



Now Is the Time For... **JUSTICE. CHANGE.** **HOPE. LOVE.**

**WITNESS THE
COLLECTIVE POWER
OF PEOPLE STANDING
BESIDE ONE ANOTHER
IN SUPPORT OF A
SHARED HUMANITY.**


The city, the state, and the country were shaken by the murder of George Floyd on May 25, and by the unrest that broke out across Minneapolis in response as citizens took to the streets to demand change.

(CONTINUE READING ON PAGE 6)


Our Library's Impact

Even with the many challenges, rest assured your library is still changing lives. We're proud to share some highlights of Hennepin County Library's innovative work through July, 2020. As more library services are made safely available to the public, the impact will only continue to grow!

MEMBERS NEWSLETTER
Summer 2020




66K+
virtual storytime views




20K+
songs streamed or downloaded - surpassing the total number of listens in all of 2019!



16K+
questions answered by knowledgeable and expert staff



2.5M+
digital downloads circulated



5K+
items sent to At Home Service patrons



176K+
items checked out via curbside pickup



11K
library e-cards issued

Support

THE LOCAL LIBRARY EQUITY FUND

Help rebuild a more just and equitable society for all.



YES!

I am investing in our library with my additional gift to the Local Library Equity Fund!

\$35 \$60 \$120 \$250 \$500 \$1,000 \$ _____

Give by mail:

Use envelope enclosed
Make checks payable to Friends of HCL or call (612) 543-8108.

Contact Info:

Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____
 State _____ Zip _____
 CC# _____
 Exp. Date _____ CVV _____



300 Nicollet Mall
Minneapolis, MN 55401

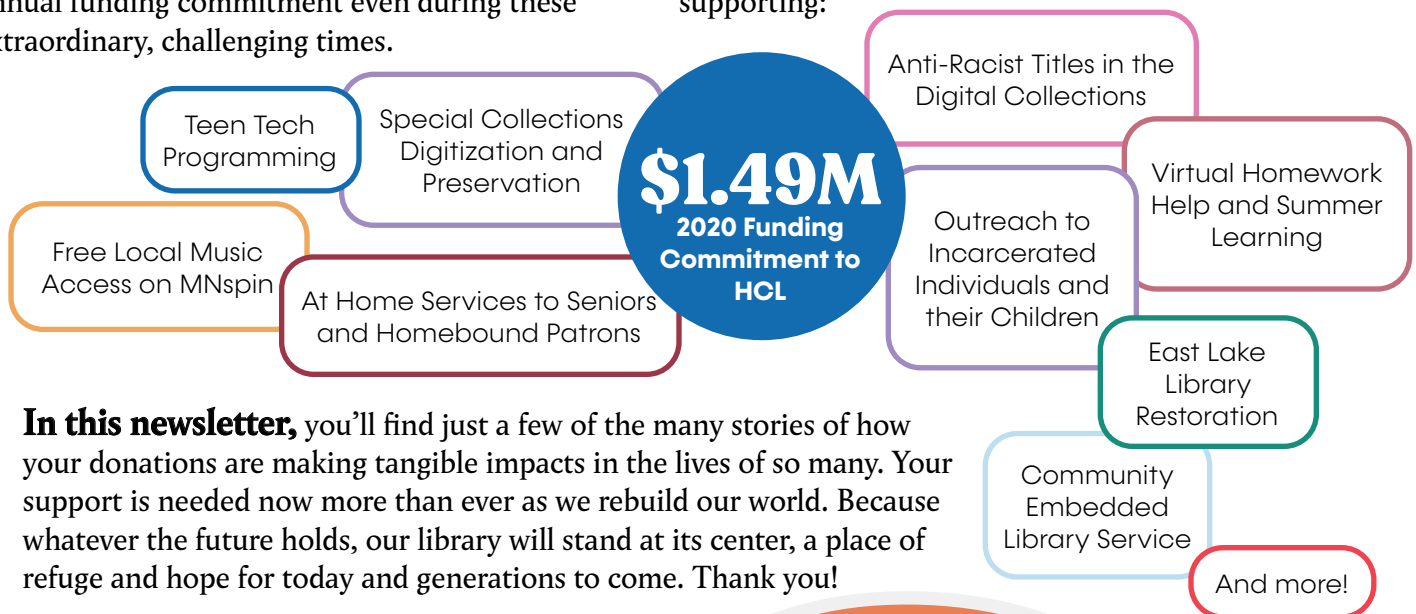
First and foremost, your donation will be used to help restore the libraries most affected by recent unrest in Minneapolis, especially East Lake Library. In addition, your generosity will help fund programs and resources focused on tackling the persistent poverty and inequality facing our black, brown and indigenous friends and neighbors. **Thank you!**

