



In recent months, Multnomah County Library has joined libraries and readers around the country in expressing opposition to a new policy from Macmillan Publishers that restricts libraries from purchasing new e-books.

Despite more than 190,000 signatures to date on a nationwide petition at [ebooksforall.org](http://ebooksforall.org), including more than 16,000 from Oregonians alone, Macmillan went forward with enacting its new e-book embargo on November 1.

Multnomah County Library is one of the highest-circulating libraries in the country for both physical and digital content. Our patrons and our communities rely on us for access to information and resources. I am deeply concerned about the long-term consequences for public libraries should other publishers follow in Macmillan's footsteps.

That's why we have decided that enough is enough. Multnomah County Library will no longer purchase new Macmillan e-books.

Providing equal and open access to digital resources is critical to the mission of public libraries, and we cannot stand idly by as the country's largest publishers increasingly demand higher prices to license content on more restrictive terms.

This is an important time for public libraries. It's been heartening to collaborate with my peers at prominent public library systems across the country to speak out with one voice.

I am grateful to our community for its show of support and to our local and state leaders for their encouragement. Multnomah County Chair Deborah Kafoury recently spoke out against the restrictions. I also recently had the opportunity to sit down with United States Senator Jeff Merkley to discuss how companies like Macmillan and Amazon are jeopardizing public libraries in their pursuit of profit.

Together, we will continue to work and advocate for what we know is right.

Vailey Oehlke  
Director of Libraries



Pictured (left to right): Perry Gardner, Black Cultural Library Advocate library assistant at Central Library; Pat Bates-Sherman, Self Enhancement, Inc staff; Tamyka Miles, library administrator at North Portland Library. Photo courtesy of Self Enhancement, Inc.

## **Library staff create new African American library at Self Enhancement, Inc**

Written by Tamyka Miles and Perry Gardner

It began with this purpose: "To build community connections to inspire change and provide opportunities to the Black community in Multnomah County." Our initial outing began as a way of introducing a colleague to the city and many of the important places that are integral to the African American community and experience. As a new Black Librarian charged with promoting librarianship to the Black community, we felt it vitally important our colleague be introduced to and become familiar with the Black community, its rich history, organizations, and people committed to serving the needs of our community.

We arrived at Self Enhancement, Inc. (SEI) with no particular motive in mind outside of just introducing ourselves and informing them of what their local library has to offer. We encountered a warm and welcoming staff member, Ms. Brooks, who immediately introduced us to the Chief Operating Officer of the organization, Libra Forde. Ms. Forde was kind enough to offer us a tour of the building and stated that they had a library space that was no longer in use. The staff wanted to revive the space but didn't really know how.

The previous SEI librarian, Ms. Adair, had built a wonderfully well used space, but had passed away some years ago and now the space was basically used for meetings. What Ms. Forde did know is that she wanted the space to have a state of the art check out system exactly like Multnomah County Library had, and that the collection would be all African American titles written by and for African Americans.

Immediately and with the utmost excitement we said "We can help with that!"

We immediately received an overwhelming amount of support from Multnomah County Library and began the work of revitalizing the Self Enhancement, Inc. library space.

We began by weeding out the existing 5,000 book collection. It took several months of reviewing and consideration of what to retain. We then moved on to the check out system that would mirror that of MCL's system.

We met with vendors, and during that process, we really learned about technical services. We were indeed able to help SEI procure the system that Ms. Forde requested. Next, we moved on to the aesthetics of the room: new paint, new carpet, new ceiling, and then all new furniture that would be comfortable, colorful, and fun. The furniture would also need to have outlets.

Finally, we began to purchase books. The project took a year from start to opening and it was a labor of love.

We had the opportunity to learn nearly every aspect of the library from budgets to acquisitions, to working with vendors, to collection development and library cards. We thank the entire Self Enhancement organization for trusting us with this important project.

This is just the beginning of a fruitful partnership. We are now in the planning stages of sharing all of what Multnomah County Library has to offer.



