



2022  
2023 **ANNUAL  
REPORT**

## A Letter from the Director

Art is an important part of my life. During my formative years, traditional art forms attracted my attention and were cultivated by my family. I'd often be asked to perform violin pieces before dinner. Later, my mind moved to visual arts which I still enjoy in my spare time. My lifelong interest in the arts has also played a role in how I approach my profession.

Over the years, I've realized that librarianship is a science, but it also requires a sort of artistic skill. The art of collaboration, for instance, is a key to success for any public organizations. Public libraries, in particular, flourish in collaborative environments and not just in the traditional sense. Not only does this report highlight the benefits of external partnerships like the ones we share with the city of Riverside and our many school districts, the following pages illustrate the breadth and depth of Mid-Continent Public Library's work, between trustees and staff, to find better ways to steward tax dollars appropriately and efficiently.

This report also provides evidence of the creativity needed to nurture an exceptional library system. Each day, I appreciate that MCPL staff bring original ideas to their work to enhance the core services offered by the Library. We listen and use what we've learned to find unique ways to engage with residents of all ages. We want to learn more from our users to improve existing library services while seeking out new ways meet the needs of our communities. You'll see this creativity continue to influence our offerings in the coming years.

While financial resources are finite, collaboration and creativity are the unlimited resources which we will continue to draw upon to support the Library mission and to serve each person in our community no matter their background, age, or status in society.

I have it on good authority that I wouldn't have made it as a violinist but I'm grateful for this life I've chosen as a public librarian. Thank you to MCPL's stellar staff, dedicated Board of Trustees, community partners, and donors for working together to ensure that each person who engages with our Library is better for the experience. To members of our community, thank you for entrusting us with the great responsibility of cultivating a love of literacy. Finally, thank you for allowing me to direct this magnificent organization that offers so much to so many.



**Aaron B. Mason**  
Library Director and CEO

## Vision Statement

Mid-Continent Public Library will provide the best library experience in the United States.

## Mission Statement

Mid-Continent Public Library's mission is to enrich our citizens and communities through expanding access to innovation, information, ideas, and inspiration.

## A Letter from the Board of Trustees President

This annual report gives witness to the Library's remarkable growth and development, singularly attributable to the dedication and creativity of the employees at the Library's 33 branches.

Your Library serves, and will continue to serve, many varied and vibrant communities within its service area that includes almost 850,000 persons. From completing the renovation and replacement of branches, to relevant presentations and collections, your Library will exercise stewardship to the taxpayers who sponsor the Library, and to the Library's users who are served.

The Library especially celebrates a new era of leadership with Aaron Mason joining as its Director and Chief Executive Officer. He brings a career distinguished by innovative library executive management, which will ensure greater service for the friends and users of the Library.

While the Library can celebrate many achievements, its focus is to master the opportunities that lie ahead through creativity, collaboration, consensus, and communication.

**Ronald Thiewes**  
Board of Trustees, President

## 2022-2023 BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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# Community Partnerships

## North Platte School District

Much of MCPL's effectiveness is created through the implementation of strategic partnerships. Some of these partnerships exist at the system level while others are specific to individual branches and communities.

The Camden Point Branch partnered with the North Platte School district's summer school, welcoming students from kindergarten to eighth grade. The branch staff collaborated closely with educators to seamlessly integrate the Summer Library Program, encouraging daily 20-minute reading sessions. The students, who walked to the branch, received drawstring bags for their books and reading logs, leading to an impressive 117 students across all grades earning their first prize books.

However, the program's impact went beyond books. The branch became a vibrant hub of development and engagement, offering interactive sessions in writing, science, art, and coding. This partnership between the Library, educators, and the community sparked curiosity and creativity in the students. The program underscored the Library's pivotal role in fostering collaboration and community growth.

The dedication of both educators and Library staff, combined with the students' enthusiasm, showcased the power of libraries as transformative spaces. This partnership not only strengthened a love for reading but also nurtured the students' broader interests, leaving a lasting imprint on their educational journey and strengthening the fabric of the community.





