

Howard County Library System

source

JUL/AUG 2026

Kindergarten, Here We Come! p 10

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

Author Events
Summer Reading
Stacked with Stories
America's 250th
Back to School





V31 N4
source
hclibrary.org

HOURS

MON - THU	9 am - 8 pm
FRI & SAT	9 am - 5 pm
SUN*	1 - 5 pm

*Summer Sundays: Only Central and Miller branches remain open.

HOLIDAYS + CLOSINGS

Independence Day	July 3 & 4
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LOCATIONS + NUMBERS

HOURSplus ONLINE	410.313.7890
PHONE RENEWALS	410.313.7810
CENTRAL BRANCH 10375 Little Patuxent Parkway Columbia, MD 21044	410.313.7800
EAST COLUMBIA BRANCH 6600 Cradlerock Way Columbia, MD 21045	410.313.7700
ELKRIDGE BRANCH 6540 Washington Boulevard Elkridge, MD 21075	410.313.5077
GLENWOOD BRANCH 2350 State Route 97 Cocksville, MD 21723	410.313.5577
MILLER BRANCH 9421 Frederick Road Ellicott City, MD 21042	410.313.1950
SAVAGE BRANCH 9525 Durness Lane Laurel, MD 20723	410.313.0760
ADMINISTRATIVE BRANCH 9411 Frederick Road Ellicott City, MD 21042	410.313.7750

TTY FOR HEARING IMPAIRED

Central	410.313.7883
East Columbia	410.313.7770
Elkridge	410.313.5090
Glenwood	410.313.5597
Miller	410.313.1957
Savage	410.880.5867

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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MISSION: Howard County Library System is your place to learn, grow, and connect.

VISION: An empowered community where all people reach their potential.

source sponsored in part by Friends & Foundation of HCLS.



Letter from the President and CEO

Summer Reading Adventures: Into the Wild is still going strong (p. 8), making this a wonderful time to visit the library and discover something new. The adventure wraps up on August 15, with prizes available through the end of the month, so there's still time to join the fun. And if you're wondering what to read next, we're here to help – from book clubs and online resources to Stacked with Stories (p. 5), an online event featuring librarians from across the state.

August also brings two exciting author events (p. 3). Acclaimed novelist Nadia Hashimi returns with *City of Widows*, a powerful story centered on the women of Afghanistan as the Taliban regained power. Then, award-winning filmmaker Phill Branch discusses his memoir, *The Double Dutch Fuss*.

This season also invites reflection. As we mark Independence Day and 250 years since the signing of the Declaration of Independence (p. 6), we explore both the promise and the practice of American ideals. At Glenwood, you can experience the Broadway phenomenon Hamilton. And if that sparks an interest in civic conversation, Braver Angels offers a chance to learn skills for more thoughtful, less polarized dialogue.

Even in the heart of summer, back-to-school season is already coming into view. Our popular Kindergarten, Here We Come classes return to branches across the system, including several sessions in Spanish and one in Korean this year (p. 10). Teens can also get a head start with Princeton Review programs designed to support test prep and college applications.

Add in opportunities through the DIY Education Center & Collection, plus a full calendar of classes and events for all ages, and there's no shortage of reasons to stop by.

I hope to see you at the library!

Tonya Aikens
President & CEO



Summer Reading Adventures
through August 15 - see p. 8
hclibrary.org/summer

ACCOMMODATIONS:

Appropriate accommodations made at Howard County Library System (HCLS) sponsored events for individuals with special needs, if requested at least one week in advance.

CONTENT AND ENDORSEMENT:

The content of HCLS publications, classes, and events does not necessarily reflect the views held by HCLS, nor does mention of companies or organizations imply endorsement.

PHOTO/VIDEO RELEASE STATEMENT:

Please see www.hclibrary.org/about/media-notice.

Author Works:

City of Widows by Nadia Hashimi

For adults. Register at bit.ly/author-Hashimi

Wed Aug 5 6:30 - 7:30 pm Miller



Bestselling novelist Nadia Hashimi discusses her new novel, *City of Widows*, a gripping, occasionally terrifying, yet ultimately hopeful story focusing on the women of Afghanistan in the years since the Taliban regained power.

In February 2020, the US began to withdraw troops from Afghanistan after nearly twenty years of occupation. A whole generation of Afghan women had been born during that time,

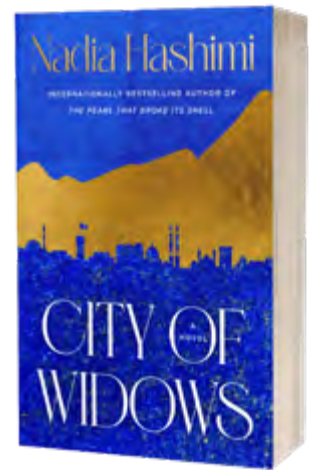
women who had grown up in relative peace, gone to school, entered professions, even served in the army and Parliament. The women of Afghanistan watched as the Taliban filled the streets again, and they knew everything was about to change.

Fans of *The Pearl That Broke Its Shell* reunite with Rahima in this tumultuous story set against the backdrop of the fall of Afghanistan.

Nadia Hashimi has written, first and foremost, a tender and beautiful family story. Her always engaging multigenerational tale is a portrait of Afghanistan in all of its perplexing, enigmatic glory, and a mirror into the still ongoing struggles of Afghan women.

- Khaled Hosseini, author of *And the Mountains Echoed* and *The Kite Runner*

Nadia Hashimi is a pediatrician turned novelist who draws on her Afghan culture to craft internationally bestselling books for adults as well as young readers. With translations in seventeen languages, she is connected with readers around the world.



