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SPRING 2018

OFF *the* SHELF

A MAGAZINE FROM THE FREE LIBRARY OF PHILADELPHIA



TACONY LIBRARY



LOVETT MEMORIAL LIBRARY

SPECIAL 21ST CENTURY LIBRARIES EDITION



LILLIAN MARRERO LIBRARY



LOGAN LIBRARY

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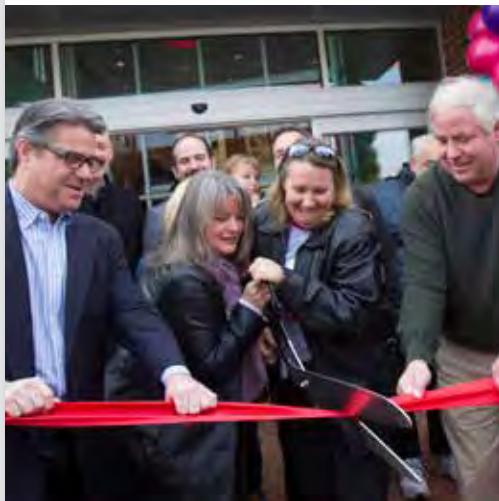
OFF THE SHELF

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Off the Shelf is published twice annually for supporters of the Free Library of Philadelphia and showcases the Library's educational, economic, and cultural contributions to the region.

ON THE COVER AND BELOW:

THE FREE LIBRARY WAS THRILLED TO CUT THE RIBBON ON THE FOUR NEWLY RENOVATED 21ST CENTURY LIBRARIES IN NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER 2017.



FROM THE PRESIDENT AND DIRECTOR

Welcome to this special edition of *Off the Shelf*!

Libraries are changing. The word “library” itself means something different than it once did. Today’s neighborhood libraries have become true civic centers, presenting cultural and educational programming; providing comprehensive professional-development tools and services; and offering community members safe, inclusive places. To best support their transformational work, they need flexible, functional, and welcoming spaces.

In the past few months, we have been thrilled to reopen four libraries that were reimagined with the needs of the 21st-century library user in mind. Drawing on community input, we increased and enhanced resources neighbors voiced greater need for—like laptop workspace and customized children’s areas—and created new spaces for users’ changing needs—like a community living room in the heart of each library.

This transformational work has been made possible in large part by a historic \$25 million gift from the William Penn Foundation—the largest private gift ever received by the Free Library—as well as a number of private individuals, institutional funders, the City of Philadelphia, and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. We are also grateful to the staff members who bring these new library spaces to life every day and serve their library communities with such dedication.

We know that the libraries of the 21st century must be so much more than warehouses of books. Through the *Building Inspiration* initiative, we are ensuring their physical spaces are up to the task of serving as centers of curiosity, enlightenment, technological access, and community support.

Explore the libraries highlighted in these pages, and I hope you will soon come visit these beautiful new spaces in person.

