

Celebrating Friendship in 2017

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Volunteering to Give Kids a Head Start



If your 2017 resolutions include **investing in the future of a child**, you need to talk to LaVance Davis.

LaVance and her committee of volunteers give children a head start on lifelong reading by sharing books with them at **Head Start centers in Knox County**. Details about the spring program have yet to be developed, but **six sessions of 30 minutes each will begin in March**, and LaVance starts looking for volunteer readers early in January. In the past her crews have been

made up of readers from a variety of backgrounds ranging from parenting, medicine, speech pathology, and education at many different levels.

LaVance promises volunteer readers the **reward of many hugs** from children 3 to 5 years old. The curiosity and exuberance of the children as they learn from books give LaVance hope that they will see reading as exciting.

In her book ***How Reading Changed My Life***, Anna Quindlen describes the act of reading as "like the rubbing of two sticks together to make a fire, an improbably pedestrian task that leads to heat and light." The very beginning of a child's reading often starts with being read to, and volunteer readers can be a part of that mysterious and wondrous process.

To volunteer or to learn more about reading to Head Start children, contact LaVance Davis at lavancedavis@gmail.com or 865-254-9647.



A group of enthusiastic young readers who are using Jack and Jill's new reading corner at The First Tee.

Last month we provided an organizational overview and information about the [Children's Literacy Gala](#) held on October 22, 2016. This month we share some exciting news about [Jack and Jill's Knoxville chapter](#).

The Williams Creek Golf Course is home to a special place known as **The First Tee Learning Center**. Every afternoon during the school year, 30 to 50 children ride a bus from Sarah Moore Greene Magnet Academy to The First Tee Learning Center. Here they receive homework help with onsite tutors. The learning center helps these children be successful in school. However, a quiet space for children to read was needed.

The local Jack and Jill chapter applied for and received competitive grants from its national chapter and from First Book. A small storage room was cleaned out and painted. Bookshelves were installed. Bean-bag chairs, ideal for settling in with a good book, were purchased. Jack and Jill purchased books from Friends; Lauren Bray helped with the selection. The addition of a finishing touch would make the reading corner perfect: a mural for the walls. With completion of the mural, **a reading-centered area for children** had been created.

The reading corner is **a quiet zone** in the busy learning center where children can come to concentrate.

Dr. LaToya Myles, president of the Knoxville Jack and Jill chapter, says, **"The children are proud of their new reading corner!"**

Connecting Kids to Books



Knoxville Police Department Sgt. Tammy Mattina, designer of the Literacy Initiative.

Five police officers will begin the new year with a positive message for students in grades three through eight when the Knoxville Police Department officially launches its **Literacy Initiative** on January 10. (We shared news about the early stages of this initiative in our [October 2016 issue](#).)

At four community centers, police officers will work with youngsters to convey two important messages: **"If You Read, You Can Be"** anything you want to be, and **"We are here to help."** Knox County Friends will help as well. Over 900 books have been selected for the project by Board member Jen Cooper and delivered to the Safety Education Unit's headquarters on Mineral Springs Avenue by Past President Bill Crosland.

According to Sgt. Tammy Mattina of the Safety Education Unit, students whose reading skills are not up to par often avoid reading altogether. The Literacy Initiative which Sgt. Mattina has designed is based on the premise that **incentives like popular new books to keep and rewards like cool backpacks** will bring reluctant readers back to reading. Officers will encourage the youngsters to talk and write about what they have read. Officers will also draw upon their life experiences to convince the youngsters that **reading is an essential life skill**.

Officers Rachel Britt, Keith Dorwart, B.K. Hardin, Diondre Jackson, and Joyce Minter bring to the program a variety of life experiences, among them playing football for UT, acquiring a law degree, parenting, teaching, writing, acting, and walking a beat. They will meet students at one of **four community centers**: Montgomery Village Boys and Girls Club, Vestal Boys and Girls Club, Lonsdale, and Dr. E.V. Davidson Center on Wilson Avenue.

Knox County Public Library is also a player in the project. Each student is given a packet containing information about the system, an application for a library card, and information about Imagination Library for younger siblings. Each center has a bus that will transport students to a tour of the nearby public library, and Erin Nguyen, director of children's services at Lawson McGhee, has helped to train officers for the program. **Books-A-Million** has also signed on as a partner.

