

FISCAL YEAR
2022



Report on Philanthropy



RICHLAND LIBRARY
FRIENDS +
FOUNDATION™



Bob Mathews
Board Chair,
Fiscal Year 2022

Thank you!

Over the past year, the Richland Library Friends and Foundation has continued to work alongside Richland Library, raising much-needed funding to support four key areas — Literacy, Workforce Development, Social Services and Inclusion, and Innovative Programming.

In a partnership with T-Mobile, we completed our matching gifts fundraising campaign to help Richland Library address a critical need in our community — helping to close the digital divide by offering 400 Wi-Fi hotspots to low-income households in our area that were without Internet access.

The Friends and Foundation also provided books for community collections, helping to increase literacy in underserved households; amplified the Library’s social justice efforts by supporting Let’s Talk Race programs; underwrote the 2021-22 Ethel Bolden Minority Fellowship, helping to ensure diversity in our libraries; and supported graduates of the Library’s Career Online High School, helping community members earn a high school diploma and a career certification through an accredited high school.

None of this would have been possible without the support of our committed donors. Their continued dedication helps make it possible for Richland Library to enhance the quality of life in our community.

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Pillars of Support

1

Literacy

2

Workforce
Development

3

Social Services
and Inclusion

4

Innovative
Programming

Programs

SOCIAL WORK

With a proven history of increasing economic stability and removing barriers for individuals living in poverty, Richland Library's social work department has developed a reputation for compassionate and meaningful case management, resource navigation, and holistic services.

In an area with the second-highest homeless population in South Carolina, Richland Library was one of the first libraries nationwide to employ social workers to connect vulnerable adults with critical resources. Three full-time social workers and three coordinators engage in case management, resource navigation, and a holistic approach to assisting individuals and families in crisis.

During fiscal year 2022, the social work department was supported by grants from the United Way of the Midlands, the National Coalition of Low-Income Housing, and the Sisters of Charity Foundation of South Carolina. Richland Library assists more than 3,700 clients annually in direct services or by matching them with benefits and community resources, such as public benefits, emergency rent and utility assistance, and programs allowing clients to gain permanent housing and job security.

In 2021, Richland Library partnered with Richland County's Emergency Rent Assistance Program (ERAP) to assist citizens in applying for emergency funds. Since April 2021,

Richland Library social workers have helped 2,189 residents complete ERAP applications, navigate the application process, directed them to additional resources, and hosted a community tele-town hall providing information on the eviction moratorium and assistance programs.

In the spring of 2022, Richland Library partnered with Cooperative Health, a local community health provider, to offer telehealth appointments at Richland Library Main and a COVID-19 vaccine clinic at two library locations — serving 200 customers by June of 2022.





STORYWALK

Stepping Into a Good Book

StoryWalk® is a creative way for children and families to enjoy parks on a family-friendly, accessible trail while reading an adventure at the same time. The pages of a children’s book are placed on signs along a path. While walking the path, families discover page after page, and after a short stroll, they have read a story. StoryWalk® sites engage young readers and are a great way to practice active reading skills with special activities highlighted along the way. In 2021, Richland Library partnered with the City of Blythewood, the City of Columbia Parks, and the Richland County Recreation Commission to install StoryWalks® at four Midlands public parks:

- Doko Meadows Park (Blythewood) opened in June 2021.
- Caughman Road Park (Hopkins) opened in August 2021.
- Hyatt Park (Columbia) opened in November 2022.
- Riverfront Park (Columbia) will open in Winter/Spring 2023.

Sponsored by BlueCross BlueShield of SC, Prisma Health, and South Carolina Humanities, StoryWalk® sites promote literacy, physical activity, parental involvement, and stronger ties to the community.