Author Works:

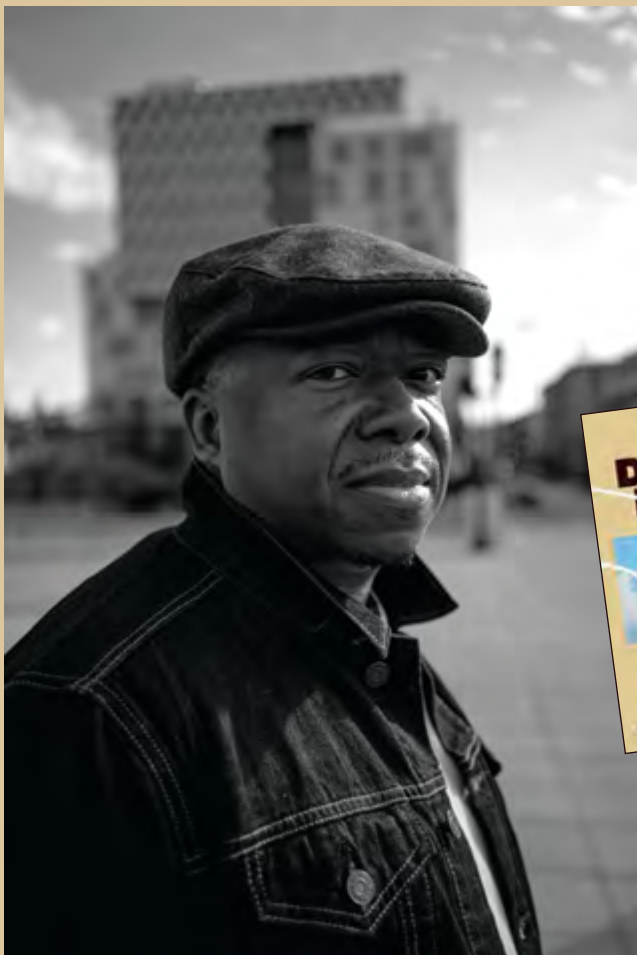
The Double Dutch Fuss by Phill Branch

For adults. Register at bit.ly/Phill-Branch

In his raw and lyrical memoir *The Double Dutch Fuss*, Phill Branch chronicles his struggle to break free from – and live outside of – the prescribed paradigms of Blackness and masculinity that shaped him.

Phill Branch is a writer, live performance storyteller, and regional Emmy Award-winning filmmaker. He is a 2025 recipient of the Maryland State Arts Council's Creativity Grant and received the Council's highest honor, the Individual Artist Award, for Theater (Solo Performance) in 2019. As the GrandSLAM Champion of The Moth in DC (2018), he has traveled the country and overseas to tell stories with the organization. Branch is the founder and Creative Director of Baltimore Story Fest and a Resident Artist at the Howard County Center for the Arts.

Thu Aug 6 6:30 - 7:30 pm Miller



Expand Your Reading Horizons

by Emily Bell, Central Branch

National Book Lovers Day occurs every year on August 9, right in the thick of summer reading. It is the perfect excuse to challenge yourself to expand your reading horizons.

The 2026 Adult Reading Challenge journal makes it easy to read outside of your comfort zone. Each of the themed challenges offers recommended reads curated by HCLS staff members. You can also join HCLS' Adult Reading Challenge on The StoryGraph, a site devoted to keeping track of all things reading at app.thestorygraph.com/profile/hocolibrary. Last year participants managed to read 152 books from the curated challenges, but I think we can beat that number.

Not sure which Reading Challenge to tackle next? Let's take a closer look at some of the suggested reads for **Adventure Across Time**. Read a book that spans multiple generations or historical periods of exploration. You could start with one of these titles:

***How High We Go in the Dark* by Sequoia Nagamatsu**

Perfect for fans of Emily St. John Mandel, this collection of intertwined stories set in a dystopic future tugs on your heart



strings. Nagamatsu shines a light on the human condition, and how we manage to maintain hope and endure even the bleakest of times.

***The Ministry of Time* by Kaliane Bradley**

In the near future, the UK government establishes a Ministry of Time wherein "expats" from all periods of history are brought from their past to the present. Each expat is assigned a "bridge," an agent who helps their charges adjust to modern life. At times a taut spy thriller, romance, and workplace dramedy - this book really has something for everyone.

***This is How You Lose the Time War* by Amar El-Mohtar & Max Gladstone**

This science fictional twist features two time traveling agents from rival futures who, through their correspondence, fall in love. Similar to Virginia Evans' widely popular debut *The Correspondent*, the novella is told through letters but is set during a war raging across space and time.

Join a Library Book Club

HCLS staff facilitate a wide variety of book clubs that read and discuss all sorts of titles - from nonfiction to romance to graphic novels. Many take a break during the summer, but you can get ready for the fall.

For titles and more information:

- Visit hclibrary.org,
- Click on the "classes and events" tab, then **View Calendar**.
- In the green **Filters** box on the left, choose **Adult** under "age group" and **Book Clubs** under "program type."
- OR type the name of the group into the Keyword Search field, and click "apply."

CENTRAL BRANCH

Eclectic Evenings (online)
Second Tuesdays at 6:45 pm

Noontime Books
Third Thursdays at 12 pm

Reads of Acceptance (online)
Third Mondays at 6:45 pm



EAST COLUMBIA BRANCH

Good Reads
Fourth Fridays at 1 pm

In Other Worlds (hybrid, with online option)
Fourth Wednesdays at 6:30 pm

Nonfiction Addiction (hybrid, with online option)
Third Thursdays at 6:30 pm

Romance Reads (online)
Fourth Wednesdays at 6:45 pm

ELKRIDGE BRANCH

ELKS Excellent Reads
Second Tuesdays at 12:30 pm

Read. Think. Talk.
Mondays at 6:30 pm

The Thursday Next Book Club
Third Thursdays at 6:30 pm

TO REGISTER FOR CLASSES: Visit hclibrary.org > classes & events, then view the calendar, using the filters to narrow your search.



STACKED WITH STORIES

Librarian Picks & Book Club Tricks

For adults. Register at bit.ly/stackedwithstories

Tue Jul 21
12 - 1 pm online

Looking for your next great read and better book club conversations? Join five librarians from across Maryland for a lively afternoon packed with reading recommendations, practical discussion tips, and literary fun.