The Food Pantry at  
Farview Neighborhood Library

## Community Needs Assessment

This fiscal year, MCPL completed its first Community Needs Assessment in six years. The primary objective was to gain a deeper understanding of the community's evolving needs, ensuring Library services and resources remain relevant and impactful. To achieve this, the Library adopted a multipronged approach: a blend of focus group discussions, community census data, and surveys.

This assessment was a slight departure from previous ones conducted by the Library. Previous assessments were conducted with a single group of stakeholders from across MCPL's district. This year's assessment goal was to dive deeper into the Library branch communities at the local level. Moderators held 20 meetings of community leaders and stakeholders throughout the entire district and administered a survey to these communities in the spring of 2023. Library staff learned about the nuances of each branch community and, more importantly, what branch communities have in common. Like all communities in the United States, MCPL's district experienced tremendous changes as a result of a global pandemic.

MCPL will be sharing the results of the assessment with the public during the 2023–2024 fiscal year. While this data will be a valuable planning tool for branches, partners, and community stakeholders, it is important to understand that these conversations with the community do not end with this assessment. MCPL will maintain these conversations with communities and stakeholders to ensure that the Library continues to provide the best possible service for everyone in the community.

Library Value Calculator: Taxpayer Savings by Using These Library Services

<b>Adult Books Borrowed</b>	\$41,958,350
<b>Youth Books Borrowed</b>	\$38,713,620
<b>Movies Borrowed</b>	\$2,732,520
<b>Music Borrowed</b>	\$1,138,410
<b>Audiobooks Borrowed</b>	\$2,581,440
<b>Items Used in Library</b>	\$1,221,862
<b>Interlibrary Loan</b>	\$1,150,450
<b>eBooks and eAudiobooks</b>	\$84,643,955
<b>Downloadable Magazines</b>	\$366,957
<b>Hours of Computer Use</b>	\$2,016,766
<b>Wi-Fi Sessions</b>	\$982,593
<b>Wi-Fi Hotspots Borrowed</b>	\$101,360
<b>Newspapers Viewed Online</b>	\$111,312
<b>Database Searches</b>	\$17,030,900
<b>Genealogy Research Resources</b>	\$2,927,340
<b>Programs and Classes Attended</b>	\$1,692,660
<b>Online Courses and Training</b>	\$4,718,300
<b>Live Online Tutoring Sessions</b>	\$75,200
<b>Reference Questions Asked</b>	\$1,919,520
<b>Meeting Room Usage</b>	\$436,820
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$206,520,335</b>

**\$3.32** in services for every tax dollar received

Calculate your savings at [mymcpl.org/Calculator](http://mymcpl.org/Calculator).



## Partnership Highlights

### **A Letter From the City of Riverside Mayor**

The City of Riverside is so excited to be writing the next chapter in our long-standing partnership with Mid-Continent Public Library. After years of big dreams and hard work, the new Riverside Branch will open next year with a facility that is welcoming and accessible to everyone.

A library serves as an invaluable resource that promotes access to knowledge, learning, and personal growth, with a wide range of resources and programs for people of all ages and backgrounds. Access to information is at the heart of learning, and we could think of nothing better to put at the heart of our community than a new library—full of information and technology to unlock a world of possibilities and potential.

Working together, Riverside and MCPL have shown how public entities can partner on projects that add value for the citizens we both serve. The Riverside Branch will be an inclusive space where individuals can explore their interests, engage in research, and expand their horizons. Finally, we will help bridge the digital divide by providing internet access and technological resources, empowering everyone to stay connected and informed in our increasingly digital world.

I can't wait to welcome you to the new MCPL Riverside Branch in 2024.

**Kathy Rose, City of Riverside Mayor**

# Capital Improvements

## Building Into the Future

The Green Hills Library Center marked a significant step in Mid-Continent Public Library's Capital Plan, as it reached its penultimate year of implementation. The new center, replacing the former Boardwalk Branch, which had become inadequate for the Library's needs in the community, encompasses 30,000 square feet. This modern branch embodies the signature progress of the Capital Plan, offering essential features like meeting rooms, communal spaces, a dedicated children's area, and upgraded technological facilities.

Notably, the Green Hills Library Center distinguishes itself through the incorporation of the innovative Culinary Center. This unique initiative merges a teaching kitchen aimed at promoting food literacy and traditional literacy through cooking, alongside incubator kitchens designed to nurture emerging small businesses within the local community.