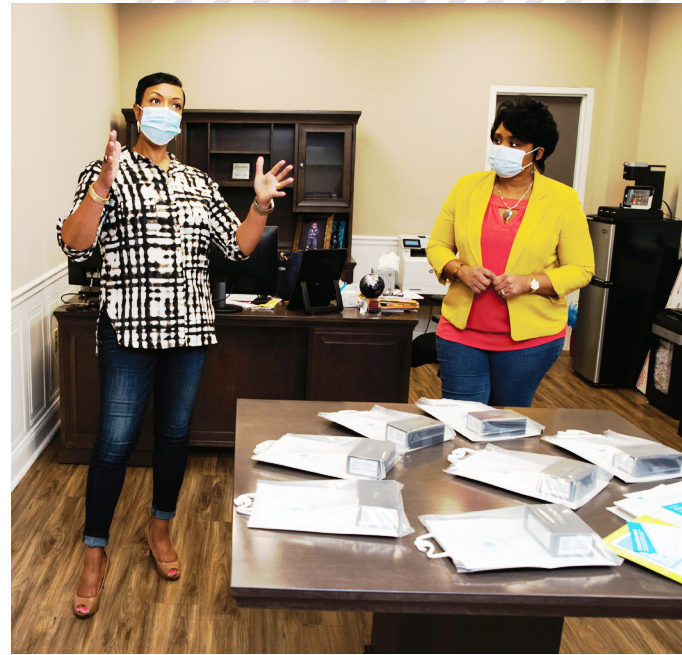
RICHLAND LIBRARY'S HOMESPOT INITIATIVE Tackling the Digital Divide

The current health endemic continues to expose the disparities that face residents in Richland County. The lack of Internet and broadband infrastructure creates a digital divide, excluding often lower-income and rural residents from telework, online learning, and telehealth.

Individuals who reside in low-income homes may be at higher risk of unequal access to education than their peers who live in more stable homes. More than 10,300 county residents do not have broadband access and many more deal with Internet speeds comparable to third-world countries.

Richland Library's HomeSpot Initiative increases Internet availability, providing hotspots to underserved households. HomeSpot began with grants from the Richland Library Friends and Foundation and McNulty Foundation that funded 65 hotspots for residents living in Columbia Housing communities. In addition to purchasing 200 hotspots, the Richland Library Friends and Foundation raised more than \$144,000 from foundations, corporations, and individuals and partnered with T-Mobile in this first-of-its-kind effort for Richland County to provide an additional 200 hotspots and data renewal plans.

Through a hotspot loan program, Richland Library increased Internet availability, bridging the digital divide for more than 700 low-income and rural households. Participants also received a resource document with device directions, troubleshooting contacts, and a list of community resources covering education, career, government assistance, health/safety, entertainment, and food/nutrition topics.



Increased Internet availability for

700
HOUSEHOLDS 

Community partners included Columbia Housing and the Richland County Recreation Commission. Program funders included the McNulty Foundation, the Richland Library Friends and Foundation, International Paper, Aflac Charitable Fund of Central Carolina Community Foundation, The Nord Family Foundation, the Truist Foundation, Southeastern Freight Lines, Rotary Club of the Vista Night and the South Carolina State Library.

CAREER ONLINE HIGH SCHOOL (COHS)

Enabling Adults to Further their Education and Career

Career Online High School is a national, accredited online high school diploma program for underserved adult students — many of whom have experienced educational trauma, either being pushed out or pulled out of high school due to family circumstances, which they often had no control over.

Funded by grants from Colonial Life and Power:Ed, Richland Library began providing local scholarships of \$1,300 to qualifying students to help eliminate the financial barriers of pursuing the program, which prepares students for careers, whether they are entering the workplace for the first time or want to advance in their current places of employment.

Students choose a major from one of nine and complete coursework to develop the skills and knowledge that can help them secure a better job, create a stepping stone for college or technical school, or meet a personal goal such as setting an example for their children.

Guided by Library staff, 49 adults have completed the 18-month education program. The program includes the assignment of a Certified Career Coach and focuses on training in nine high-growth, high-demand career fields. In addition to the program's 49 graduates, 38 students are currently pursuing a certified high school diploma and looking ahead to better jobs or an opportunity for higher education.





Connections

When Cearra Harris embarked on her path to becoming a librarian, she was immediately drawn to the life and work of Ethel Martin Bolden for her devotion to public service and civic change. Bolden was a barrier-breaking librarian who founded Columbia's first library in a black school and paved the way for the integration of schools in Richland County School District One. She was also a respected member of the Richland Library Board of Trustees from 1977-1982 and 1984-1995.