Give online: supportHCLIB.org/justice-for-all

A Note About Our 2020 Library Funding Commitment

Friends of HCL is more committed than ever to standing with and supporting our library. This year, with you and other generous donors, we are determined to meet our \$1.49 million annual funding commitment even during these extraordinary, challenging times.

When plans for our 2020 library funding were set last year, the world was a very different place than it is now. No one knew just how much a virus and a collective cry for justice would alter daily life at every level. As a patron-first institution, the library has adjusted quickly to meet those needs, shifting how it delivers its resources and services in response. Friends is continuously working with the library to evaluate the most impactful ways to invest your contributions and put your gifts to work directly in the community. Here are some of the important programs and resources you are supporting:



In this newsletter, you'll find just a few of the many stories of how your donations are making tangible impacts in the lives of so many. Your support is needed now more than ever as we rebuild our world. Because whatever the future holds, our library will stand at its center, a place of refuge and hope for today and generations to come. Thank you!

We are so grateful for the incredible generosity from donors across the country and world in support of the Local Library Equity Fund. Thank you for rallying around our library in a time of need!

“This is a gift from Finn, who is ten, and loves the East Lake Library. We want to see it open again very soon!”

~ Rachael, Minneapolis

“Reading and education are the way toward hope and justice. Donation in memory of George Floyd.”

~ Chris, Brooklyn, NY

“Happy to help a library in need.”

~ A fellow librarian, Orange County, CA

Respect
this
Community-owned
library

We're Still Here

New Realities for At Home Services Patrons

“We cannot leave our apartments anymore. We have to wear masks whenever we leave to take the garbage out.”

This message, written by an At Home Services patron on the back of a materials request form, is a typical one in the time of COVID. Dillon Young, Outreach Services Manager, explains that with every book or material, a slip is included for patrons to request their next read. Before the pandemic, patrons often wrote thank you notes on the back, or continued their list of requests. But now, in these uncertain times with increased isolation, some patrons are now using this space to simply process their new realities to people they know will listen.

Donors, like you, help At Home Services patrons stay connected during isolation

Some patrons with long- or short-term disability, illness, or physical impairment do not have access to all the resources the library provides. That's where At Home Services steps in, sending materials—books, DVDs, CDs, audiobooks, large print books—directly to patrons' homes, helping keep them connected. This service also provides something less tangible but just as important: social interaction.

Building Relationships from Afar

“People are living longer, but also becoming more disconnected, which means people are living longer and longer in isolation,” Dillon

“The library’s here to keep our patrons connected to the world, to all the things that are important in life. We keep them connected to what keeps them whole.”



says. “We know that physical health is important to longevity, but mental health is equally as important. **The library’s here to keep our patrons connected to the world, to all the things that are important in life. We keep them connected to what keeps them whole.**”

These connections have only become more important now that patrons are socially and physically distanced, their movements even more limited than before. The challenge facing At Home Services is balancing the importance of the physical safety of patrons, many of whom are in high-risk categories for the coronavirus, while also recognizing the increased importance of staying engaged and connected to their library lifeline. The solution? Strengthened relationships.

The At Home Services phone line, operational from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Mondays through Fridays, has become even more popular. Most of the calls are initiated because a patron wants to receive materials, but the patrons also want to talk with someone who recognizes their voice, who knows their name and their interests and who can share in their life experiences, even from afar. Sometimes, the At Home Services staff member is the only person the patron will talk to that day. These personal relationships are so valuable in a world where physical interactions are gone but social interactions are vital.

Looking Forward

“It’s not the what, it’s the how that’s important,” Dillon says. In other words, the materials are secondary to how the work is being done. The books and DVDs are a gateway to the greater work of getting to know who their patrons are and learning how to make those connections despite any challenges that arise.