With the completion of Green Hills, the Capital Plan now focuses on four remaining projects: the North Oak Branch, the Grain Valley Branch, the East Independence Branch, and the Riverside Branch. All these projects are on track to open during the 2023-2024 fiscal year. Both East Independence and Riverside broke ground this year with public ceremonies that highlighted community partnerships.





## Culinary Center

This year, MCPL proudly unveiled the Culinary Center, a space inspired by the idea that food, like literature, transcends boundaries and narrates stories of unity, heritage, and shared experiences. From the onset, the Culinary Center has been more than a hub for culinary arts; it's a melting pot of traditions, stories, and community connections for both customers and local entrepreneurs.

Since opening in May of 2023, MCPL's Culinary Center has already had more than 120 inquiries from businesses interested in working with the incubator kitchens program, and three of those businesses successfully launched in MCPL's incubator kitchen. The Culinary Center also hosted the two-day Food Business Conference, where local entrepreneurs learned about starting and growing a culinary business.

Programming at the new Culinary Center has also proven to be very popular. Registrations for nearly all scheduled programs were completely booked within the first few weeks of the Culinary Center's launch. Since that time, the Culinary Center has hosted 20 programs with 360 attendees. At programs like "Healthy Caribbean Cooking" or "History of the Tortilla," customers not only learn how to make tasty dishes, they also learn about the culture and foodways from where the meals originated.

A common refrain heard from customers and businesses is about the power of breaking bread together. MCPL customers value the connections they have formed through cooking and learning at the Culinary Center. Entrepreneur partners frequently comment that they desire to start their businesses because they want to live life surrounded by their communities. It's not about the money, but rather the connection. The Culinary Center's true essence lies in its ability to unite. In a digitized, fast-paced world, the act of preparing and sharing a meal offers a refreshing, genuine connection.



# Core Services

## Cardholders

**Library District Population** 840,292



**Cardholders** 643,176

**Active Cardholders** 291,124

## Customer Satisfaction

**MCPL** 90.7%

**Other Libraries** 86.1%

**Retail** 61%

**Ecommerce** 50%

## Library Branch Visits

2,306,166

On a typical day in Fiscal Year 2022-23, customer transactions included:

681

**Library-provided computer sessions**

12,299

**Digital items checked out**

923

**Wi-Fi sessions in Library**

6,496

**Branch visits**

14,502

**Physical items checked out**

477

**Program attendance**

15,996

**mymcpl.org visits**

24,412

**Social media impressions**

**Meeting Room Usage**  
43,682

**Attendance at Library Programs**  
169,266

**Outreach Program Attendance**  
34,440

**Library Computer Sessions**  
241,773

**Library Wi-Fi Sessions**  
327,531

**Use of Online Resources**  
1,109,224

**mymcpl.org Website Views**  
5,838,696

**Physical Circulation**  
5,148,231

**Digital Circulation**  
4,489,284

**Total Transactions**  
12,804,431

3,926,169

**Children's Material  
Circulation**

272,138

**Use of Online Resources for  
Literacy and Students**

**Children's Programs**

5,795  
**Events**

144,353  
**Attendees**



**2022 SLP Active Participants:**

16,145

**Kids and Teens**

3,245

**Adults**

Youth Services

**Summer Library Program**

During the summer of 2022, the Mid-Continent Public Library handed out approximately 32,000 new prize books to children through the Summer Library Program: Oceans of Possibilities in its return from pandemic-era programs. The annual Summer Library Program positively impacted general circulation and program attendance, continuing a trend from 2019.

The program is designed to encourage a daily habit of reading, with participants reading 20 minutes daily for 60 days throughout the summer. Children reading consistently over the summer are better prepared for back to school. With 8-year-olds making up the largest participant age group in 2022, the Summer Library Program is continuing to meet its goal of targeting the participation of elementary-age students.

In addition to serving existing customers, MCPL continued the summer school partnership that originated in 2021. Because it is essential to reach kids where they are over the summer, partnering with some of the surrounding school districts is a crucial way to ensure students have an opportunity to participate in the Summer Library Program. In 2022, Mid-Continent Public Library partnered with the North Kansas City School District, the second largest and one of the most diverse districts in Missouri, to add some of their elementary summer school sites to the program. More than 1,200 students were able to earn a prize book through this key partnership.