Once the program is established, Sgt. Mattina foresees the possibility that it may extend to activities related to what the kids are reading like going to a baseball game or a movie. She says that the officers implementing the Literacy Initiative are eager to be unofficial mentors who **connect kids to books and a successful future**.

The Conversation Is All Over the Page



Casey Fox incorporated a brief history of the former Yugoslavia into the discussion of *Girl at War* at December's All Over the Page.

The January meeting of Lawson McGhee Library's **All Over the Page** book club marks the beginning of the sixth year of this **monthly conversation about books**, which is free and open to the public. The discussions bring both regular and new attendees together to share their perspectives and listen to those of others.

The idea for All Over the Page, which is sponsored by KCPL and Friends, came from Jamie Osborn, a reference librarian at LML who is now the manager at the Halls Branch. No other adult programs were being offered at LML at that time.

Osborn initially worked with Nancy Petersen, then KCPL's Collections and Access Services Manager, and Anna Leah Keene, KCPL reference librarian, to select books, identify discussion leaders, and host the monthly gatherings in LML's meeting room.

Keene continues to serve on the committee along with reference librarian Circe McKinney, Collections and Access Services Manager Janet Drumheller, and Library Fund Development Manager Casey Fox. In December, Fox led the discussion of Sara Nović's *Girl at War*.

All Over the Page **meets once a month at 6:30 on a Monday evening** in the LML meeting room. The books and facilitators for the first 6 months of 2017 represent a broad spectrum of interests and backgrounds.

On **January 9**, WUOT's Brandon Hollingsworth will lead a discussion of Louise Erdrich's latest novel, ***LaRose***.

The **February 13** meeting will feature a discussion of ***Underground Airlines*** by Ben Winters facilitated by André Canty of the Highlander Center.

March 13 will bring a conversation about Anne Tyler's ***Vinegar Girl***, a contemporary take on one of Shakespeare's most beloved comedies. Jen Horn, English instructor at Pellissippi State Community College, will lead the discussion.

On **April 10**, Amy Steadman, collections manager of the B. Carroll Reece Museum at East Tennessee State University, will guide the evening's conversation about ***Hillbilly Elegy*** by J.D. Vance.

Aravind Adiga's ***White Tiger*** will be the topic on **May 8**. Viren Lalka of Knoxville's Namaste, Welcome to India will facilitate the discussion.

12 conversation about [The Magician's Lie](#) by Greer Macallister.

Keene says that she enjoys seeing people who don't like a particular book take part in the discussion because it encourages everyone to think about why they enjoyed the book or not. Fox adds that such conversations offer a simple way to **spark connection and understanding in our community**. Thanks to All Over the Page, these good conversations will continue.

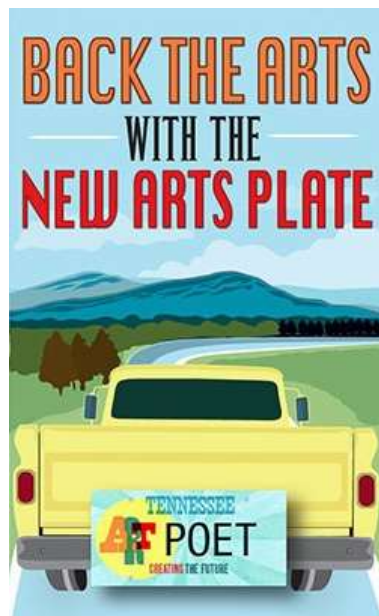
Spend January With Flannery



Area readers can explore the work of an iconic American author this month as the Knox County Public Library hosts **Finding Flannery**, a month-long exploration of the life and work of Southern writer Flannery O'Connor. The series, facilitated by Pellissippi State Writer-in-Residence Edward Francisco, features **four weekly discussions** of O'Connor's work on Tuesday evenings and **two Sunday afternoon film screenings**. All events will be held at the Lawson McGhee Library community meeting room.