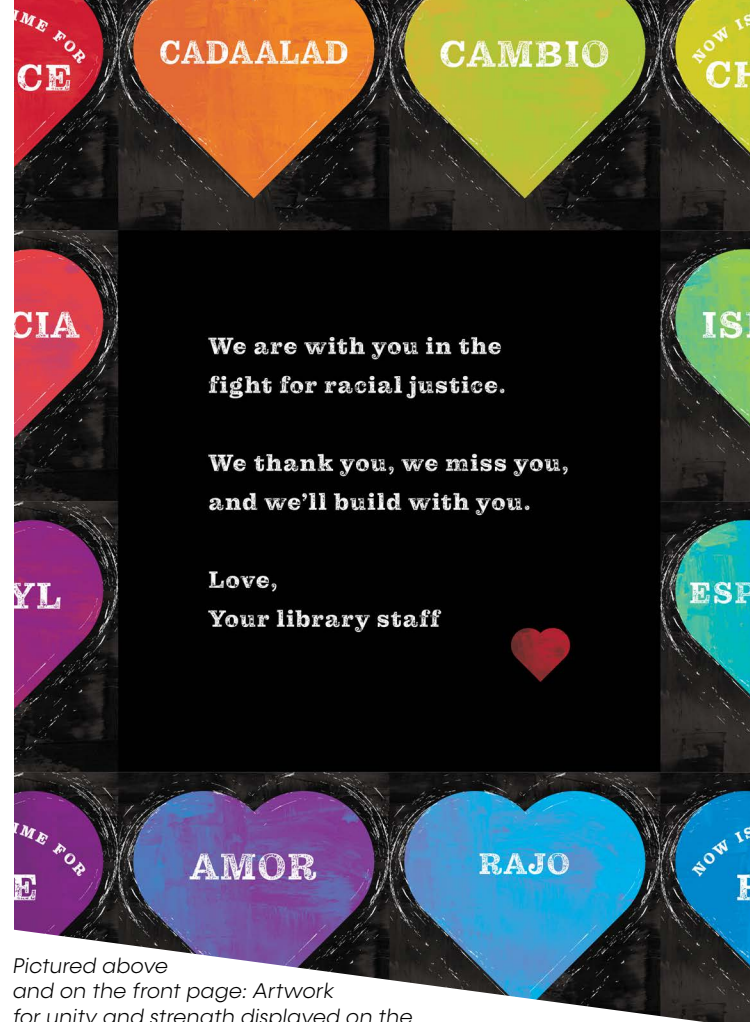
As a library donor, you are directly helping this work take place. At Home Services circulated more than 46,700 books and materials to 867 patrons in 2019, and received more than 16,000 phone calls. Already in 2020, staff members have made hundreds of personal phone calls to update patrons on services during COVID and simply to check in. The ability of departments like At Home Service to pivot during a crisis, to have the resources to evaluate their programs, and to continue their services through challenging times depends on the support of Friends. **Your generosity is keeping patrons connected to their whole selves.**

While no one is sure how the future will take shape, the At Home Services staff have never been more sure of their purpose. “A lot of what we provide as a service has changed dramatically,” Dillon says, “but what hasn’t changed is the desire of Hennepin County Library Outreach Services to continue to support people that rely on our services and our staff. We’re still here.” ■

Our library, at the very heart of our Hennepin County neighborhoods, heard this call, felt this call, and witnessed the collective power of people standing beside one another in support of a shared humanity.

“Libraries are so important to every community. Hang in there, and know you are supported in this difficult time.”