Harris began her career as a librarian at Richland Library Southeast more than a decade ago. Since then, she has continued building her professional and academic credentials, including a stretch serving as a teen librarian at Charlotte Mecklenburg Library, as well as completing her master's degree in Library and Information Science at the University of North Carolina-Greensboro. She recently returned to Columbia as a doctoral student in Library and Information Science at the University of South Carolina.

In 2021, the Richland Library Friends and Foundation named Harris the Ethel Bolden Minority Fellow, an honor awarded annually by the Friends and Foundation to recognize Ethel Bolden's years of service to the Richland County community and its libraries. Capitalizing on Harris' research interests and experience working with underrepresented communities, the year-long fellowship project centered on launching the Edgewood location's

Oral History Project, an initiative to capture community stories from the historic Edgewood neighborhood in downtown Columbia.

"Being the Ethel Bolden Minority Fellow was one of the most meaningful experiences I've had thus far as a Black woman in LIS," said Cearra Harris. "Not only was I able to develop invaluable community connections, but I was also able to honor the legacy of a trailblazer by capturing the stories of those who benefitted directly from her tenacity and courage — learning her story, listening to her voice through her oral histories, and getting to know people who knew and loved her reignited a passion in me that will be evident in my future work as a librarian, LIS educator, and community servant. It was an honor to serve as the Ethel Bolden Minority Fellow, and I will be forever grateful to walk in her footsteps as I create a legacy of my own."

In addition to providing the funds for Harris' fellowship, the Friends and Foundation also facilitated the funding of the Oral History Project itself through a major gift from longtime library supporter Nonie Price, who dedicated her donation to the memory of Bolden. Price's gift encompassed the outfitting of an Oral History Room with a computer, microphone and acoustic panels, as well as a lending library of iPads and recording equipment that customers can check out to record stories on their own.



“Oral history is a permanent way to remember people and places that might otherwise be forgotten. Knowing Mrs. Bolden through our time together on the library board gave me insight into how important her neighborhood was to her. She needed to be remembered for her connection to the Edgewood community.”

—
Lenora “Nonie” Price

Throughout the 2021-22 academic year, Harris worked alongside Edgewood branch manager Randy Heath and library associate Seth Lanford to help define and pilot the program. In December 2021, Harris published the project’s first interview of Moses Felder, a community leader who has owned and operated Hill’s Barber Shop in Edgewood for more than 50 years.

Harris captured another very important oral history in April 2022, when Retired General and former Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Charles F. Bolden Jr., son of Ethel Bolden, visited Richland Library Edgewood to see the progress of the Oral History Room named in memory of his mother. His visit marked a special event, bringing together many of the people responsible for the

creation and piloting of the Oral History Project, including Harris, Price, Felder, and Richland Library staff. Lanford, the project manager said, “The Oral History Room was designed to provide the people of the Edgewood community with the tools and platform to record and share their stories. There’s a lot of history in Edgewood, and we hope that people will share their stories with us so that we can preserve them for future generations.”

With this project, gifts to the Friends and Foundation enhanced Richland Library’s resources to create connections and build community through shared history.



Charles F. Bolden Jr.

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By Annual Giving Level during Fiscal Year 2022

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“Richland Library reflects my values. I value community, knowledge, access to information, diversity and people and their inherent good. It’s sort of a microcosm of what I want our community to look like, when I walk in any location, I see people from all walks and shades and abilities.”

—
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 that the Library is so
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 where you can go and just
 check out books. People
 can book rooms, rent
 equipment and utilize
 other amazing resources."**

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A planned gift clearly demonstrates how much you value the library, and it sets a lasting example for other philanthropic-minded individuals throughout Richland County and beyond.

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Richland Library's Development Team is responsible for all philanthropic support for Richland Library.

We oversee the efforts of the Richland Library Friends and Foundation; coordinate volunteers for the Library and the Friends and Foundation; and manage the grant writing and reporting process.

Please contact us to discuss the various ways you can support Richland Library.



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