We also dive into book club strategy: how to spark meaningful conversation, what to do when a book falls flat, and where to find discussion guides and other helpful resources.

A Maryland Libraries Together program presented by Allegany County Library, Baltimore County Public Library, Howard County Library System, Harford County Public Library, and Prince George's County Memorial Library System.

Writing and Publishing Genre Fiction

For adults. Register at bit.ly/4umEqaZ

Horror, romance, and sci-fi, oh my! No matter what genre, learn how to go from a blank page to published work as you bring your story to the world.

Thu Aug 20 6 - 7 pm Central

GLENWOOD BRANCH

The Reading Cafe
Last Tuesdays at 1 pm

Warning: Graphic Content (online)
Second Thursdays at 7 pm

MILLER BRANCH

Bas Bleu
Third Wednesdays at 6:45 pm

Global Reads
First Mondays at 6 pm

Light But Not Fluffy
Third Thursdays at 2 pm

Mostly Historical Fiction
Third Mondays at 2 pm

Musical Mondays
Second Mondays at 6 pm

Spies, Lies & Alibis
First Tuesdays at 6:45 pm



SAVAGE BRANCH

Mystery
(hybrid, with online option)
Second Wednesdays at 6:30 pm

Nonfiction
(hybrid, with online option)
Third Wednesdays at 6:30 pm

IN THE COMMUNITY

Asian American Literature (online)
Third Mondays at 7 pm

Between the Lines
at Brewing Good at Savage Mill
Second Fridays at 5 pm

Books on Tap
at The Ale House Columbia
First Wednesdays at 6 pm

The Unbook Reading Group
at Backwater Books
Second Wednesdays at 6:30 pm

Required Reading: Texts for Change (online)
Meets quarterly



Celebrate Freedom at the Library

by Brandon Bannister, Central Branch

On July 5, 1852, in Rochester, New York, Maryland native and abolitionist Frederick Douglass delivered his famous speech, "What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?" Speaking before an abolitionist audience, he praised the ideals of the Declaration of Independence while condemning the hypocrisy of celebrating liberty in a nation where millions remained enslaved.

One of the speech's most remembered lines states:

"This Fourth of July is yours, not mine. You may rejoice; I must mourn."

Douglass believed the promises of freedom and equality should apply to all people regardless of race. Plan a visit to Central Branch's Equity Resource Center & Collection for biographies, films, and historical materials featuring influential figures such as Maryland native Frederick Douglass, who fought for freedom and equality.

To celebrate the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, consider visiting the library, in person or at hclibrary.org. Our values include upholding foundational liberties such as intellectual freedom and equity. We continue to strengthen, protect, and build together through knowledge, understanding, and community.

Depolarizing Within with Braver Angels

For adults. Information at bit.ly/4dv9nCs

Take a look at your attitudes towards the political "other," and develop strategies for engaging in politics without disparagement. Learn how to intervene constructively with like-minded peers when conversations stereotype or vilify the other side. Complete a self-assessment exercise, learn to counteract your inner polarizer, and practice communication skills to avoid polarizing conversations.

Sat Aug 29 10 am - 1 pm Miller

Stars, Stripes, and Stop Motion!

For teens. Register at bit.ly/49eHCgl

Celebrate 250 years since the signing of the United States Declaration of Independence through creative storytelling. Collaborate in teams to storyboard, sculpt, film, and edit original claymation films exploring themes of freedom, voice, innovation, and the future. Learn stop motion techniques, green screen effects, sound design, and editing.

Mon - Fri Jul 13 - 17 2 - 4 pm Elkridge

Stars, Stripes, and Stop Motion! The 250 Teen Film Festival

For everyone. Register at bit.ly/4dprDhY

Celebrate teen creativity! Enjoy a red-carpet event to view each team's animated short film along with behind-the-scenes interviews. Come applaud their artistry, innovation, and storytelling as they share their vision for the next 250 years.

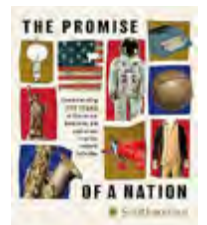
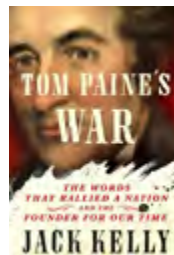
Sat Jul 25 2 - 3 pm Elkridge

Into the Wilds of America

Families. Ticketed. Information at bit.ly/3RpkmPQ

Commemorate America's 250th birthday with stories, songs, and a craft.

Thu Jul 2 5:30 - 6 pm Savage



further reading

***Tom Paine's War: The Words That Rallied a Nation and the Founder for Our Time* by Jack Kelly**

This is a story of the power of words – and the power of belief – and how both speak as well to America's current crisis.

***We the Women: The Hidden Heroes Who Shaped America* by Norah O'Donnell with Kate Andersen Brower**

Take a fresh look at American history through the eyes of women, introducing us to inspiring patriots who demanded that the country live up to its promises.

***The Promise of a Nation: Commemorating 250 Years of Patriotism, Resilience, and Aspirations from the National Collection* by Smithsonian Books**

Smithsonian curators share aspirational stories that have shaped the nation in chapters representing each decade from the 1770s to the 2020s with spotlighted objects that offer important insight into each decade and the American story.

Young, Scrappy & Hungry: A Review of *Hamilton*

by Kristen Blount, Administrative Branch

You could argue it's the show that defines the past ten years of Broadway music – it just celebrated its Hamil-ten. In case you haven't seen it, Lin-Manuel Miranda's *Hamilton* is an absolute phenomenon!

Inspired by the Ron Chernow biography of the founding father and co-author of the Federalist papers, the show breathes new life into Revolutionary history. Miranda famously read the book while on vacation and thought that Alexander Hamilton embodied hip-hop energy. It's a modern take on what happened 250 years ago, told in bold tunes and fast raps with a diverse cast that looks like modern America. In one memorable line between Hamilton and Lafayette, "Immigrants, we get the job done."