During the unrest, Minneapolis Central Library experienced several broken windows, and East Lake Library sustained significant fire, smoke



Pictured above and on the front page: Artwork for unity and strength displayed on the boarded windows of East Lake Library.

and water damage. The outpouring of support in response—the donations from around the country and world, the messages and notes from donors and patrons, the willingness of people to lend a hand in any way—filled our hearts. It is clear from the overwhelming response just how deep the community’s love for the library goes, how central a role this beloved institution plays in the lives of its patrons. Every note and every gift represents a person who cannot imagine a world without the library in it. For instance, Rena from Madison, WI, stated: **“Libraries are so important to every community. Hang in there, and know you are supported in this difficult time.”**

The response also demonstrated that you, our Friends, are resolved and committed to dismantling systemic racism and enacting true and meaningful change to move us toward a more just world. We know there are no simple ways to confront the brutal truths of our society, but learning is a first step forward. The library, dedicated to educating and making critical change, quickly made available the most popular anti-

racist audio and e-books for download with no holds through the summer, including: *How to Be an Antiracist* by Ibram X. Kendi, *White Fragility* by Robin DiAngelo, and *Me and White Supremacy* by Layla Saad. To meet the incredible demand for these titles, Friends has committed \$150,000 to help fund the fees associated with these e-book downloads.

As the fundraising partner, we are dedicated to standing with our library as it continues to do what it does best: listen to the community, respond to its needs, and serve as a beacon of hope and unity. **Together, we will all rise to the challenge of our times, listening, learning, and shifting our work to better fulfill our values and serve one another.**

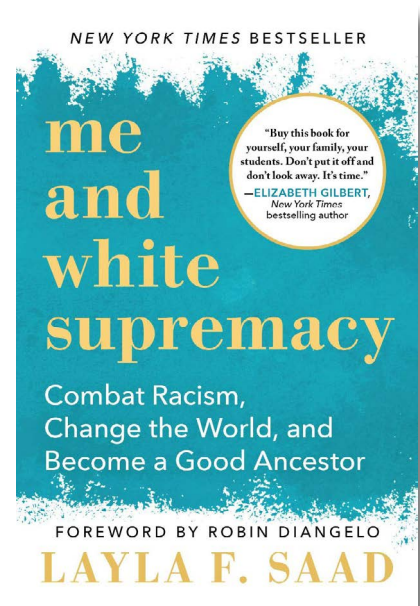
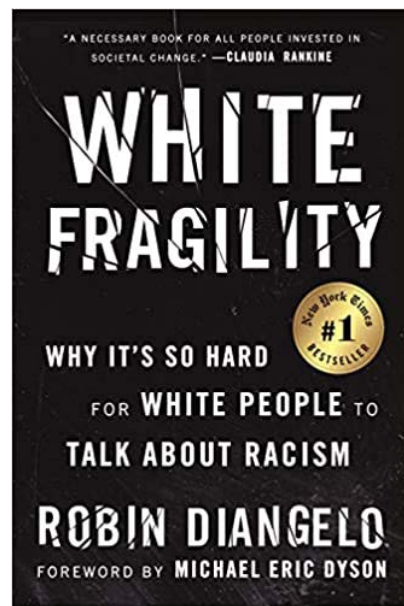
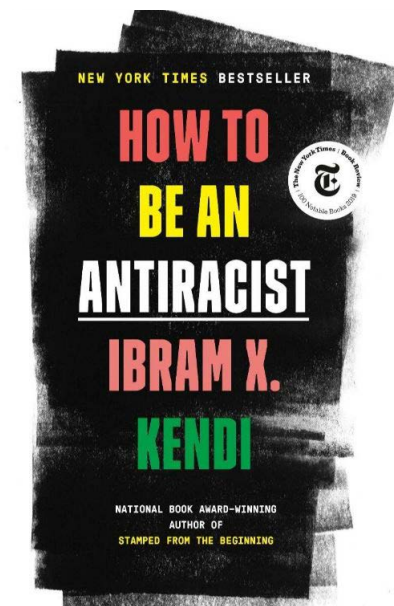
In a note from Chad Helton, the newly hired Library Director who will join our library in August, he wrote: “When we think about the future, we often speak of the future with uncertainty, as if the future happens to us, and we have no hand in its creation. We create our future, and the future of this community is bright, because we as individuals, and we as an organization, will work tirelessly for what we believe in, and that is wholehearted dedication to the betterment of all of the community we serve.”