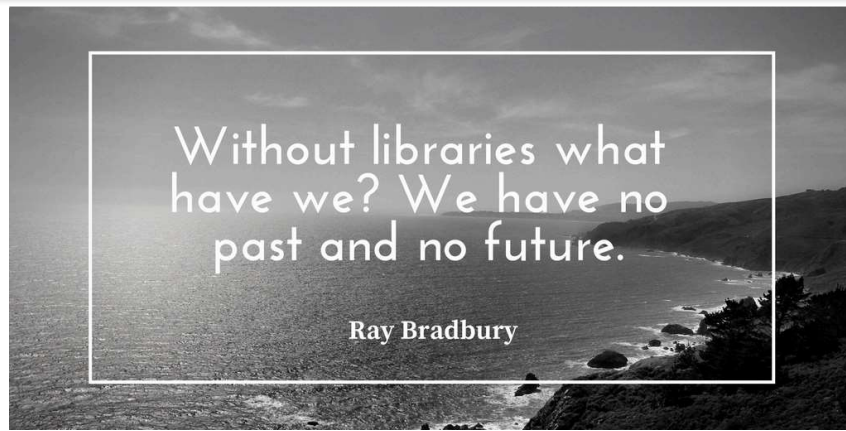
To learn more about Finding Flannery, [visit the KCPL website](#).

On the Road for the Arts



Each year, the **Tennessee Arts Commission** makes a substantial grant to the Knox County Public Library for the **Children's Festival of Reading**. Some of that grant is funded by the sale of **Arts Specialty License Plates**. A portion of the annual fee for the plates goes to support the Tennessee Arts Commission and local projects.

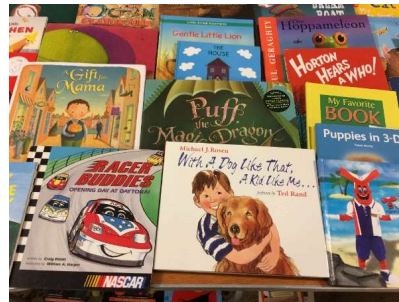
Want your own Arts Specialty License Plate? You can **exchange your current license plate** at your local Knox County Clerk's office at any time — your fees will be prorated.



Resolve to be a Friend of the Knox County Public Library in 2017! As a Friend, you can help ensure that outstanding library programs such as the Children's Festival of Reading, Summer Library Club, All Over the Page, and Books Sandwiched In continue to **enrich the lives of members of our community**. Follow the link below to join online or to print out a mail-in membership form.

[Join Friends Today](#)

Sharing the Joy of Reading



Thanks to numerous donors, volunteers, and partners, tables filled with **books for children of all ages** awaited families at Chilhowee Park's Jacob Building on December 23 when they arrived to pick up their holiday baskets from the **Empty Stocking Fund**.

We're especially grateful to our partners in this year's Children's Book Drive — the Knox County Public Library, the Knoxville News Sentinel, the Center for Children's and Young Adult Literature, Knoxville Catholic High School, The Episcopal School of Knoxville, Webb School of Knoxville, and Union Ave Books — for joining with us to **give the gift of reading** to children in our community.

Friends @ Rothrock Used Book Shop. The January bag sale features a large selection of **children's books**, including a number of read-aloud books. Adults will find plenty to choose from as well.

Don't miss this opportunity to **stock up on winter reading** at Rothrock, the little book shop with the big bargains.



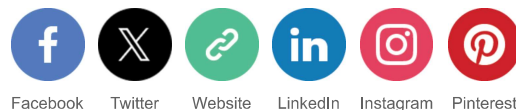
WHAT'S COMING UP

- **Finding Flannery: A month-long exploration of the life and work of Flannery O'Connor** — January 8–31 [MORE>>](#)
- **All Over the Page: LaRose** – Monday, January 9, 6:30 p.m. [MORE>>](#)
- **Books Sandwiched In: Hillbilly Elegy: A Memoir of a Family and Culture in Crisis** – Wednesday, January 25, noon [MORE>>](#)
- **An Evening With Amy Greene: 2017 Wilma Dykeman Stokely Memorial Lecture** – Thursday, March 23
- **Friends of Tennessee Libraries Annual Meeting** – Friday, March 24–Saturday, March 25
- **Imagination Library's Under the Big Top Gala** – Thursday, March 30
- **Friends Annual Used Book Sale** – Saturday, April 1–Tuesday, April 4 [MORE>>](#)

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Friends♥KCPL is a monthly e-newsletter produced by the Communications Committee of Friends of the Knox County Public Library. Members of the committee who contribute to the e-newsletter include: Martha Gill (Chair), Peter Andreae, Deanne Charlton, Martha Edington, Beth Fisher, Paula Hickey, Rusha Sams, and Joyce York.

organization raises funds to sponsor community outreach programs, represent the interests of Knox County library patrons, and support a variety of services offered by the local library system that would otherwise not be available due to budget or staff restrictions.

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