Hamilton came from poor, humble beginnings in the Carribean (St. Kitts and Nevis), and made his way to New York where he joined the budding revolution. The show covers all of this in the first 10 minutes, then the first act continues with war and



his marriage to Eliza Schuyler - although her sister Angelica steals the show for me (along with King George). The music, the lyrics, and the choreography combine to convey the youthful energy and forward motion of our country's founding. We think of them now as the bewigged gentleman on our money and in portraits. The show portrays them as vibrantly alive – young, scrappy and hungry for a new country and

new way of governing. I watch it when I need a little hope that we can continue what they started.

Screening of *Hamilton*

For teens & adults. Information at bit.ly/3PWruJS

Celebrate the 250th anniversary of signing of the Declaration of Independence by watching *Hamilton*! From Broadway to the big screen, *Hamilton* captivates audiences everywhere with its creative blend of music and American history. Listen to some catchy tunes and learn about the life and legacy of one of America's founding fathers: Alexander Hamilton.

Sat Jul 18 12 - 2:45 pm Glenwood



American Struggle: Democracy, Dissent, and the Pursuit of a More Perfect Union: An Anthology by Jon Meacham

This collection covers a wide spectrum of history with primary source documents that recount critical moments in which Americans fought over the meaning and the direction of the national experiment. Across our history, this rich and diverse chorus – sometimes discordant and always fascinating – tells the story of the country and of its people.

The Girl from Greenwich Street by Lauren Willig

Based on the true story of a famous trial, this novel follows Alexander Hamilton and Aaron Burr as they investigate the shocking murder of a young woman who everyone – and no one – seemed to know.

America Redux: Visual Stories from Our Dynamic History by Ariel Aberg-Riger

Explore the themes that create our shared sense of American identity and interrogate the myths we tell ourselves. With American catchphrases as chapter titles, discover stories from history that continue to reverberate.



The Story of America's Birthday by Patricia A. Pingry

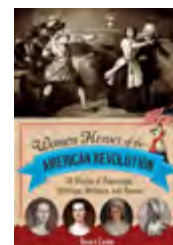
Colorful illustrations paired with simple text help to explain the connection between the Declaration of Independence, the American Revolution, and Fourth of July festivities.

The American Revolution (History Smashers) by Kate Messner

Myths! Lies! Secrets! Uncover the hidden truth behind the Revolutionary War.

Women Heroes of the American Revolution: 20 Stories of Espionage, Sabotage, Defiance, and Rescue by Susan Casey

This lively collection of biographical profiles draws on interviews as well as primary source material to spotlight the stories of remarkable girls and women.





SUMMER READING ADVENTURES into the WILD! through August 15 CLAIM YOUR PRIZE BY AUGUST 31!

Read, listen, learn, connect, and celebrate all summer by participating in one of our summer reading programs. Receive a prize when you finish, while supplies last. For book lists, classes, events, and summer fun, visit us in person or at hclibrary.org/summer.

Ages birth - 4

Head into the wild of your backyard, our Enchanted Garden, or anywhere butterflies love to take a rest on local flowers. Color butterflies on your game board, and when you get to 10, show off your achievement at the library!

Ages 5 - 10

Plan for Summer Reading Adventures in the wild – whether camping, in a local park, or maybe on vacation. See what you can see – like Booker with his binoculars. Color all 15 fish in the big, blue river, then bring your game back to the library.

Teens: Ages 11 - 18

Get a little wild with the return of the teen raffle! Finish 10 tickets and be entered into a grand prize drawing. Check your branch each month for raffles for local adventures (like ice cream and pizza).

Beyond Words (teens and adults)

Everyone should be able to participate in summer reading, and Beyond Words invites our neighbors with special needs and developmental delays to join the fun!

Sponsored by Friends & Foundation of HCLS and M&T Charitable Foundation

summer celebrations

For everyone.

Go wild at one of Howard County Library System's Summer Reading Celebration events! Activities may include crafts, games, live animals, and more.

Sponsored in part by Friends & Foundation of HCLS.

Thu	Jul 9	5 - 7 pm	Elkridge
Wed	Jul 15	East Columbia 11:30 am - 2 pm (for everyone) & 6:30 - 7:30 pm (for adults)	
Sat	Jul 18	11:30 am - 1:30 pm	Savage
Thu	Jul 23	5 - 7 pm	Miller



summer fun for adults



Adults: Ages 18+

Your next year's worth of reading challenges take you to new places and introduce you to new ideas. Get a journal at any branch – finish three challenges and return for a prize.

Hammer Dyeing with Flowers

For adults. Register at bit.ly/4dWzwvs

Gather with other crafty adults and channel some flower power! Using small hammers and fresh flowers, learn the art of flower pounding to create a beautiful abstract floral design on watercolor paper. Beginners welcome. Materials provided.

Thu Jul 16 6 - 7 pm Miller

Beaded Bracelets

For teens & adults. Register at bit.ly/4tMEoIb

Enjoy a relaxing afternoon of crafting and create unique jewelry pieces to keep or give as gifts.

Wed Jul 29 1:30 - 3 pm Elkridge

Regency Tea Party Mystery

For adults. Register at bit.ly/4dFCByG

Rumors abound in the town, dear reader, but who could be spreading them? Your presence is requested to aid in the investigation. Become a Regency character for this event, find clues, enjoy some tea, and solve the mystery.

Sat Aug 1 2 - 4:15 pm Savage

Summer Meals & Snacks

FREE summer meals and afternoon snacks for children and teens ages 18 and under. Children must be present to receive free meals.

HCPSS Summer Food Sites

bit.ly/hcpss-summer-meals

To continue meeting the need to feed hungry children and fill the nutritional gap over the summer months, the Howard County Public School System continues its free summer meal program. Other sites listed on HCPSS webpage.

