

The Heart of the Community

By Scarlett Johnson

“The library is the heart of a community.” I have heard it said, but didn’t truly believe it until moving to Columbus. Being a new family to the region two years ago, it was challenging to get to know the area and people, but the library served as a foundation of support for my family and me to rely on.

My first time walking into the library, I was with my then 3-year-old son. We were introduced to a children’s program, Story Time, and my son absolutely loved it. We were originally there to check out some of the community facilities and maybe find some fun books for us to read, but we were introduced to so much more. The ladies at the front desk created the most welcoming atmosphere and informed us of some of the family-friendly programs offered at the library. Story Time, coincidentally being one of them taking place that morning.

The children’s room had such a fun, inviting presence that my son was eager to join in. Ever since then, we’ve had the best experiences during Story Time on Thursdays. Until COVID closed the library, it was our absolute favorite day of the week. They offer a variety of activities during the event, including the famous book poem, reading several books with lots of animation and kid involvement, and making arts and crafts. They always keep the kids involved and entertained with little scavenger hunts and fun prizes. On the really special days, you leave with the best balloon animal or sword, compliments of Mr. H.

My high school daughter, of course, prefers the young adult section. That’s another great thing about the library. It gives people of all ages something to do. It provides littles with fun activities to get them encouraged to read, and it gives teens and young adults opportunities to create new friendships and learn valuable skills. It enables our older adults to stay engaged in the digital world and enjoy a quiet environment to really indulge in a good book. However, our library offers so much more than just books. It also provides everyone with games, clubs, programs, and endless opportunities.

We have all heard the saying, “don’t judge a book by its cover.” It’s what I think of when visiting the temporary library that currently resides in the old police station. First of all, our librarians and team are beyond talented and creative. When first visiting the facility before it had become the library, I was in disbelief that in a few short weeks, it would house our library. I feared that new and old patrons would miss what I felt when first walking in just 2 years ago. However, the transition is unbelievable and I can absolutely say, it has not lost its heart. There are the same warm greetings when you walk in, with many of the same opportunities offered. The library continues to be the heart of the community and the gateway to the future.

It's exciting to think about the transition of the library from where it was, where it is now, to where it will be in 2023. I can only imagine the excitement other residents must feel about the development of the new library.