Warmly,

Siobhan A. Reardon

PRESIDENT AND DIRECTOR



PHOTO BY JON ROEMER

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BUILDING INSPIRATION

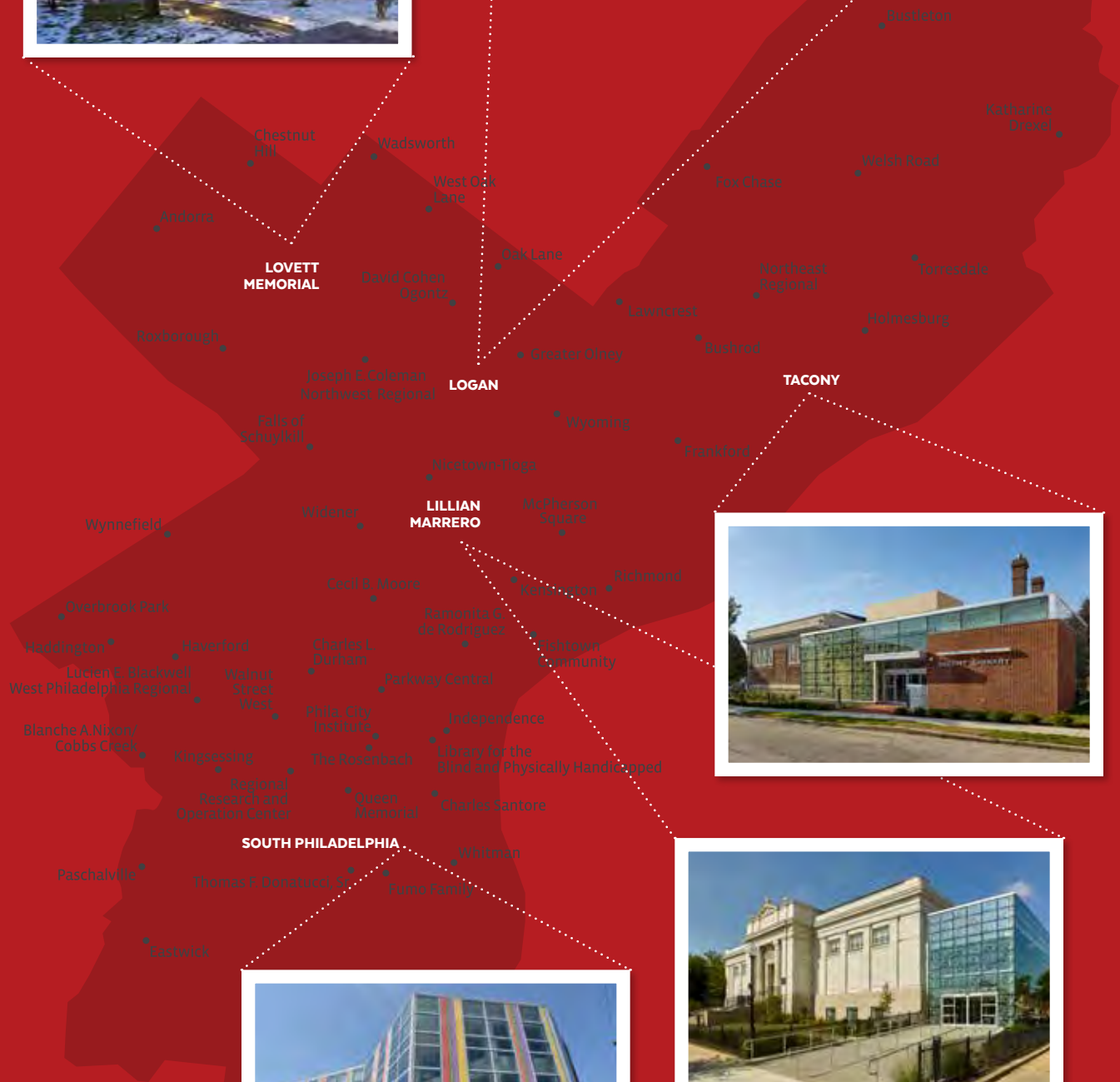
The ambitious *Building Inspiration: 21st Century Libraries Initiative* has reimagined and reshaped neighborhood libraries for today's—and tomorrow's—library users, redefining what it means to be a library in the 21st century.

Based on library staff experience and input, census data, and the results of a market segmentation study, the Free Library identified an initial five libraries, representing a broad cross-section of Philadelphia, to serve as prototypes. These pilot locations have undergone extensive modernization and expansion, becoming examples of what a 21st-century library can and should be.

The new South Philadelphia Library opened in 2016 in the new Health and Literacy Center at Broad and Morris streets; its nearly 12,000 square feet of space hosts more than 14,000 programs and serves more than 150,000 library users annually. We were thrilled to reopen the Lillian Marrero, Logan, Lovett Memorial, and Tacony libraries at the end of 2017, welcoming home their communities to warm, state-of-the-art spaces in which our library staff members can continue their passionate, dedicated work to advance literacy, guide learning, and inspire curiosity for Philadelphians of all ages, backgrounds, and needs.

THE TRANSFORMED 21ST CENTURY LIBRARIES ARE ALL ADA COMPLIANT AND INCLUDE

- a vibrant Children's Library
- a customized Pre-K Zone
- a dedicated Teen Space
- a welcoming living-room space
- an improved circulation desk and self-checkout kiosks
- updated program, meeting, and study rooms
- updated computer facilities



WELCOME HOME

THE LILLIAN MARRERO, LOGAN, LOVETT, AND TACONY LIBRARIES REOPENED THEIR DOORS IN NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER.

