

New & Noteworthy



4-Star Library Status!

The Library received national recognition as a Star Library, awarded by *Library Journal*. Champaign's 4-star rating ranks the library in the top 3% nationwide—and represents a gain over last year's 3-star rating.

Library Architect Wins Highest Honors from AIA

Carol Ross Barney, design principle and founder of Ross Barney Architects, the firm that built the Main Library, was recently awarded the American Institute of Architects' Gold Medal. A representative from the firm reached out to share that they consider the Champaign Public Library one of their "best and favorite building designs." The building truly is a community gem and a "place of civic pride."



From Participant to Presenter: Realtor Leads New Workshop in Spanish

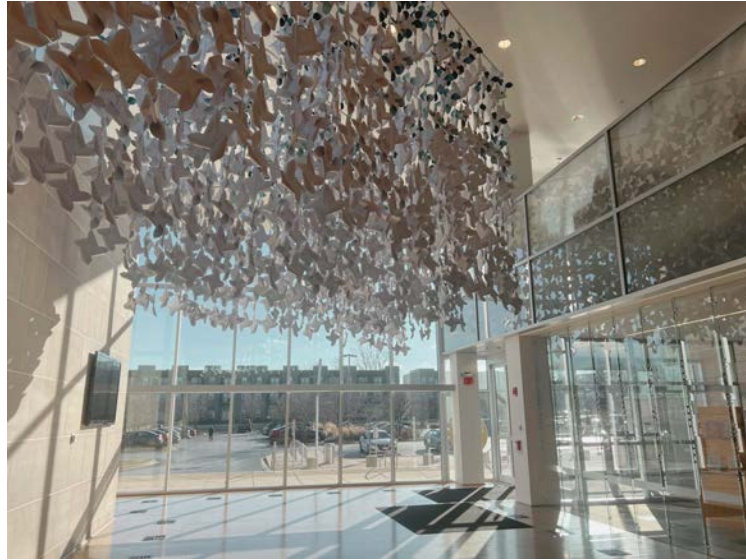
Launch at the Library participant, serial entrepreneur, and local business leader, Melixa Rivera-Sustache, will be leading a workshop in Spanish on buying or selling a house, "El proceso: Comprar o vender su casa hoy día" (January 30).



Staff Day Success!

In November 2022 we brought staff together for our first in-person training day since 2019. The schedule included a keynote address on "Joy in the Workplace" by Richard Sheridan, entrepreneur and author, and safety training led by Security Manager Brandon Stokes. The day was a great reminder of the shared expertise and passion this group of people bring to work every day in service of Champaign customers.

Program Highlights



Lobby Artwork Delights Visitors—including 60K Virtual Fans

Adriane Binky Donley's "Winter Wind" lobby installation premiered in December to the delight of community members of all ages. Photos have reached more than 63K people on social media.

Harp Performers Shared a Joyful Noise with 110+ Music Lovers

The Roslyn Rensch Central Illinois Chapter of the American Harp Society performed in the library lobby, with 110 community members of all ages listening intently. Visitors and staff alike enjoyed the ethereal sounds of ambient music throughout the building.

Teens Spend Time at the Library Every Day After School

The word's out! Hundreds of middle and high school students enjoy spending time in the library after school, including on early-out days, from 1 to 4:30 pm. We partner with area organizations and U of I programs to offer an astounding array of activities in Teen Lounge—including an insect petting zoo, VR headsets, ice-cream making (aka food science), Python programming, building robots, lava lamps, solving puzzles, and creating sculptures from upcycled materials (and that's just during November and December!).

New! "School's Out" Play Days Draw Hundreds

Our new family play days engaged and entertained 160 kids and families in December and 140, in January. Games included giant-sized Connect 4 and Jenga. We have another School's Out Big Games Play Day planned for March!

Sharing How We Help Older Adults

Adult Services staff member Laura Reiss was invited to join the East Central Illinois Aging Committee (ECIAA) and will be presenting alongside Urbana Free Library, sharing how public libraries are able to help older adults in Champaign County with social isolation and loneliness.

