



MILWAUKEE
PUBLIC LIBRARY

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**Milwaukee Public Library Launches Online Merchandise Store
Promoting Digital Inclusion During National Library Week**

In recognition of National Library Week (April 23 – April 29) the Milwaukee Public Library is raising awareness of the importance of Digital Inclusion and the library’s longstanding commitment of offering programs and services designed to bridge the divide between those that have access to digital resources and those that do not.

Digital inclusion includes the availability of digital skills, consistent connectivity to the internet, reliable access to computers, and readily-available support. Populations most frequently challenged by barriers to these essential functions include older people, people in lower income groups, people without a job, and people with fewer educational qualifications.

To support area residents experiencing these barriers, the library offers WiFi access at Central Library and the library’s neighborhood-based branches, a Hotspot Lending Program, workforce and literacy-development courses, and “*tech-splanation*” classes to build a greater familiarity with the depth of resources available on the internet.

“Our Milwaukee Public Library does so much more than many people may realize,” said Milwaukee Mayor Cavalier Johnson. “Central Library and our 12 neighborhood branch libraries proudly represent this city’s significant investment in education, in addressing profound community needs like child literacy, access to basic resources like a computer and the internet, and community-building and workforce development programming.”

“I believe that the library makes one of its greatest contributions to the Milwaukee community by providing access to resources that might not otherwise be available,” said Joan Johnson, City Librarian. “We are always looking for new ways to present the public with new experiences and learning opportunities.”



To support the continued availability of digital inclusion resources, the Library has launched an **online merchandise store** that offers a variety of items that will allow residents to show their support of the library and its programs. Visit mpl.org/merch for some “guilt-free” shopping!

First promoted in 1958, [National Library Week](#) is sponsored by the American Library Association (ALA) and observed in libraries across the country each April. All types of libraries - school, public, academic and special - participate.

The theme for National Library Week 2023, “There is More to the Story,” promotes the idea that libraries are full of stories in a number of formats. Stories in print or nonprint resources, as well as a place that brings the community together as places to learn, study, connect with others, attend lectures and workshops, use technology, and more. Libraries help develop and facilitate life-long learners.

To further recognize this event, City Librarian Joan Johnson will be hosting the next in a series of **Community Conversations** at Central Library on **Saturday, April 29**. These sessions have been established to hear from Milwaukee residents on what brings them to their neighborhood library. Join this informal conversation and share why the library is important to you and what role it plays in Milwaukee neighborhoods. Additional information under *Community Conversations* at mpl.org/conversations.

About Milwaukee Public Library

Milwaukee Public Library is an anchor institution that helps build healthy families and vibrant neighborhoods – the foundation of a strong Milwaukee. Since 1878, Milwaukee Public Library has been a free provider of education and information for residents of Milwaukee and beyond. With 13 locations and more than three million items in circulation, MPL offers free access to a rich collection of materials both physical and digital, access to technology, classes, exhibitions, programming and more. From toddlers to scholars, MPL serves nearly one million patrons who come through its doors annually and many more around the globe who use its resources at www.mpl.org. To offer this wide array of free programming, MPL relies on both public and private funding. Learn more about how to support Milwaukee Public Library at www.mpl.org/support.

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