Lunch served:

Monday - Friday
through Jul 31 12:30 - 2 pm
East Columbia and Elkridge Branches

Snacks at the Library

Sponsored by Good Harvest

Mon - Fri through Aug 31
Central 2 - 3 pm
East Columbia 3:15 - 3:45 pm



kindergarten

Here We Come!

¡aquí vamos!

킨더가튼에 가요! 준비 완료!

For children entering Kindergarten in the fall. 45 - 60 minute class. Visit hclibrary.org for class details and registration. Children entering kindergarten in the fall have fun with stories and activities. They even get to board a real school bus!

Sponsored by Friends & Foundation of HCLS and Howard County Public School System

CENTRAL BRANCH

Registration begins July 22 for all sessions.

Wed	Aug 5	3 & 6 pm
Thu	Aug 6	1 pm
Sat	Aug 8	1 pm

EAST COLUMBIA BRANCH

Registration begins July 29 for all sessions.

Wed	Aug 12	6 pm
Thu	Aug 13	1:30 pm
Sat	Aug 15	10 am

ELKRIDGE BRANCH

Registration begins July 11 for all sessions.

Sat	Jul 25	2 pm	
Mon	Jul 27	4 & 6:30 pm	
Tue	Jul 28	10 am & 2 pm	
Sabado	1 Agosto	2 pm	en español



GLENWOOD BRANCH

Registration begins July 18 for all sessions.

Sat	Aug 1	10:30 am & 1:30 pm
Mon	Aug 3	2 pm
Tue	Aug 4	2 pm
		Bilingual (Spanish/English)
Martes	4 Agosto	2 pm
		Bilingüe (español/inglés)

Tue August 4 6 PM Glenwood
Bilingual (Korean/English)

화요일 8월 4일 오후 6시

이중언어 (한국어/영어)

Registration begins July 18 for all sessions.

모든 수업의 등록은 7월 18일부터 시작됩니다.

MILLER BRANCH

Registration begins July 25 for all sessions.

Sat	Aug 8	11 am
Mon	Aug 10	11 am
Tue	Aug 11	2 pm
Wed	Aug 12	6:30 pm
Thu	Aug 13	6:30 pm

SAVAGE BRANCH

Registration begins August 1 for all sessions.

Sat	Aug 15	2 pm
Mon	Aug 17	10 am
Wed	Aug 19	6:30 pm
Fri	Aug 21	11:45 am





Books for Back to School

First Ride on a School Bus with Tamir by Whitney Sanderson

It's fun to ride the school bus! Join Tamir, Rosita, and their friends from Sesame Street as they learn all about riding the bus to and from school.

K Is for Kindergarten by Erin Dealey

Here comes kindergarten! Whether little ones are gearing up for the first day or making their way through the school year, this picture book guides them with silly rhymes and fun activities from A to Z.

Batter Up for the First Day of School! by Bethany Hegedus

With plenty of punny prose and playful baseball terms, this humorous read-aloud is the perfect way to get little sluggers ready for the first day of school.

Back to School, Backpack! by Simon Rich

In this hilarious yet reassuring back-to-school picture book, a backpack deals with first-day-of-school nerves and feeling out of place. This fun read-aloud helps kids brave classrooms with a smile (and maybe taking better care of their trusty backpacks...).

Today at School: with Yesterday and Tomorrow by Jessica E. Young

Yesterday and Tomorrow, uncertain about the first day of school, learn the importance of living in the present with the help of their new friend Today.

First Day Around the World by Ibi Aanu Zobi

How do children around the world spend their first day of school? From Ethiopia to Germany to India to Brazil, young readers are introduced to the breakfast-to-bedtime routines, cultures, and landscapes that connect people across all continents.



Sign up for newsletters to stay on top of all the great classes and events happening at HCLS.

Scan the QR Code or visit hclibrary.org > [About Us](#) and opt in to the ones that interest you:



- Early Literacy
- Children
- Teens
- Adults
- Author events
- Makers: Makerspace, DIY, AV Lab
- HiLights: general HCLS news
- Equity Resource Center & Collection



Practice SAT

For teens. Register at bit.ly/4uJkOxV

Get the experience you need to succeed on test day by taking a full-length practice test. Receive an interactive score report to help you evaluate your strengths and areas of opportunity, so you can start improving your score.

Sat Jul 11 10:30 - 11 am online

SAT Strategy Session

For teens. Register at bit.ly/4dKVvUN

You will not get a high score on standardized tests just because you excel in high school – these tests require specialized prep. In this session, a Princeton Review expert shares tips, tricks, and strategies that will help you get the score you need.

Mon Jul 27 10 - 11 am online

6 Most Missed Math Questions

For teens. Register bit.ly/42ZRdUN

Did you recently take a practice SAT or ACT test? If so, this class is for you. A Princeton Review SAT Math expert reviews the top math questions students get wrong on the practice tests, pointing out the common traps, while demonstrating savvy, problem-solving and test taking strategies.

Tue Jul 28 11 am - 12 pm online

Essays That Kick Apps

For teens. Register at bit.ly/4fa79uR

Essays are the part of your application that make you stand out from other students. Learn why your essay is so important and how to make your essay shine.

Wed Jul 29 10 - 11 am online

Inside the Admissions Committee

For teens. Register at bit.ly/43tSHqr

Ever wonder what happens behind closed doors in a College Admissions office? While you're working on your college applications, it's important to understand who will be reviewing the final product. Explore how admissions committees recruit and evaluate applicants so you can become the student who receives the coveted acceptance letters.

Thu Jul 30 10 - 11 am online

Roadmap to College

For teens. Register at bit.ly/4v6EN9y

Wish you had a GPS for the journey from 9th grade to college? Discover a year-by-year roadmap to navigate the path to higher education with confidence, avoid roadblocks, and stay on track for success. Presented by Princeton Review.

Fri Jul 31 10 - 11 am online

Dear Jackie by Jessixa Bagley

A middle schooler's plan to fit in with her new friends by writing herself a fake love letter backfires spectacularly in this funny and all-too-relatable graphic novel perfect for fans of Raina Telgemeier.