Altogether, Summer Library Program participants read 923,477 days for a total of more than 18.4 million minutes, launching the community into the school year set for success.

# Serving the Whole Community

## Grandview Branch Community Resource Coordinator

As part of the commitment to serving all community members, Mid-Continent Public Library is currently piloting the Community Resources Coordinator position at two branches. In addition to working the desk and shelving books along with other frontline staff members, the Grandview Branch's Community Resources Coordinator, Morgan Perry, works with walk-in customers who require assistance with issues ranging from getting their kids registered for school to finding long-term housing situations for the unhoused.

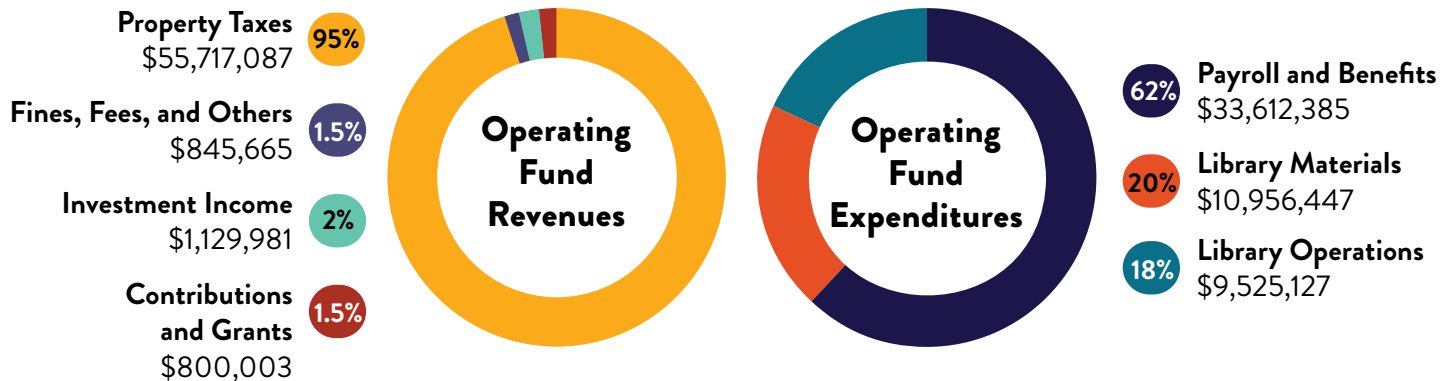
“The Library is the last place you don’t have to spend money to exist,” Perry said, as she detailed the types of customers who visit looking for assistance and feel there is nowhere else to help them. One customer sought out help from the Library with securing SNAP benefits after suffering from multiple strokes. Perry’s assistance in walking her through the process accomplished what the customer had previously been unable to do.

Often, when a customer seeks help, it’s not just one area that requires assistance. One couple came in with a grandchild who regularly met with a therapist in the Library space. As they got to know the Library staff and built trust over time, they began to inquire about help accessing needed dental care for their grandchildren. Soon, they were discussing how to contest their property tax assessments. Ultimately, they were able to be connected with Veterans Affairs for a home repair grant. “It’s important that we take the time to get a whole-person view of their needs,” said Perry. “That’s how we can go from a band-aid solution to a long-term fix.”



