



Computer classes help adults learn technology skills, earn a free laptop

Twenty-two adults in East Portland and Gresham learned new technology skills and earned themselves a free laptop thanks to a library partnership with technology nonprofit [Free Geek](#) and the Rockwood community organization, [Rosewood Initiative](#).

The five-week "Welcome to Computers" program took place in November and December at the Rosewood Initiative in East Portland. The program was taught in Spanish by the library's Bilingual Technology Coordinator Carlos Galeana. He offered lessons on sending email, navigating the internet, downloading apps, and using the library.

After completing the full program of weekly, two-hour classes, participants received a free laptop from Free Geek and one year of technical support.

"I love teaching the important technology skills that will help people both in the library and in everyday life," said Carlos, who has taught the program twice.

For some of the students, the classes are the next step in helping them earn their GED; for others, it's a boost in navigating complex online job applications.

"The computer is a nice extra," adds Carlos.

The library and Free Geek teach the Welcome to Computers program with various community partners throughout the year. A new session will begin in February 2019 with Central City Concern.



Meet Liza Dyer, volunteer coordinator

For those interested in volunteering their time and expertise at the library, Volunteer Coordinator Liza Dyer works diligently as a "matchmaker," pairing people with the volunteer position and library location that best aligns with their interests and skills.

"Volunteer services is all about the people," says Liza. "We recruit, onboard and orient

people to what we do at the library — we're a human resources department for library volunteers."

In her role, Liza supports the library's 2,000 annual volunteers, along with more than 100 library staff across Multnomah County who work directly with volunteers.

With her colleagues, Liza interviews incoming volunteers to learn about what they like to do, their work styles, and their goals for volunteering. She works hard to ensure that each volunteer is matched with a role that will be meaningful for them.

"We want to make sure the experience is amazing for both our staff and volunteers. When we have everyone working together towards our shared goals it makes us a stronger library system."

Library volunteers help with everything from shelving books and fulfilling holds to teaching computer literacy classes and delivering books to homebound patrons. As library services evolve, so does volunteer services.

"We all are in this together. Whether it's a staff person who is in every day and getting paid or a volunteer coming in two hours per week, we're extending the impact for the greater community," Liza adds.

Staying true to her passion for volunteering, Liza also gives of her time to local and national organizations, including the Council for Certification in Volunteer Administration, the Northwest Oregon Volunteer Administrators Association, and the Nonprofit Technology Network.

[Learn more about volunteering with Multnomah County Library.](#)

Bestselling author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie headlines library's community reading project, *Everybody Reads*

The library's 17th annual community reading project [Everybody Reads](#) began January 2. Thanks to [The Library Foundation](#), 4,500 copies of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah* are available at libraries across Multnomah County. In addition, patrons can access the audiobook of *Americanah* through the RBDigital app and the e-book through the Overdrive app, with no holds or waiting. An additional 4,900 copies of *We Should All Be Feminists* are being distributed to high school students studying Adichie's essay in the winter term.

The goal of Everybody Reads is to engage deeply around the themes of a book and convene meaningful conversations around difficult issues. *Americanah* addresses issues of culture, race, immigration and feminism.

Community members are encouraged to join the discussion at one of the many [Everybody Reads events](#) taking place across Multnomah County:

[Radical Empathy and Immigration Story Exchange](#)

Learn more about radical empathy by participating in a story exchange. You'll have an opportunity to meet young immigrants, hear about their lives, and share a story of your own. You'll observe how story exchanges using the Narrative 4 style of deep listening and sharing work. Those inspired by the event will have future opportunities to volunteer.

Wednesday, January 8, 6:00 to 7:30 pm

Central Library, U.S. Bank Room

[Black Feminism in the Hashtag Era](#)

Women of color have played an essential role in laying the groundwork for the #MeToo movement. Join Dr. Shirley A. Jackson in this tour of the intersections of history, race, activism and feminism and come away with tools to embrace your inner activist.

Tuesday, February 26, 6:30 to 7:30 pm

North Portland Library

[So You Want to Run for Office?](#)

Serve your community and neighbors by running for elected office! Jillian Schoene draws on 20 years in Oregon politics to show you how to file, find jurisdictions, and run a campaign. All are welcome, especially women and people of color.

Wednesday, February 20, 6:30 to 7:45 pm

Central Library, U.S. Bank Room

Patron comments

"Having worked in customer service for many years, I'm not prone to doing this. . . but. . . THANK YOU! Thank you for participating in the Libby app. I LOVE being able to check out books without worrying about returning them, without having to haul paper books on my bus commute, and being able to try out books that I'm not sure about without the commitment to having to get them back to the library after losing interest after a chapter."
— anonymous, December 21

"After taking one class with a computer here [Central Library], I am no longer afraid of computers. I was amazed at just how much you can see through these machines." — Irina, November 30, 2018

In the news

[Deeper Commitment: Library system to expand reach for black families](#) (Portland Observer, December 26)

[County Library Jumpstarts Initiative to Support Black Families](#), The Skanner, December 20

[Volunteer tutors help Portland adults navigate a world full of written English](#) (The Oregonian, December 17)

[New Plan for Multnomah County Library](#) (KXL radio, December 6)

[What We're Reading](#) (Southwest Connection, November 21)

Four fast facts

- The first Everybody Reads selection was *A Lesson Before Dying* by Ernest J. Gaines in 2003.
- *Americanah* is the first Everybody Reads title that the library is able to offer with unlimited audiobook and e-book downloads, which means no holds or waiting!
- Approximately 30% of library volunteers speak a language other than English.
- There are more than 50 different types of volunteer roles at the library.

Upcoming events

[Winter Origami for Kids](#)

Wednesday, January 9

4 pm

Capitol Hill Library

[GirlStrength Workshop](#)

Thursday, January 17

4 pm

Belmont Library

[A Selection from Audubon's Final Masterpiece](#)

Saturday, January 12 to Monday, March 4

Collins Gallery, Central Library

[Cooking Around the World Club: Soup and Salad](#)

Sunday, January 20

3:15 pm

Holgate Library

[Новогодний праздник! / Slavic New Year!](#)

Sunday, January 13

1 pm

Gresham Library

[Fire Cider for Cold and Flu Season](#)

Saturday, January 26

2 pm

Hollywood Library