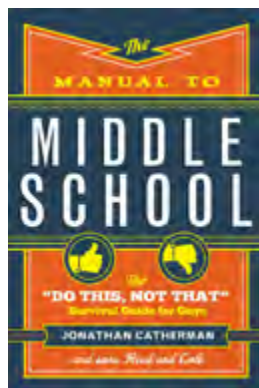
The Middle School Survival Guide for Girls: The Inside Scoop on Dealing with School, Friends, Emotions, and Other Big, Big Changes

by Geraldine O'Sullivan

Using the skills outlined in this book, readers can build the resilience needed to thrive personally, socially, and academically, and gain new understanding of themselves as they face the challenges of middle school and beyond.

How to Navigate Middle School by Anna Pozzatti

Learn how to handle the increasing academic demands of middle school, organizational skills and time management, how to be self-determined, have grit, and a sense of agency.



The Manual to Middle School: The "Do This, Not That" Survival Guide for Guys

by Jonathan Catherman

Catherman and his two sons offer boys practical help to make the move to middle school as painlessly as possible. The book covers 100 relevant topics and situations middle-school boys may face, including school lockers, bullies, test taking, and cell phone use.

Everything You Need to Ace Math in One Big Fat

Notebook: The Complete Middle School Study Guide
by Altair Peterson

This revolutionary math study guide covers everything to get students over any math hump.

Everything You Need to Ace English Language Arts in One Big Fat Notebook: The Complete Middle School Study Guide

This friendly, colorful guide helps middle schoolers ace English classes with confidence and ease. It covers every skill a middle schooler needs to read, write, and analyze their way through middle school English.

The Hardest Working Card in Your Pocket

by Sahana Callahan, Administrative Branch



As summer winds down and backpacks start filling up again, there's one school supply that deserves a permanent place in every student's pocket: **a library card**. At Howard County Library

System, your library card unlocks far more than bookshelves - it opens the door to homework help, research tools, creative inspiration, and entertainment for every age.

We're lucky in Howard County to have such a great relationship with the public school system, which means every student has an **A+ account** (accessible via hcpss.me) that they can use to unlock all the resources we have to offer, without having to sign up for one.

We have a powerful lineup of digital resources that can be accessed from home, school, or anywhere with an internet connection. Need help understanding algebra, revising an essay, or preparing for an upcoming test? **Brainfuse HelpNow** provides live online tutoring, study tools, and writing support. Research projects are easier with **Gale databases**, which offer reliable articles, biographies, science resources, and academic content that students can trust. Instead of sifting through questionable internet sources, students can access curated, credible information with just a few clicks. Access digital newspapers through hclibrary.org and digital magazines in the **Libby** app or **PressReader** to stay informed about current events and explore perspectives beyond the classroom.

Of course, library resources are never just about academics. Students can borrow e-books and e-audiobooks instantly, stream movies and music, learn a new language, or dive into hobbies ranging from cooking to coding. For families, educators, and lifelong learners alike, a library card is one of the few tools that continues to grow in value the more you use it. It supports learning, creativity, entertainment, and exploration all year long.

And there's no better time to celebrate than around Back-To-School time, and September, which is National Library Card Sign-Up Month. This year the American Library Association's honorary chair for National Library Card Sign-Up Month is the singer Laufey (check out her children's book, *Mei Mei the Bunny*, or her album, *A Matter of Time*, on CD), who reminds everyone that libraries are spaces where creativity and curiosity thrive.

If you already have a library card, now is the perfect time to rediscover everything it can do. If you don't, September is the perfect time to sign up.

Teens Teach Financial Workshop Series

For middle school students. Register at bit.ly/43BPncN

Learn real-life money skills through fun, interactive activities covering budgeting, banking, smart spending, and entrepreneurship. Designed to help middle school students develop strong, healthy financial habits, and confidence in money management. Presented by the Marriotts Ridge High School InvestInfy teen club members.

The Teens Teach - Financial Workshop Series is part of the HCLS Teens Teach initiative, in which teens develop, plan, and share their passions and expertise with the community.

Saturdays; Jul 11 & Aug 8 2 - 3 pm Elkridge

Moving Up to Middle School Jeopardy

For rising sixth graders. Register at bit.ly/43sIUIE

For students starting sixth grade this fall, befriend other rising sixth graders as you play a team-based game of Middle School Jeopardy. Through a series of activities, the game tackles new school concerns and provides opportunities to work out solutions in a fun environment.

Sat Aug 22 2 - 3:30 pm Elkridge

Online Homework Help



All you need is an internet connection, computer or mobile device, and your library card.



Find it at hclibrary.org > digital library

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Staff Spotlight: Stacy Ashenden

Title and branch:

Program Evaluation & Data Analytics Manager,
Administrative Branch

How long have you been with HCLS?

I have been with HCLS a little over a year. I joined HCLS in April 2025. My position and I are both new to the system.

Explain your job a little and what about it excites you ?

In my role, I help staff use data to evaluate and improve library offerings for our community and tell the library's story.

I am excited to share data to help staff reflect and build on the strong work they do, day in and day out. I love using data to showcase their efforts and expertise and celebrate their successes.

What inspires or motivates you?

I have always been a heavy library user. As a new parent, I use even more HCLS resources, including our toy collection and early learner classes. I am inspired by the dedication of our library team members and the gratitude I hear expressed by other new parents.

What's an unusual fact about you?

I have traveled to Antarctica and did a *real* polar plunge!

What was your first job?

I entered bibliographic data for a small library upgrading their catalog. Prior to working there, I volunteered at the circulation desk, where I helped preschoolers check out books. That was when we had cards in the back of each book to write the borrower's name and stamp the due date.

Favorite smell or sound?

This will make more sense after reading where I want to travel... I love the smell "petrichor," the smell after rain falls on dry earth or pavement. This, I suppose, is quite apt considering the current drought. After it finally rains, I will be even more grateful for that unique smell!

If you could travel to anywhere, where would you go?