LILLIAN MARRERO LIBRARY

- 1 Community organizer Tania-María Ríos Marrero, daughter of library namesake Lillian Marrero, spoke at the ribbon cutting.
- 2 Neighbors participated in a craft activity with MakerJawn.
- 3 Julie Burgos and Los Bomberos de la Calle performed Puerto Rican Bomba and Plena music.



LOGAN LIBRARY

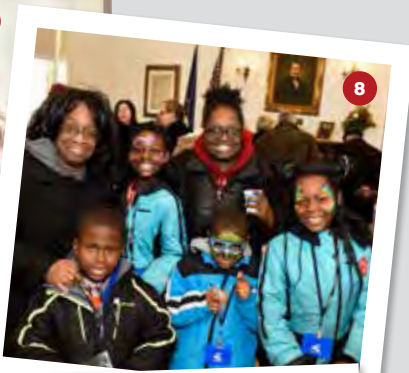
- 4 Rep. Dwight Evans and Mayor Jim Kenney celebrated the reopening with the community.
- 5 Cutting the ribbon on the new library were, from left to right, State Sen. Art Haywood, Councilwoman Cherelle Parker, Rep. Dwight Evans, William Penn Foundation Board Chair Janet Haas, and donors Lawrence and Toba Kerson.
- 6 Singer Sarai Love performed in the new Logan Library Community Room.



These 21st Century Libraries welcomed neighbors back with food, music, dancing, giveaways, and more! Free Library President and Director Siobhan A. Reardon and Mayor Jim Kenney helped kick off the celebrations.



7



8



9

- 7 Local musicians the Gin Canaries joined the celebration with live jazz.
- 8 Customers of all ages got their faces painted during the celebration.
- 9 Library volunteers were on hand for reading activities.

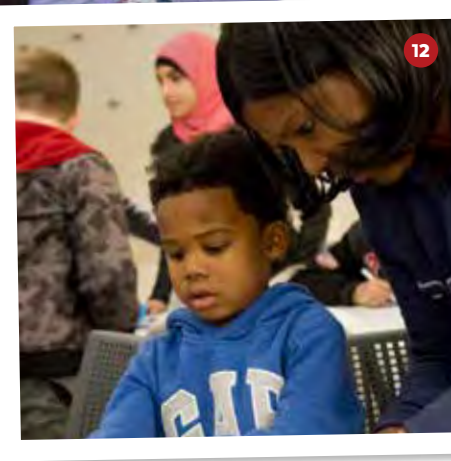
LOVETT MEMORIAL LIBRARY



10



11



12

- 10 The Philadelphia Suns performed a Chinese Lion Dance in honor of the occasion.
- 11 Tacony Library staff members Bernadette Puttergill, Jennifer Baumier, and Lesley McDowell were thrilled to welcome back library goers.
- 12 Children enjoyed craft-making as part of Tacony's Winterfest.

TACONY LIBRARY

LILLIAN MARRERO LIBRARY

>> 6TH STREET AND W. LEHIGH AVENUE <<



LILLIAN MARRERO's surrounding community has 11 public schools and a high concentration of new Americans. The library offers resources in both English and Spanish and maintains the largest Spanish-language collection in the Free Library system. Now that it has reopened, staff aims to support the needs of the community through programming targeted to early-childhood literacy and new Americans, bolstered by the library's expanded bilingual resources and bright new community spaces.



PART OF THE GLASS ENTRYWAY ADDITION

HISTORY

The original library was built in 1906, using a donation from philanthropist Andrew Carnegie, who funded free public libraries across the country and in 1903 committed \$1.5 million for the purpose of building more Free Library of Philadelphia locations. The white limestone, Grecian-style building was once the largest library in Pennsylvania.

Formerly known as the Lehigh Avenue Library, it was renamed in 2005 in honor of Lillian Marrero, a community organizer and long-serving librarian at the location until her death. It has been a great joy to welcome her daughter, Tania-María Ríos Marrero—who grew up at the library—as our community organizer in the Fairhill neighborhood.