Pictured (left to right): Tiffany, Chance, Cherille and Diana. Library drop-in tutoring GED graduates celebrate their accomplishment.

## **Library's first GED grads celebrate their achievement**

A group of GED® graduates shared their joy and dreams with families, staff, tutors and patrons at Midland Library during its first-ever graduation ceremony for adults who earned their diploma with support from Multnomah County Library's drop-in tutoring program.

The graduates donned caps and gowns, posed for photos and shared cupcakes, shared stories and described their plans for the future. Tiffany, a full-time administrative assistant in a busy social service program, now qualifies for a promotion. Cherille, a single mom who studied all summer with a tutor, finished school to be a role model for her children. Chance has worked many jobs but now dreams of entering a veterinary technician program at Mt. Hood Community College. Diana, a bilingual mom and businesswoman, juggled family, business and GED® studies and proved to her daughter that she could finish school.

The GED® drop-in tutoring program, coordinated by Adult Literacy Coordinator Lisa Regimbal, has served 103 older and younger adults over the past year. Many of the

program's attendees were nervous about the test and didn't know how to study or where to begin. Thanks to a one-year Oregon GED® Program Wraparound Services Grant, the library has been able to offer attendees free GED® testing, tutoring by volunteers, and coaching from GED® Coordinator Colleen Latimer. Multnomah County Library was the only library system in the state to receive the funding.

A cadre of 30 volunteer tutors helped the students stay motivated while remembering the intricacies of algebra and fractions, and studying science, social studies and language arts. Library staff ensured students felt welcomed and provided books for kids while parents studied.

The ceremony was a reminder of the importance and significance of graduation for the students who had dropped out of school years earlier. Graduate Cherille was surrounded by her children, nieces, nephews, elderly mother and other family members. She pointed to the children and smiled, "I wanted to show them I could do it."

## **Fairview-Columbia Library partners with Reynolds Middle School on library apps for new student iPads**

As the school year kicked off this September, library staff at Fairview-Columbia Library helped Reynolds Middle School students navigate their new school-owned iPads and access library resources.

Students at three Reynolds School District middle schools received iPads thanks to a grant from Verizon and those iPads came preloaded with Multnomah County Library resources, like the Overdrive app for e-books and audiobooks, Libby. The effort to promote the library's digital resources was led by Bilingual Youth Librarian Tanya Belmont and Library Assistant Laura Bradshaw.

Tanya and Laura attended an outreach event at Reynolds Middle School, helping students navigate their new iPads and connecting with teachers on how to access digital library resources. This was the first time the library has partnered with a school to have library apps preloaded on school-owned devices.

"Many students and families were surprised to learn that they didn't have to physically walk into the library to access books and even more surprised to learn that e-books just expire off of an account when they are due." Tanya said.

Tanya has been partnering with Reynolds Middle School for the past three years, talking to classes about how to access homework help, digital resources and other materials through the library. She's also worked to recruit volunteers for the library's Teen Tuesday and Summer Reading program. The goal is for students and families to know that the library is a resource and is a space where they can feel like they belong.



Pictured (left to right): Natalia, library assistant at Midland Library; Kristine, Midland Library Summer Lunch program coordinator; Tim, Summer Works intern/Summer Lunch program assistant; Ying, Summer Works intern/Summer Lunch program assistant

## **Nearly 5,000 free lunches served to youth this summer**

Gresham, Midland, and Rockwood libraries, in partnership with Gresham-Barlow School District, Meals on Wheels, and Reynolds School District, provided 4,911 free lunches to youth this summer. Summer lunch service is one of the ways the library helps meet youth patrons' basic needs, and helps connect youth to the Summer Reading game, programs, and other services.

The library began serving summer lunch at Rockwood Library in 2015, and the program quickly expanded to Midland and Gresham libraries. This summer, program attendance saw an 80 percent increase from 2018.

This year, the library conducted its first assessment to determine the impact of the summer lunch service on program participants. To be respectful of patron privacy, the library used talkback boards and optional surveys to collect data. Youth answered six questions by placing stickers on talk back boards and filled out 71 surveys.