This is a tough one! Before becoming a librarian, I worked in the wine industry and learned about wine-growing regions around the world. I'd love to visit the Loire Valley of France to explore the vineyards and caves!

Do you read more than one book at a time?

For better or for worse, I typically read one at a time. I'm stubborn and reluctant to stop reading, even if I've grown bored or uninterested. I feel compelled to finish a book I've started, which can really slow me down!

Anti-Virus & Malware Removal Programs at a Glance

For adults. Register at bit.ly/4nGdhgA

Did you know that viruses are only one type of malware that can harm your computer? Learn about different types of malwares, how they work, and anti-virus programs that can prevent and get rid of malware infections. Attend this lecture to learn how to keep your device safe!

Mon Aug 3 10 - 11 am Glenwood

Finding & Launching Your Side Hustle

For adults. Register at bit.ly/4doVt6h

Learn how to turn your skills, interests, and experiences into a profitable side hustle in this interactive, beginner-friendly class. Explore different ideas, develop a concept, and get practical guidance on pricing, tools, and business basics. Leave with a clear plan and the confidence to start earning.

Wed Aug 5 6 - 7 pm Central



Marilyn at 100: Icon, Intellectual, Influencer

For adults. Register at bit.ly/4v5qS3z

Celebrate Marilyn Monroe's groundbreaking influence on film, her surprising life as an avid reader and thoughtful writer, and the lasting impact she's had on queer culture, from the gender-bending brilliance of *Some Like It Hot* to her status as a symbol of self-invention and resilience.

Tue Jul 14 6 - 7:30 pm Central



Beyond Words

Step into the fun and active world of Beyond Words, a vibrant and inclusive monthly class designed to spark joy and ignite the imagination of people with developmental and intellectual disabilities.

Unique sessions of Beyond Words are available for children, teens, and adults. In Beyond Words Jr., participants journey through five engaging stations, including Fine Motor Skills, Creativity, Cognitive Skills, Movement, and Sensory.

- Beyond Words Jr: ages 6 - 11
- Beyond Words Teens: ages 11 - 21
- Beyond Words for Adults: ages 18+

Participants may stay for as little or as long as they want. Caregivers must stay with participants at all times.

For the full schedule of all sessions, visit bit.ly/beyond-words-hcls



All about DIY

by Alex Pyryt, Administration, and Kelly MacBride-Gill, ElkrIDGE Branch

You do know about the Do It Yourself (DIY) Education Center, right? With this special collection, you can explore, create, and tackle everyday DIY projects with confidence. Need a wheelbarrow, sewing machine, or window screen repair tool? DIY is the place for you!

You can find everything from basic tools like drills and hammers, to outdoor adventure equipment like camping lanterns and metal detectors, to a variety of novelty baking pans perfect for parties and holidays. The DIY Center also offers seasonal favorites like bike repair kits, pressure washers, hedge trimmers, weed pullers, post hole diggers, and moisture meters. Browse the full DIY collection online at hclibrary.org/centers/diy to view items and learn more about borrowing.

The backbone of library borrowing is requests. You request a copy of a title on the online catalog or with the help of a staff member, and we retrieve it, tag it, and hold it for you to pick up at your convenience. This way, you can get a title delivered to the location you prefer, and long queues for in-demand materials can be managed well.

Up until now, all items retrieved have been held for you to retrieve for seven days after they are tagged. We've recently made a change for DIY items. At the DIY Education Center, located at the ElkrIDGE Branch, your items will now be held for a three-day window.

We made this change for a few reasons. Wait times will be reduced, and in-demand items won't be able to sit unused for seven days waiting for pickup. This way, you'll get power tools, gardening equipment, sewing machines, and other wonderful DIY items faster, and everyone will get their turn sooner.

Part of this change is that your DIY card is now assigned to "DIY at ElkrIDGE Branch" instead of HCLS ElkrIDGE Branch. Remember when placing requests for tools on the online catalog that you'll need to use your DIY card, and the pickup location must be "DIY at ElkrIDGE Branch." DIY staff are always eager to help you find the right tools for your project and answer questions, making it easy to learn new skills and complete projects. Visit in person to wander the collection and discover something new.

Borrow tools for free or attend a class to learn new skills at no charge. Whether you're planning a family activity or a home improvement project, the collection offers tools and kits to help you get started.

Bring your ideas to life with the DIY Education Center!



Home & Garden

Build a Little Birdhouse

For adults. Register at bit.ly/3PGbRGh

Learn the basic carpentry skills to build a wood birdhouse to attract beautiful birds. Try some of the tools from the DIY education center.

Thu Jul 9 5 - 6:30 pm Elkridge

Four Keys to Happy Houseplants

For adults. Register at bit.ly/3PGbXxD

Learn how to provide the right light, water and growing conditions to make sure your indoor plants are happy and healthy. Also learn how to create a sustainable plant care routine, repot and propagate your plants. Presented by Master Gardenersx

Wed Jul 22 6:30 - 7:30 pm Elkridge

How to Install Wainscoting

For adults. Register at bit.ly/4oOFtuN

Learn about the different types of wainscoting and discuss, watch and participate in installation techniques. Discuss the tools and materials you'll need to add texture and character to your walls.

Sat Aug 1 10 - 11:30 am Elkridge

Home Wiring Basics: How to Replace a Receptacle and Light Fixture

For adults. Register at bit.ly/4x1wLQX

Learn about your home's wiring from an experienced electrician. Then, learn by doing as you replace a receptacle and light fixture, with tools you can borrow from the DIY collection.

Sat Aug 29 10 - 11:30 am Elkridge

3D Printing at our Makerspaces

Introduction to 3D Printing Using Prusa

For teens & adults. Register at bit.ly/4wM7kTv

Learn how to use 3D printing to create designs for fabrication on the Prusa CORE One+ printer. Discuss options for locating existing designs or creating original ones, how to import set up and start up a 3D printing project, and tips and tricks for setting up a design in an efficient and cost-effective manner. All levels of experience are welcome.