THE ARCHITECT FULLY RESTORED THE LAY-LIGHT CEILING, WHICH HAD BEEN PREVIOUSLY OBSCURED. IT HAS BEEN RELIGHTED IN ITS ENTIRETY WITH LED LIGHTING, SPANNING THE MAIN LEVEL.

“The new space has an at-home feel, and I love the family literacy section, which is truly needed in this community.”

- DAVID MEDINA, LIBRARY CUSTOMER

NEW LAPTOP BAR



EXPANSIVE INTERIOR WITH OPEN FLOOR PLAN, INCLUDING THE PATRICIA KIND COMMON

LOGAN LIBRARY

>> WAGNER AVENUE AND OLD YORK ROAD <<



The **LOGAN LIBRARY** is a vital resource for area children and families. Neighborhood residents rely on the library to provide afterschool programming and homework help for school-age children in a safe and comfortable environment. Families now have new spaces in which to learn together and programming designed to build literacy across generations.



PRIVATE WORK AND STUDY ROOMS

“I’ve been a supporter of the Logan Library for over 40 years. It’s a blessing to see new resources and investments in both our community and our youth.” - D. HAWTHORNE, LIBRARY CUSTOMER SINCE 1977



TOBA S. AND LAWRENCE A. KERSON COMMON

THE ARCHITECT DISCOVERED ORIGINAL OAK POCKET DOORS—BETWEEN WHAT IS NOW THE ADULT LIBRARY AND THE CHILDREN’S AREA—COMPLETELY INTACT AND OPERABLE. THEY WERE RESTORED AND ARE AGAIN AVAILABLE FOR USE.

HISTORY

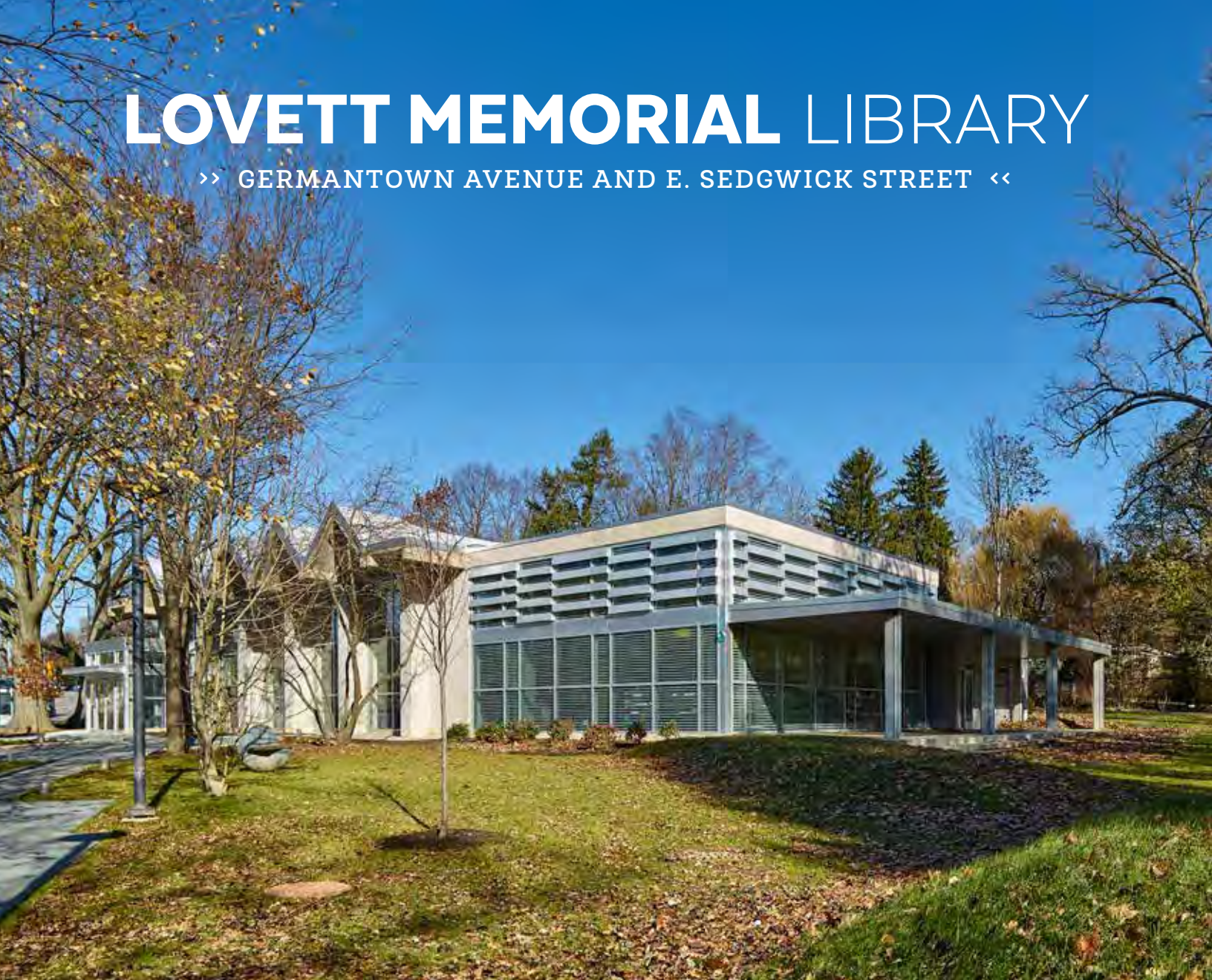
Spurred by a decade of work by the Logan Improvement League, the original Logan Library was built in 1918 on a portion of the Garrett Estate donated by Mrs. Philip Garrett. The construction of this Greek-Revival-style building was supported by funds from Andrew Carnegie’s donation to the Free Library of Philadelphia system. This year marks the 100th anniversary of this Carnegie library!



