



# Celebrate National Library Card Sign-up Month

Just in time for the start of the new school year, National Library Card Sign-up Month is a way to encourage students and adults to check out what their local libraries have to offer.

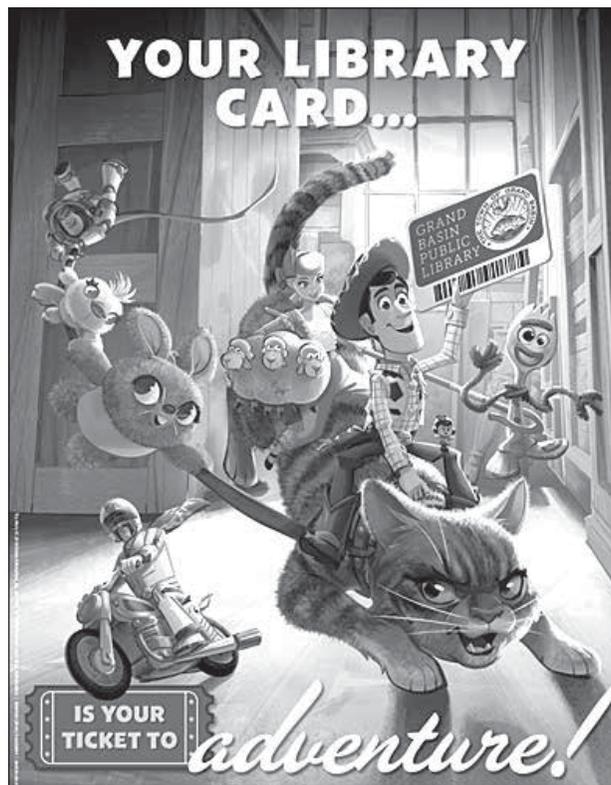
This year Disney and Pixar's "Toy Story 4" characters Woody, Buzz Lightyear, Bo Peep and friends are joining the American Library Association on an adventure to promote the value of a library card as Library Card Sign-up Month Honorary Chairs.

In their new role, they will remind the public that signing up for a library card opens a world of infinite possibilities: libraries offer resources and services that help people pursue their passions and give students the tools to succeed in school and beyond.

The Toy Story crew knows library cards help bring great stories to life. From borrowing books, movies, or music, to enjoying story time or group play, there's no end to the exciting activities you can access with a library card.

You can celebrate National Library Card Sign-up Month by visiting the Takoma Park Maryland Library for one or several of its monthly events. Some monthly programs the library offers include Preschool Time on Sept. 4, 18 and 25, that teaches concepts like shapes, counting and colors and skills like using scissors, taking turns and name writing. There's also Petites Chansons for babies, toddlers, preschoolers and their grown-ups to French songs and rhymes with Madame Marie.

The library will also be holding a Books-to-Action event on Sept. 21 that teaches social justice through literature.



The library is tying the event to Banned Books Week, and there will be readings of picture books that have been challenged over the years, including the Caldecott-Medal-win-

ning *Sylvester and the Magic Pebble*, *In the Night Kitchen*, *And Tango Makes Three*, and *Tar Beach*. The program will conclude with a craft connected to Banned Books Week. (See page 8 for more information on these events.)

"There are numerous class visits throughout the school year, at which we distribute card applications and encourage kids to get Library cards — and many do," said library director Ellen Arnold-Robbin. "It's a good way to bring families into the orbit of library activities."

Since 1987, Library Card Sign-up Month has been held each September to mark the beginning of the school year. During the month, the ALA and libraries unite in a national effort to ensure every child signs up for a library card.

## DID YOU KNOW?

- Kids get a free lanyard with their first library card, courtesy of the Friends of the Takoma Park Maryland Library.
- In addition to checking out the Library's physical books, music and magazines, library card holders can access thousands of digital resources, including audiobooks from Recorded Books, and movies, music, and books from Hoopla.

For more information about applying for a Takoma Park Maryland Library card, visit [www.takomapark.info/library/getacard.html](http://www.takomapark.info/library/getacard.html).

## The making of a mural

By Rick Henry

Thanks to a Community Grant from the city of Takoma Park, a group of middle school students was able to spread "good vibes" this summer.

The students were participants in the FLOW (Future Leaders of the World) program administered by the Montgomery Housing Partnership (MHP), and they spread the vibes by creating a mural in the Sligo View Apartments Community Center on Houston Avenue.

Painting the mural was one of the many activities the group engaged in as part of the new FLOW summer program for middle school students. A Community Grant from the City helped MHP to launch the program, building on its existing elementary school programs and filling a critical need, according to MHP President Robert Goldman.

"This is an outgrowth of our after-school program," Goldman said. "Our staff had been advocating for an extension into middle school, and this grant was instrumental in allowing us to do that."

Many of the participants, such as Nancy Cabrera, 14, of Takoma Park had participated in the elementary school programs and enthusiastically signed on for the middle school program. "I had been in the program since Head Start, and I loved it, but then I had to stop because there were no more programs," she said, "so I was very excited when I found out they were starting one for middle school students."

Goldman noted that middle school is



As a FLOW program participant, Nancy Cabrera, 14, helped create the Good Vibes mural pictured here.

Credit: Rick Henry

an important transitional time for students, so being able to extend the FLOW program to provide them with worthwhile activities after school and over the summer was very important to MHP.

Goldman and the MHP realized that they could not just replicate the existing program, however. "Middle schoolers are much more independent, so we needed to have a different approach and curriculum," he said.

To that end, the FLOW middle school program included such items as homework counseling, journaling and a trip to the University of Maryland. These components really made an impression on Cabrera.

"The trip to the University of Maryland made me realize that I want to go to college," said the rising freshman, who will attend John F. Kennedy High School in the fall. "And for our journals we were assigned to write about how we would want to be seen 15 years from now, which really helped me reflect and inspired my creativity."

Creativity is one of the hallmarks of all of the MHP FLOW programs, which is where the "Good Vibes" mural comes in. MHP takes a broad view of what it means to develop affordable housing, an approach articulated by its mission statement: "housing people, empowering families, and strengthening neighborhoods."

"People living in our properties don't just need affordable housing; they need programs and activities," Goldman said.

MHP has a long history of creating murals in the neighborhoods properties it develops, he said, citing a series of murals that youth in MHP programs developed in Wheaton and Long Branch. He added that the murals, which professional muralist Arturo Ho, supervises, provide a lasting legacy for participants, friends and family and the communities at large.

"It gives everyone something to be proud of and creates a lasting legacy," he said. Now that legacy includes the "Good Vibes" mural, which was developed through a partnership with the nonprofit Carpe Diem Arts.

Cabrera described how the process developed. "There were lots of ideas being shared," she said. "Someone wanted to incorporate butterflies, which led to us focusing on vibrant colors. Then someone else suggested black-eyed Susans, the Maryland state flower."

The group then collectively looked at the mural and asked, "What does that painting give us?" "What do we feel when we look at it? We saw positive goodness and happiness and we wanted the title to reflect a positive message, so we settled on Good Vibes Only," Cabrera said.

For the residents of the Sligo View Apartments and the participants in the program, the message has been received.