# Financials

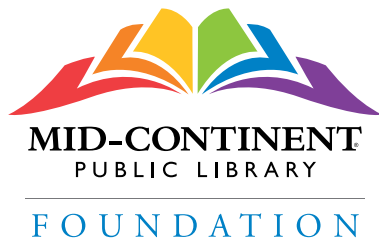
	Operating Fund	Capital Project Fund	Debt Service Fund	Nonmajor Governmental Funds
<b>Revenues:</b>				
Property Taxes	\$ 55,717,087	\$ -	\$ 6,580,000	\$ -
Fines and Fees	845,665	-	-	-
Investment Income	1,129,981	(92,845)	-	23,024
Contributions and Grants	800,003	2,215	-	500,457
<b>Total Revenues:</b>	<b>\$ 58,492,736</b>	<b>\$ (90,630)</b>	<b>\$ 6,580,000</b>	<b>\$ 523,481</b>
<b>Expenditures:</b>				
Payroll and Benefits	33,612,385	-	-	-
Library Materials	10,956,447	-	-	-
Library Operations	9,525,127	-	6,573,698	226,187
Capital Outlay		17,677,508		
<b>Total Expenditures:</b>	<b>\$54,093,959</b>	<b>\$ 17,677,508</b>	<b>\$ 6,573,698</b>	<b>\$ 226,187</b>
<b>Other Financing Sources (Uses):</b>				
Fund Transfer In (Out)	0	-	0	0
Property Disposal	-	1,346,972	-	-
<b>Fund Balances, Beginning of Year</b>	<b>\$ 35,185,453</b>	<b>\$ 22,102,697</b>	<b>\$ 14,194</b>	<b>\$ 964,279</b>
<b>Fund Balances, End of Year</b>	<b>\$ 39,584,230</b>	<b>\$ 5,681,531</b>	<b>\$ 20,496</b>	<b>\$ 1,261,573</b>



# Charitable Impact

Private gifts and grants from a variety of sources allow the Library to stretch beyond providing the core services supported by tax revenues. Charitable gifts fuel innovation and allow our Library staff to be nimble in meeting the demands of the more than 840,000 residents of the Library's service area.

Thanks to the generosity of 1,015 donors this fiscal year, more than \$480,000 bolstered Library programs, improved early literacy outreach efforts, and supported branch improvements and technology enhancements for Library customers.



## Transformational Gifts

Several gifts made a significant impact at MCPL during the 2022-2023 fiscal year. MCPL staff are incredibly grateful for all donations and are especially thankful for gifts and in-kind support that create opportunities for improved service and innovation.

**Ewing Marion  
Kauffman Foundation**

**Brad and Karla Hughes**

**Missouri State Library**

**Rainy Day Books**



# What Did Private Dollars Do?

## Access Fund

Private funds allowed MCPL to establish the Access Fund in March to improve existing services for all ages and abilities. Through the generosity of donors, the Access Fund reached \$50,000 and supports greater capacity for American Sign Language interpretation, assistive listening devices, translation services, and captioning. In addition, the Access Fund supports the expansion of the Library-By-Mail program serving homebound readers and sensory storytimes serving children with processing sensitivities.

## Summer Reading Endowment

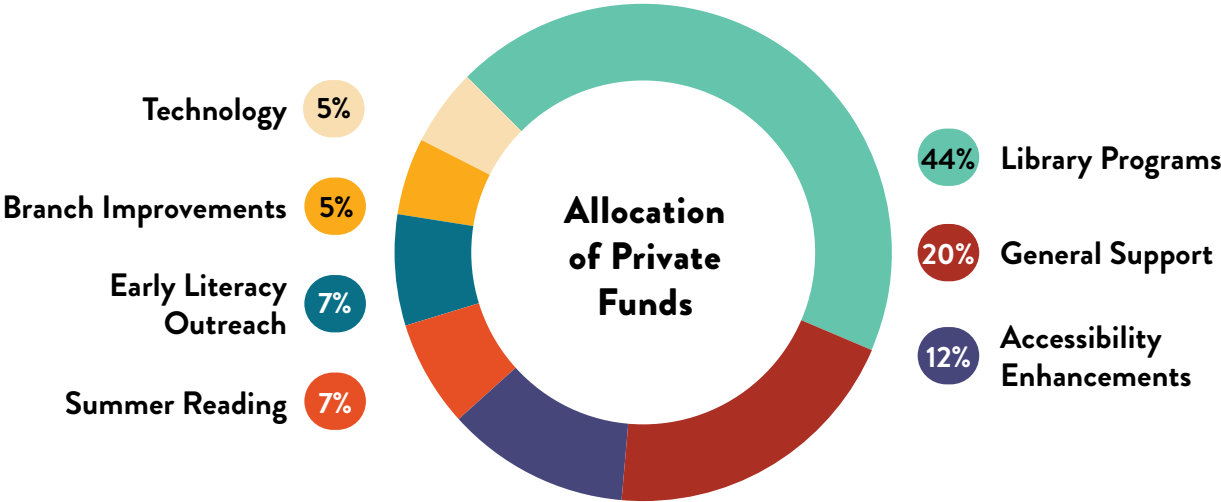
MCPL serves almost 20,000 young readers each summer and distributes nearly 10,000 books as prizes to build home libraries. The Summer Reading Endowment ensures that this program will continue to thrive for years to come. In 2022, donors gave more than \$30,000 to the Endowment to provide future access to books, educational activities, and free programs every summer.