It is Friends like you, those with open hearts, who will help us create a better future through our library. We know there is work to be done, and we look forward to tackling it with you, and to keeping you

“Together, we will all rise to the challenge of our times, listening, learning, and shifting our work to better fulfill our values and serve one another.”



updated on our progress forward. If the events of the past few months have taught us anything, it is that now is the time for justice, for change, for hope, and for love. ■



Brooklyn Park Library's Teen Tech Squad Moves Forward

How one Teen Tech Squad carries their momentum into the new days ahead

participate in the program's twice monthly workshops each year, and 34 high school students are employed as workshop teen leaders, gaining invaluable program design, curriculum development, safety planning, and group facilitation experience. For the teen leaders, however, their measures of success for the younger workshop participants are less quantitative. They measure smiles

From the Teen Tech Squad Perspective

If you were to ask one of Brooklyn Park Library's Teen Tech Squad (TTS) members to describe the program, you'd probably hear many similar words: fun, learning, kids, science, growth, team, technology, cool. In fact, to hear them speak about their work sounds like what we all imagine an ideal learning environment to be. Workshops are interactive, collaborative, and engaging, in addition to being challenging and rigorous. Young people who take part in the program explore science, engineering, and technology through rockets, through slime, through board-game-inspired escape rooms. And the students and teens learn about themselves, too, along the way.

The impact of Teen Tech Squad, in some ways, can be difficult to measure. Nearly 1,000 young people from underserved neighborhoods

“Teen Tech Squad has meant so much to me because I’ve learned about myself through this program.”

and experiences and confidence alongside attendance. When asked about the impact of the program, they cite stories, cherished memories, and lessons learned about themselves and others.



Anoka High School senior Kathryn tells us, “**Teen Tech Squad has meant so much to me because I’ve learned about myself through this program.** I’ve also come to understand that I can learn so much from other people. Teen Tech Squad has just blessed me so much! With each workshop, I’ve realized how important it is to be part of a team and respect the strengths of your team.”

For Osseo High School senior Owen, who will be attending Stanford University in the fall to study robotics engineering, being part of Teen Tech Squad has been about reaching a hand back to help bring others forward. His favorite part of the program is “how all of the kids are so passionate, and they’re so sure about everything that they know. I just love their creativity. **It reminds me of how creative my community is, and it’s helped push me toward trying to create other opportunities for other people.**”

Engaging from Afar

These connections are the heart of Teen Tech Squad, for both the teen leaders and the young people engaging with the program. Understandably, then, the inability to gather has

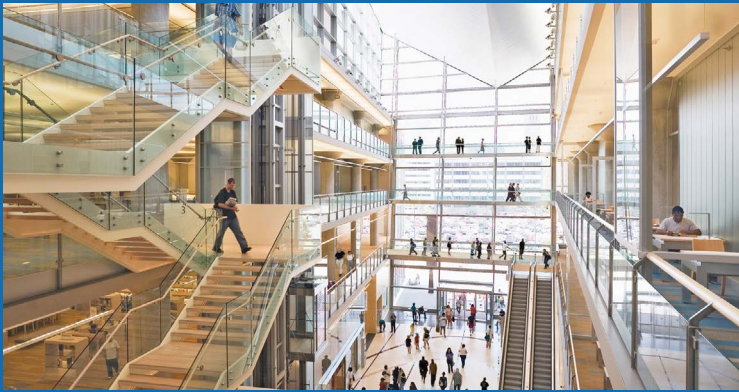
been a tricky transition. But **the Teen Tech Squad team is responding with innovative solutions and rising to the challenge of how to connect over distance without losing the true magic of the program.** They have created a website and curated a selection of activities for kids to do online that they describe as “learning, but still fun.” They’ve also started a YouTube channel with informative videos and reinvigorated their Instagram account.

With the support of donors, Friends of the Hennepin County Library is contributing more than \$100,000 to Teen Tech Squad this year, which will allow the development of future STEM leaders like the Brooklyn Park Library team to continue. The generous support of library Friends also offers our adult mentors and teen leaders the opportunity to pivot quickly to meet the challenges of today when the communities served by our eight Teen Tech Squads across Hennepin County are hit the most by hardship. Despite the challenges the team is facing during this time of physical distancing, these determined teens are not looking to slow down anytime soon. Owen says, “It’s exciting to always try and outdo ourselves. We’re constantly trying to up what we did last time and make kids even happier and more excited about what’s possible. It’s just fun.” So, what do they have planned next? We cannot wait to see! ■

VISIT
[bpteentechsquad.
 weebly.com](http://bpteentechsquad.weebly.com)

Watch educational videos,
 browse through book
 recommendations,
 and more!