Survey results confirmed that summer lunch is a fundamental offering that families rely on. Patrons had positive comments about the service:

"Thank you for healthy lunch options and food without shame."

"The summer lunch program helps me significantly; without this program my kids may have to skip a meal, thank you."

## Patron comments

"Thank you for holding the line against Macmillan!" — Karynn, November 6

"Hello - I just wanted to pass along my thanks to Director Oehlke for boycotting Macmillan's e-books. Standing up for your readers against their bullying and greed is much appreciated." — Patrick, November 6

[From a note left at a library branch] "Thanks for having LGBTQ+ resources. I've appreciated them greatly, and the mere presence of a pride flag or rainbow decoration makes me feel safe :)." — "a closeted teen," November 4

"The DVD Lucky Day program really lit up my library visits. Being able to access current films at the library allowed me a sense of economic equity. Many of the DVD options available had also been recently released on platforms that are costly and essentially monopolize the capacity for access ( ie Comcast). It was a joy to be able to be included in peer group conversation on 'recent releases.' It is my sincere hope the program pilot is deemed a success so fellow patrons can potentially experience the same joy as I. Thank you." — Annette, Gregory Heights patron, October 30

"[My Discovery Pass] is a spectacular program. I have really enjoyed seeing the program expand and really hope it continues to do so - it's truly fantastic. Thank you, thank you, thank you!" — anonymous, October 28

"I'd like to send a shout out to Nadia from Customer Service for being so friendly ): I thought she was a robot haha. Cause she was so perfect. Also thank you to Sandy for saving my books and getting me a new card in record time! They are both such an asset to this library and truly make it feel like the library is for everyone. Proud to be a Central Library member! Everyone could answer all my questions today." — Ray, Central patron, October 11

From an anonymous handmade card sent to the Library Administration office: "Dear Vailey, Thank you! Thank you! Thank you for your hard work and leadership. I love our library! xoxo" — Anonymous, October 2019

## In the news

[Library system cuts ties with Macmillan over ebook policy](#) (Portland Tribune, November 5)

[In Response to Restricted E-Book Access, Multnomah County Library Stops Buying from Macmillan Publishers](#) (Willamette Week, November 5)

[Multnomah County Library boycotts top publisher](#) (KOIN, November 5)

[Multnomah County Library Will No Longer Buy New Macmillan E-Books](#) (OPB, November 5)

[Multnomah County Library to stop buying e-books from major publisher](#) (KATU, November 5)

[Afternoon news](#) [clip about Macmillan e-book decision] (KXL, November 5)

[Multnomah County Library in the fight with publishers over price of ebooks](#) (KATU, October 28)

[Five Things for Thursday, including Sondland's testimony and Voodoo's blueberry goodness](#) (Portland Business Journal, October 17)

[Community Hotline](#) (MetroEast Media, October 9)

[Opinion: Publishers are blocking your access to e-books at local libraries](#) (Oregonian, October 6)

[Afternoon news](#) [clip about library fines] (KXL, October 3)

[The Gift of Technology](#) (Gresham Outlook, September 26)

## Upcoming events: Native American Heritage Month

[Dream Catcher Weaving](#)

Friday, November 8

4 pm

Fairview-Columbia Library

[The Prairie Blossoms: Shining the Spotlight on Native American Music](#)

Sunday, November 17

3 pm

St. Johns Library

[Native American Jewelry Making](#)

Friday, November 15

4 pm

Troutdale Library

[Native American Dance](#)

Thursday, November 21

12:30 pm

North Portland Library

[Native American Indian Storytelling and Drumming](#)

Saturday, November 16

11:30 am

Albina Library

[PDX Native Film Night: Warrior Women](#)

Monday, November 25

7:30 pm

Hollywood Theatre

[Connecting Cultures: Native American Children's Songs](#)

Saturday, November 16

3 pm

Hillsdale Library