## Early Literacy Outreach

When families and children can't make it to the Library, the MCPL Reading Rocket team comes to them. The Reading Rocket team delivers mobile storytimes, literacy activities, and giveaway books to build home libraries. The Reading Rocket visits high-need areas within the MCPL district's three-county area with a focus on apartment complexes, daycares, educational sites, and community events. This year, donors provided funds for more than 10,000 "forever books" given to local kids to encourage reading and family literacy.

## Technology

Private funds and grants through the Missouri State Library facilitated the purchase of new and replacement early literacy station computers at 15 MCPL branches. These stations are pre-loaded with more than 4,000 educational activities, games, and eBooks geared toward the youngest readers. The early literacy stations are well loved, and more than 50,000 sessions were logged this year!





Brad and Karla Hughes

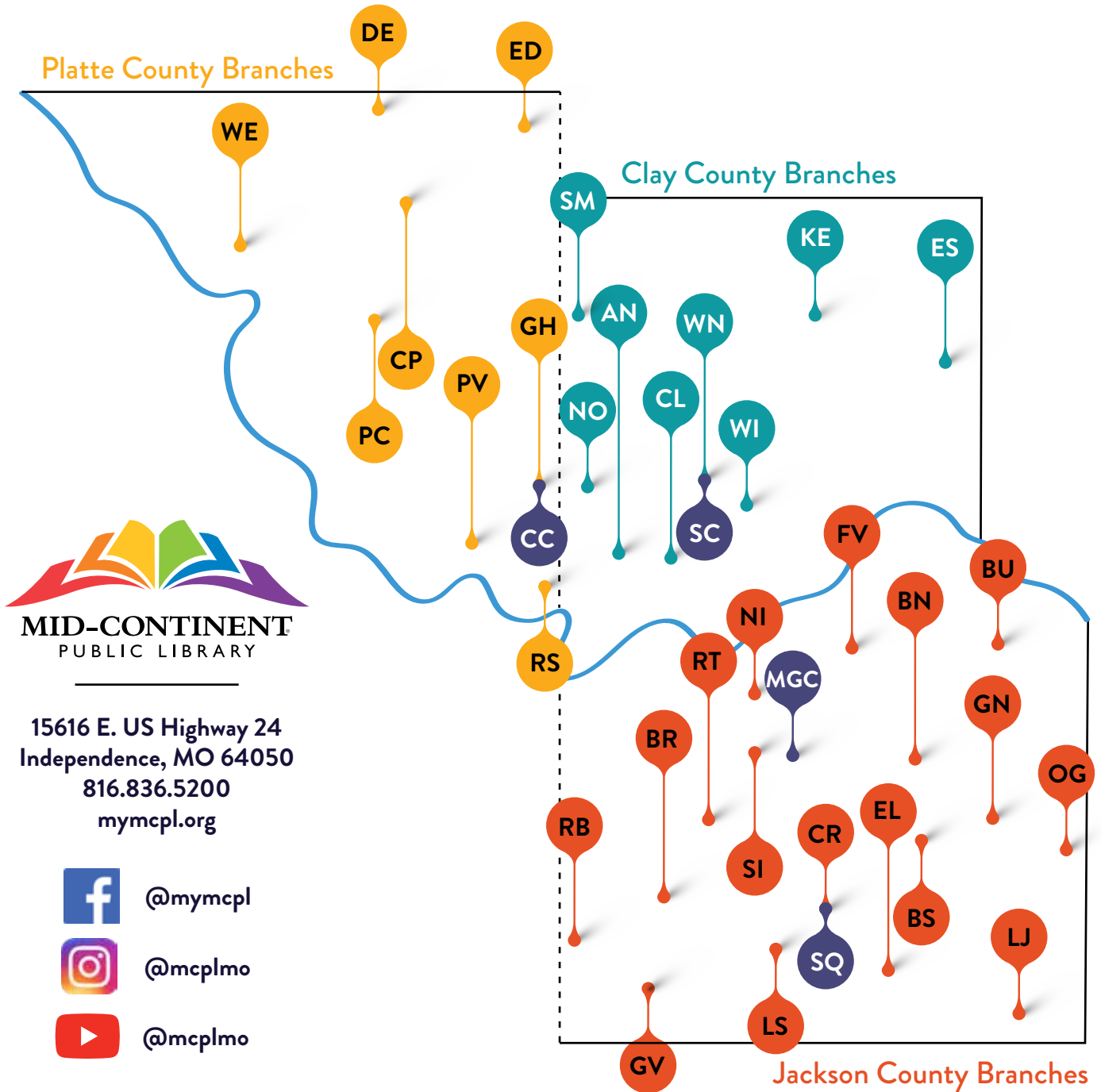
## Community Support

For Brad and Karla Hughes, giving to Mid-Continent Public Library comes from a personal love of reading and a drive to see a community that shares their passion. As Lee's Summit residents of more than 40 years, they have seen the Library's Lee's Summit presence grow from one to three branches and from physical card catalogs to countless online resources. Karla, whom Brad refers to as his "conscience," is also thankful for the things that have not changed. "The Library is the equalizer between the kids who have and those who don't," Karla said, referencing the role the Library plays in Brad's work with foster children. "It just takes people being aware of all the resources the Library has to offer."

The financial support the Hughes give includes a desire to recognize and care for the staff as well. While they've recommended staff amenities at times, their gifts always come with no stipulations for how they should be utilized. "We're very interested in what we as a community can do to support the Library system," Karla said, "and how we can be more creative with how we help with the needs of the Library."