FOR ALL. FOREVER.



“Our country and our community have always benefited from institutions like the Library that bring us together to learn, question, discuss, and grow.

Please join me and all of the members of the Gratia Legacy Circle who have added the Friends in their estate plans.”

– Aimee Guidera, Gratia Legacy Circle Member

Leave a legacy for your Library—and honor your values—by making a planned gift to Friends of the Hennepin County Library. The power of your gift will have an incredible influence on lives all across our community, far beyond your lifetime.



FRIENDS
of the HENNEPIN
COUNTY LIBRARY
GRATIA LEGACY CIRCLE

If you would like additional guidance or information as you consider a legacy gift, please contact **Phil Edwards**, Donor Relations Officer at **612-543-8114** or **pedwards@hclib.org**

Gratitude Diaries

one donor shared with me, “For us, the library is a cherished resource, but it’s not an essential one. We have access to the internet; we have a safe place to be during the day; we have other ways of occupying and entertaining ourselves. But there are thousands—of people that rely on the library for those things. For them, the library is essential.”

READ MORE
special stories reflecting
on shared love of the
library at
[supporthclib.org/
gratitude-diaries](https://supporthclib.org/gratitude-diaries)



A young boy reading his new book immediately after receiving it from a free book giveaway near East Lake Library.

The Library Bike: Feeding Hearts and Fueling Minds

READ FULL
impact story at
[supporthclib.org/
library-bike](https://supporthclib.org/library-bike)

The library bike has become a crucial way for the library to deliver its mission with physical locations temporarily closed. Funded by Friends of HCL donors, this innovative vehicle is bringing learning, engagement, and joy to people throughout the community.

Join us

for the thrilling 24th season of Pen Pals, the Twin Cities' definitive literary series! An array of virtual and in-person events to enlighten and entertain.



Last season SOLD OUT – order a subscription today to save your spot!

Subscriptions go on sale **Friday, August 7, 2020.**

Visit our website at supportHCLIB.org/pen-pals for more information.

THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS SPONSORS:



ANONYMOUS IN HONOR OF



Colum McCann

Thursday, **Oct. 22, 2020** | 7:30 p.m.
+ on-demand replay through Oct. 25



Virtual Event

Colum McCann is the author of the recent bestselling novel *Apeirogon*, as well as *Let the Great World Spin* and five others. He has received the National Book Award, a Guggenheim fellowship, and the Pushcart Prize.

Nikki Giovanni

Thursday, **Nov. 5, 2020** | 7:30 p.m.
+ on-demand replay through Nov. 8



Virtual Event

Nikki Giovanni is a world-renowned poet, activist, and author of several children's books, essays and poetry collections, including the upcoming *Make Me Rain*. Her numerous honors include the Langston Hughes Medal, Rosa L. Parks Woman of Courage Award, and seven NAACP Image Awards.

Yaa Gyasi

Thursday, **Feb. 11, 2021** | 7:30 p.m.
Friday, **Feb. 12, 2021** | 11:00 a.m.



In-person Event
+Virtual Backup

Yaa Gyasi, the author of *Homegoing*, is a recipient of the National Book Foundation's "5 Under 35" Award and the National Book Critics Circle's Award. Her novel *Transcendent Kingdom* releases September 2020.

Susan Choi

Thursday, **May 6, 2021** | 7:30 p.m.
Friday, **May 7, 2021** | 11:00 a.m.



In-person Event
+Virtual Backup

Susan Choi is the author of *The Foreign Student*, *A Person of Interest*, *My Education*, the Pulitzer Prize-nominated *American Woman*, and *Trust Exercise*, which won the 2019 National Book Award for Fiction.

Erik Larson

Monday, **May 24, 2021** | 7:30 p.m.
Tuesday, **May 25, 2021** | 11:00 a.m.



In-person Event
+Virtual Backup

Erik Larson is the author of five bestsellers, including *The Devil in the White City*, which was nominated for a National Book Award. His latest, *The Splendid and the Vile*, chronicles Churchill's first year as prime minister.