RUTH W. WILLIAMS CHILDREN’S LIBRARY

LOVETT MEMORIAL LIBRARY

>> GERMANTOWN AVENUE AND E. SEDGWICK STREET <<



LOVETT MEMORIAL is a heavily attended library that attracts a broad range of users, including seniors, academics, and school children. Because Lovett is such an important center of activity for the surrounding community, its new designs provide multiple designated spaces for a wide variety of activities and programs. Its new covered reading porch just off the new Children's Library adds a

wonderful community space for quiet reading as well as book discussions, conversation groups, knitting workshops, and more.

IMPROVEMENTS TO LOVETT MEMORIAL LIBRARY AND THE ADJOINING LOVETT PARK WERE FUNDED IN PART BY A \$1.25 MILLION GRANT FROM THE JOHN S. AND JAMES L. KNIGHT FOUNDATION FOR THE REIMAGINING THE CIVIC COMMONS INITIATIVE, A JOINT VENTURE WITH THE WILLIAM PENN FOUNDATION AND LED BY THE FAIRMOUNT PARK CONSERVANCY, WITH THE AIM OF LEVERAGING PARKS AND LIBRARIES TO FOSTER COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. IN COLLABORATION WITH MT. AIRY USA, THE LIBRARY WILL BE INTEGRATED INTO THE PARK, WHICH WILL INCLUDE A READING AREA AND SPACE FOR OUTDOOR PROGRAMMING LIKE THE POPULAR SUMMER MOVIE SERIES.

HISTORY

Mount Airy Free Library was founded in 1885 in a rented room at a lumberyard on the Lovett estate, located along Germantown Avenue. In 1887, Charlotte Lovett Bostwick built and endowed a permanent library building as a memorial to her brother, Thomas R. Lovett; this portion now serves as a meeting room in the Lovett Library of today—which became part of the Free Library of Philadelphia in 1924. This cherished community hub has had a dedicated Friends group for nearly 40 years.

THE ARCHITECT WAS ABLE TO REVEAL THE ENTIRETY OF THE HISTORIC 1887 LIBRARY INTERIOR, FOR USE AS AN EXPANDED MEETING ROOM. THIS INCLUDES RESTORATION OF AN ORIGINAL FIREPLACE, LIGHT FIXTURES, AND A STAINED-GLASS PANEL THAT WAS METICULOUSLY RESTORED BY THE FRIENDS OF LOVETT MEMORIAL LIBRARY.