Wed Jul 15 6:15 - 7:30 pm Glenwood

Savage 3D Printing Meetup

For adults, no experience needed. Information at bit.ly/4tQIVJW

Are you interested in 3D printing, optimizing designs for 3D printing, or building your own 3D printer at home? Drop-in to collaborate with fellow enthusiasts, work on 3D design projects, ask questions, and share ideas. Expand your knowledge about 3D printing, including CAD, our Makerbot Method X, Prusa MK4S, and Prusa Mini+ 3D printers.

Wed Aug 26 6 - 7 pm Savage

School & Office Supply Swap

For everyone. Information at bit.ly/4tMyIhp

Exchange new and gently used school and office supplies in preparation for the upcoming academic year. Supplies welcome: pens, pencils, markers, crayons, paper, glue, rulers, folders, notebooks, binders, calculators, backpacks, and more. This is a drop-in event – no registration required. Sign up to receive a reminder email beforehand (optional).

Sun Jul 26 2 - 3 pm Central

Kindergarten Readiness and Independent Children's Classes

Is your child starting kindergarten this fall? Attend one of our HCLS kindergarten readiness and independent children's classes during the summer. Visit bit.ly/ready-to-learn for the complete schedule.

These and other children's classes provide learning experiences for children and families.

Infant - age 3 : Children learn social-emotional and language skills by singing, talking, reading, writing, and playing.

Ages 2 - 5 years: Children learn to be creative, get along with others, and listen; the foundations of reading; and the basics of letters, numbers, and vocabulary. Children explore science, technology, engineering, math, and art. These classes also support the development of physical motor skills.

Play Partners

Infant - 23 months with adult; 20-30 min. Ticket required.

Newborns and toddlers learn to express feelings, language, and movement through stories, baby games, musical activities, and playtime.

Time for Us

Ages 18 - 35 months with adult; 30 min. Ticket required.

Toddlers gain coordination and control when using small and large muscles through stories, music, movement, fingerplays, rhyme, and playtime activities.

All Together Now

Infant - age 5+ with adult; 30 min. Ticket required.

Children build skills in singing, talking, listening, reading, and getting along with others through stories, music, rhymes, and activities.

Pajama Time

infant - age 5+ with adult; 30 min. Ticket required.

Children build skills in singing, talking, listening, reading, and getting along with others through stories, music, rhymes, and activities. Children may wear their pajamas and bring their loveys and blankets to this evening class.

Cuentos en Español y Tiempo de Juego

Infant - age 5 with adult; 30 minutes. Ticket required.

Únase a nosotros para cuentos, canciones y rimas en español. Seguido de un tiempo de juego.

3, 2, Fun

Ages 2 - 3 years with adult; 30 min. Ticket required.

Preschoolers get ready for school by talking, singing songs and rhymes, doing finger plays, and listening to stories.

Picture Book Parade

Ages 2 - 5 with adult; 30 min. Ticket required.

Children build language, literacy, and social skills through tales, tunes, and fun activities.

Little Learners

Ages 3 - 5 years with adult; 45 min. Ticket required.

Children learn through play and exploring the world around them. Stories and activities help with skills like getting along, talking and reading, moving and doing, math, science, and being creative.

Just for Me and All by Myself

Ages 3 - 5 (JFM) or 4 - 6 (ABM) independently; 30 min. Ticket required.

In these classes, preschoolers go to class on their own. They learn to follow rules and routines, understand feelings, and talk about stories. They may also learn about shapes and numbers, use scissors, draw and write, make guesses about what is going to happen, learn about the world, and be creative.



FIND MORE CLASSES ONLINE

howardcounty.librarycalendar.com

- SEARCH BY KEYWORD OR CATEGORY
- CLICK OR TAP "APPLY"!



thank you!



Our sincere thanks to the individuals, organizations, and businesses for their generous financial and in-kind donations to Howard County Library System. Every effort was made to ensure the accuracy of this list of those who made contributions between Jan 1 - Feb 28, 2026. Please call 410.313.7799 to report any errors or omissions.

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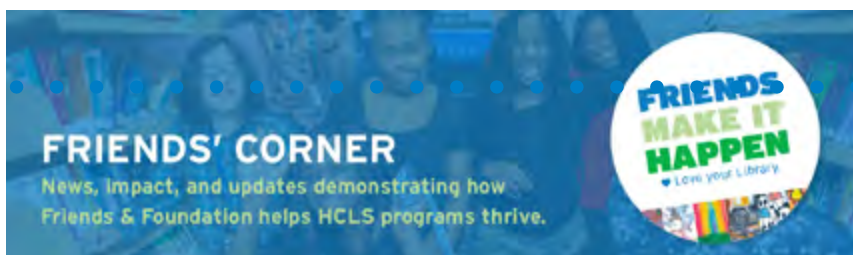
Howard County Public School System

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Hooray for Summer Fun, Summer Sun & Summer Reading!

The HCLS Summer Reading 2026 programs are officially underway. The theme this year is Summer Reading Adventures: Into the Wild.

Summer reading helps prevent "summer slide" in academic achievement, builds self-confidence, and shows kids that reading can be fun! By sponsoring prizes and events, Friends & Foundation helps keep Howard County kids in our libraries, growing as readers all summer long.

"I loved the prizes and the easy challenges to earn the prizes. I love reading. It was a win-win. Reading and prizes!" – Howard County student

On June 24, Friends sponsored Summer Reading celebrations at the Central and Glenwood branches featuring a live animal encounter and animal-themed crafts and games. Look for more Friends-sponsored celebrations at the Elkridge, East Columbia, Savage, and Miller Branches this July!

This summer's Bookmark Contest produced dozens of creative entries from children and adults across all branches. The 2026 theme was "Finding Joy" – and your illustrations delivered just that! Look for the six winning bookmarks at all HCLS branches at summer's end, printed with contributions from the Friends.

Your support makes programs like Summer Reading possible. Consider becoming a Friend today: www.friendshcls.org



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