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Charles County Public Library Announces Fine Free Status and Limited Reopening of Branches for Computer Use

(La Plata, MD – April 12, 2021) The Charles County Public Library is now fine free for all users and will be reopening the doors of three of its branches for computer and printer use by appointment.

With the passage of The Building Lifelong Learners Act of 2020, which makes all public library accounts for minors in the state of Maryland fine-free, Charles County Public Library and its Board of Trustees made the decision to forgive all current overdue fines for all customers. In total, over \$350,000 worth of fines was forgiven.

The Building Lifelong Learners Act also stipulates that by July 1, 2021 all minors be given a clean slate, so all lost/damaged fees on minors' accounts will be waived as well. However, after July 1, 2021 libraries, including CCPL, can continue to bill minors for lost/damaged items, but overdue fines will no longer be assessed. Any lost/damaged fees on adult accounts will not be waived.

“We felt it was critically important to forgive fines system wide, and not just for minors, as mandated by the Building Lifelong Learners Act,” KennethWayne Thompson, Executive Director of the library stated. “This is something we’ve been wanting to implement for a very long time as fines for overdue items created a barrier for our customers that need our services and resources the most, and often deterred them from coming into the library. Removing all fines for overdue items makes CCPL a truly welcoming and inclusive space for all residents of Charles County.”

Instead of late fines, customers will be charged a replacement fee if items are never returned or if they are returned damaged. Items borrowed from other library systems may still be subject to late fines.

Charles County Public Library is also reopening three of its branches for computer use appointments. As of April 12, 2021, the La Plata, Potomac, and P.D. Brown Memorial branches will be opening on a limited basis for one hour computer and printer use appointments. This is a continuation of the third phase of the library’s reopening plan, that includes the previous redeployment of the Mobile Library, as well as Curbside Pickup service at all of its branches.

All visitors will be required to make appointments, and must wear a face mask as well as follow all CCPL safety guidelines in place to enter the building.

For full details about these services, to make a computer appointment, a Curbside Pickup appointment and more, please visit our website www.ccplonline.org.

About Charles County Public Library

Charles County Public Library System (CCPL) creates opportunities for its community to engage, discover and learn. CCPL has four physical buildings and one mobile library. The Waldorf West and P.D. Brown Memorial branches are both located in Waldorf. The La Plata branch serves as the administrative headquarters for the system and is located in the town of La Plata. The western side of the county is served by the Potomac Branch located in Ruth B. Swann Park in Indian Head. CCPL has a staff of more than 100 full-time and part-time employees. Their branches house over 200,000 volumes of printed material, audio books, film, and other documents. Currently, there are over 75,000 county residents who have library cards and that number grows every day. Be connected to endless possibilities and sign up for a library card today.

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