Launch at the Library Helps Nonprofits Get Their Start

We presented a popular panel discussion in December, "So You Want to Start a Nonprofit," with three local leaders sharing their expertise and 46 participants getting their questions answered. Panelists included Genevieve Kirk, Center for Nonprofit Excellence Director at the Community Foundation of East Central Illinois; Jenette Jurczyk, president of The Family Room; and Mark Pelmore, CEO, president, and founding member of Business Elevator. Gloria Ye, director of the New American Welcome Center, attended and shared a compliment: "Great panel. Champaign Public Library is awesome—thanks for coordinating this wonderful event!"

Contest Winner's Appreciation: Library Writer's Group Going Strong After 4 Years

The winner of this year's Short Story Contest expressed her appreciation after the ceremony ended. Jessica Launius shared that she's part of a writer's group that met at the very first Writer's Lounge we hosted years ago, and that they still meet here regularly! She credits Adult Services staff member and series host Salem Gebil with the longevity of her group. Jessica garnered first place in both 2019 and 2022. Read the winning stories at champaign.org/writers.

Douglass Branch

Community Partnerships Help Fund Friday Night Jam Sessions

This season's Friday Night Jam Sessions are made possible with support from the Champaign County Community Coalition, Don Moyer Boys and Girls Club, and the Champaign County Mental Health Board.

Table Talk Book Club's Loyal Members Both November and December meetings of the Table Talk Book Club drew a loyal group of participants (24 each month!) for a lively conversation about the book selections. Next up? The group will discuss *The Personal Librarian* by Marie Benedict and Victoria Christopher Murray on February 14.

Juneteenth Planning Process Unites Champaign & Urbana

Douglass Branch staff and collaborators for the Juneteenth Emancipation Community Celebration are working to bring together both Champaign and Urbana audiences, uniting for a shared afternoon of events—including a parade!

Helping Provide Needed Resources to Area Parents through Collaboration

In November, Amanda met with area collaborators to plan 2023 resource sessions for parents. Partners include Amanda Gray from Champaign Unit 4 School District's Family and Community Engagement Center and Jeniece Mitchell from Urbana #116 School District's Family Engagement initiative. They developed three spring C-U Connect sessions.

Customer Comments

On Second Thought...

We watched a customer walk out the door only to turn around and come back inside: "I just had to tell you, I love this library! It's so great!"

Mastering Mortgage Assistance

After helping a customer complete her mortgage assistance application, she said, "You don't know what a blessing you are. I would never have been able to do all this by myself."

Feeling More Confident Now

Compliment from a local entrepreneur: "Thank you for listening to me. Just talking to you is making me feel more confident in myself and my ideas."

***Best* Use of Taxes**

A customer told us the library is the "best use of property taxes!"

Customer Passes Online Quiz and Gets to Keep Job—with Help from Library Staff

One customer was on the verge of losing his job if he didn't take a specific training by a specific date. He had never participated in any online training or quizzes. He was able to rely on us for assistance—and passed the quizzes! We were thrilled to see his success.

Watched Workshops on YouTube—Now, Excited to Attend in Person

We offer Tech Workshops each month and recently a new participant told us he had watched all of our Tech Workshop videos on YouTube. He was now very excited to attend in person and apply what he had learned already online!

This Young Reader Says Life Begins...at the Library!

We helped two young girls find The Game Master series in the Children's section. The older of the two hugged the book super tight and said, "This is the moment my life begins!"

Meaningful Fun – at the Douglass Branch

We received a compliment via email from an afterschool coordinator after we sent copies of their students' stop-motion movies: "Thank you for sending these to us, and for such a fun and engaging activity! You always pull meaningful fun out of your library hat!"

Wonderbooks Are, Well, Wonderful

"My daughter loves the Wonderbooks—and so do I. We use them at home and I use them in my classroom. I am a Special Education teacher and I have several first graders who are not reading, but love books. I use Wonderbooks as part of our independent stations. My students love them!"

Great Holiday Card We Received!