In addition to the support of their local branches, Brad and Karla's impact has been felt throughout the system with the Forever Book Fund and early literacy outreach. They've also helped the Mid-Continent Public Library Foundation reach its goal of \$50,000 for the Access Fund.

Karla hopes that others will share their passion for MCPL and provide support as well. "I can't imagine my life not including being in a library once or twice weekly."



- |           |   |            |   |           |  |
|-----------|---|------------|---|-----------|--|
| <b>AN</b> | Antioch Branch  | <b>EL</b>  | East Lee's Summit Branch                                  | <b>NO</b> | North Oak Branch   |
| <b>BN</b> | Blue Springs North Branch   | <b>ES</b>  | Excelsior Springs Branch                                  | <b>OG</b> | Oak Grove Branch   |
| <b>BR</b> | Blue Ridge Branch   | <b>FV</b>  | Farview Neighborhood Library                              | <b>PC</b> | Platte City Branch                                       |
| <b>BS</b> | Blue Springs South Branch   | <b>GH</b>  | Green Hills Library Center<br>» <b>CC</b> Culinary Center | <b>PV</b> | Parkville Branch   |
| <b>BU</b> | Buckner Branch  | <b>GN</b>  | Grain Valley Branch                                       | <b>RB</b> | Red Bridge Branch  |
| <b>CL</b> | Claycomo Branch   | <b>GV</b>  | Grandview Branch  | <b>RS</b> | Riverside Branch   |
| <b>CP</b> | Camden Point Branch   | <b>KE</b>  | Kearney Branch  | <b>RT</b> | Raytown Branch   |
| <b>CR</b> | Colbern Road Library Center<br>» <b>SQ</b> Square One Small Business<br>and Career Services | <b>LJ</b>  | Lone Jack Branch  | <b>SI</b> | South Independence Branch                                |
| <b>DE</b> | Dearborn Branch   | <b>LS</b>  | Lee's Summit Branch                                       | <b>SM</b> | Smithville Branch  |
| <b>ED</b> | Edgerton Branch   | <b>MGC</b> | Midwest Genealogy Center                                  | <b>WE</b> | Weston Branch  |
|           |   | <b>NI</b>  | North Independence Branch                                 | <b>WI</b> | Withers Branch   |
|           |   |            |   | <b>WN</b> | Woodneath Library Center<br>» <b>SC</b> The Story Center |