

A publication  
supporting:



# Great Communities Build Great Libraries

DEC 2020

## IMAGINE WHAT YOU CAN DO AT THE LIBRARY!



*The new Kennett Library & Resource Center is taking shape... dare to Imagine! Over the last six months, the Board of Trustees has been working hard finalizing the vision and preparing detailed plans. What is being built will be bold and exciting and have a major impact on southern Chester County for generations to come.*

The new library will be a place where people of all ages and socio-economic backgrounds can come together and exchange ideas about everything under the sun. Children can dream about a future with endless possibilities. The Library will also be a Resource Center, a place where people can attend life-skill programs, get job training and readily access the internet. The auditorium will host everything from TED Talks to free first-run movies. Having direct access

to a world class library will attract the brightest and best to our community and ultimately benefit us all.

The current schedule is to break ground in July 2021 and open the doors to the new Kennett Library & Resource Center by the end of December 2022.

The new library being planned at State & Willow Streets will be so much more than a building – it will be a living and breathing community resource!

**Great Communities Build  
Great Libraries!**

Jeff Yetter  
President, Board of Trustees

*Collis*

Collis Townsend  
Chairman Campaign Committee

# Serving Our Diverse Community

*Filomena Elliott began working at the Kennett Library as a part-time circulation assistant in September 2015. In October of that year she was asked to step in temporarily to lead the Adult Literacy Program (ALP). This turned into a permanent job as the ALP Director in January of 2016.*

Within the past five years, there has been a steady increase in people taking advantage of the many aspects of ALP — from students learning English, to those studying for the General Equivalency Diploma (GED), or preparing for American citizenship. Filomena and her assistant, Lupe Ruiz, also help clients who come to the ALP office, often directing them to the many resources available in this community. They collaborate with other agencies in the area that offer help to those in need such as KACS, Family Promise, Young Moms, and Wings for Success.

In Kennett Square, ALP has offered four classes of English as a Second Language (ESL) in the evenings and a class during the day; three years ago, ESL classes and a GED class were added in West Grove and Oxford. This September, a citizenship class was included in the current schedule. From the beginning of 2019 to November 2020, a total of 20 students became American citizens with the help of ALP; others continue to take the class in preparation for the citizenship interview and test.

Since it began in 1979, ALP has had more than 8,500 students take

tutors themselves, and others volunteer within the community in various ways, realizing the importance of giving back to the community that helped them,” said Filomena.

She is especially grateful and proud of the many volunteer tutors, who make the one-on-one tutoring part of ALP such a great success. There is an average of 100 tutors annually who give their time to help students achieve their goals. In January 2016, a partnership was established with the Kendal-Crosslands Communities and since then, many volunteers from there were trained as tutors.

Currently, classes are held in the evenings via Zoom, offering four levels of ESL and a citizenship class. Also, Filomena and her daughter, Laura, have created two original resources as additional opportunities for students to practice: a biweekly newsletter with information,



Filomena Elliott and Lupe Ruiz

from grants from various community organizations, among them the United Way of Southern Chester County, the Dollar General Foundation, The Mushroom Festival, The Kennett Run, the Chester County Community Foundation, and Chester County Regional Education Services.

Filomena and her staff are grateful for the support, and especially excited about the possibilities which will become available to ALP with the new Kennett Library and Resource Center. She said, “There is always demand for literacy and ESL classes, but we would like to also offer digital literacy, numerical and financial literacy, and health literacy. Our community partnerships will allow us to have many artistic, cultural, and educational programs which will benefit children, young people, and adults – not just within the ALP program, but in the whole community.”

**Filomena and her staff are grateful for the support, and especially excited about the possibilities which will become available to ALP with the new Kennett Library and Resource Center.**

advantage of its classes. Even with the loss of traditional classrooms due to COVID-19 restrictions, 103 students are attending virtual classes this fall. “One of the things that makes me so proud of our students is the fact that some who learn from us have become

readings, and comprehension activities, and a website with videos, conversations, and lessons.

ALP is a non-profit program supported by the Kennett Library. Other funding comes from private donations and



# It's a Family Love Affair for the Kennett Library

Kat Etherington and her family love the Kennett Library. "If we didn't have the Library, I don't know what we would do. I don't know of anything that could replace it," she said.

Kat, her husband Chris and their two children Piper, 7 and Wesley, 4, live in New Garden Township and were frequent visitors to the library to check out books and to attend the various children's programs until the Covid lockdown. Now, they attend the online programs and are regularly using the curbside pickup for a stack of books. Piper's favorite virtual program is Paws for Reading, a program where children read to a PAWS dog (Philadelphia Animal Welfare Society).

"The Kennett Library is very important to our family. We consider it a vital part of our community. Libraries are so much more than books for us and with the new space we are looking forward to more educational programs," she said.



## Giving back to the Community that Helped Him



When Raúl Toledo came to the United States in 2012, he had been teaching computer classes in Mexico. When he arrived here, he realized that Spanish speakers in the U.S. also need computer classes. He happened to see Filomena Elliott and Lupe Ruiz from the Adult Literacy Program (ALP) at a park event and asked them how he could teach

classes. They offered some space in the Library for a class to teach basic computer skills to ALP students. Raúl also volunteered to tutor math to students who were preparing for the General Equivalency Diploma.

Through ALP, Raul had an English tutor to enhance his English communication skills and he also received business help from a SCORE program offered by the Library. Using the skills he learned from these programs, he was able to start his own business, Kennett Multimedia.

"The platform for Kennett Multimedia is to inform, educate and to help promote all the people, especially, the Latinx community. Everyone has a talent and I want everyone to be able to use their talent," Raul said.

Kennett Multimedia has produced videos in Spanish for the US Census, Kennett Greenway, and the Chester County Planning Commission. Raúl also volunteers for Casa Guanajuato and helped them with their recent Dia de los Muertos event at the Kennett Creamery.

"I want to help people to learn new skills and to open their eyes to all the opportunities. I appreciate all the help from the Library," he said.

Filomena Elliott, the Director of ALP, said that one of the things that makes her so proud of her students is the fact that many who learn from the program achieve success and come back to impart their skills to others. Raúl is a fine example of that.

# Passing on Library Love

Kate O'Reilly and her growing family live on South Broad Street, in the Borough of Kennett Square. She grew up in Unionville with five siblings and has been coming to the Kennett Library for as long as she can remember.

"Once I learned how to use the Library App, I would order books for me and my siblings and then my mom would drive to pick them up," she said.

"When Covid came and everything was locked down, I was so upset. Neither my daughter nor I had enough books to read."

They have a big "library basket" in the family room, full of library books for her daughter. "The Chester County Library App limits the number of books you can reserve online, but there is



no limit on the number of books you can check out. In August, when we were taking a car trip, I checked out 80 books!" Emma is two and Kate and her husband, Joe, were awaiting the birth of their second daughter at press time.

Kate is happy the library is staying in town. She wants to be able to walk her children up to the library. "I like that I can grab a cup of coffee and grab a book," she said.

## Donate

For questions about making a donation or volunteering for the campaign please email **Mary Hutchins, Campaign Associate** at [mary@kennettlibrary.org](mailto:mary@kennettlibrary.org) or go to [campaign4kennettlibrary.org](http://campaign4kennettlibrary.org)

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