“Book lovers, WiFi-ers, moms and dads (and grands) pushing strollers, school kids, and the whole spectrum of this diverse community has eagerly welcomed this fresh chapter of 21st-century service for our historic 19th-century institution.”

- DAVID T. MOORE, PRESIDENT OF THE FRIENDS OF LOVETT MEMORIAL LIBRARY



HISTORIC COMMUNITY ROOM

REDESIGNED INTERIOR, INCLUDING THE MORRIS FAMILY COMMON, AT RIGHT, AND THE SECOND-FLOOR BENJOLIEL FAMILY COMPUTER LAB



TACONY LIBRARY

>> TORRESDALE AVENUE AND KNORR STREET <<



TACONY LIBRARY is situated in the center of a re-emerging commercial corridor on Torresdale Avenue in the lower Northeast. The Tacony Community Development Corporation (CDC) has been working to establish the neighborhood as a quality destination for shopping and dining. As small businesses in the area

undergo a process of revitalization, the library's new Small Business Resource Center provides valuable information and resources for starting, managing, and growing a business. Deepening the library's commitment to supporting business needs in the neighborhood, the Tacony CDC has moved its offices to the new Tacony Library's lower level.



HISTORY

Industrialist Henry Disston moved his sawmill from downtown Philadelphia to Tacony in 1872, transforming the area into a thriving industrial corridor. In 1906, the Disston family bequeathed a plot of land for the construction of a public library, supported by funds from Andrew Carnegie's donation. Benjamin Volta's original artwork at the new Tacony Library honors this history with patterns drawn from the Disston tool catalogue. Read more about Volta's work on page 17.

THE ARCHITECT DISCOVERED ORIGINAL PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE LIBRARY AND WAS ABLE TO RECONSTRUCT SEVERAL ORIGINAL FEATURES, INCLUDING LIVING-ROOM CHANDELIERS, LAMPPOSTS AT THE HISTORIC ENTRANCE, AND THE INTERIOR LAY-LIGHT (SKYLIGHT)—ALL NOW LIGHTED WITH ENERGY-EFFICIENT LED LAMPS.



PART OF THE MODERN GLASS ADDITION

"I can't say enough good things about it. I've been coming here for years, and it's like moving into a new home."

- MARY GORDON, LIBRARY CUSTOMER

FOCUS ON

ORIGINAL ARTWORK IN THE 21ST CENTURY LIBRARIES

EVERY DETAIL OF OUR NEW LIBRARIES WAS CREATED WITH THE CUSTOMER IN MIND—FROM NEW COLORFUL FURNITURE AND SELF-CHECKOUT KIOSKS TO ACCESSIBLE ENTRANCES AND NEWLY INSTALLED ELEVATORS. THE WALLS, TOO, HAVE BEEN ADORNED BY NEW ARTWORK CREATED SPECIFICALLY FOR EACH LIBRARY COMMUNITY.

Supported by the Percent for Art Program in the City of Philadelphia’s Office of Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy, four artists created site-specific pieces that reflect both the neighbors and the neighborhoods that define these libraries.

Thanks to a Knight Foundation-funded community-immersion process, each artist was able to spend considerable time at the library and in the community, meeting with neighbors and embracing the unique cultural fabric of these Philadelphia neighborhoods—a sense that is felt in the resulting beautiful pieces of art.



PHOTO CREDIT: NATHEA LEE

Read: A Pathway for Hope

INDOOR MURAL AT LOGAN LIBRARY
CREATED BY IFE NII OWOO

This mural focuses on the importance of literacy in the community, highlighting images and colors drawn from culturally significant patterns from the neighborhood. Words from internationally renowned, Philadelphia-based poet Trapeta Mayson are artistically interwoven throughout the work. Nii Owoo shared she wanted “viewers to feel this community’s vibrancy, see its diversity, and celebrate the act of reading.”

Shared Voices, Common Hearts

BLACK-AND-WHITE PHOTOGRAPHS AT LILLIAN MARRERO LIBRARY
CREATED BY JULIA STAPLES

These portrait photographs of Fairhill community members reflect the diverse and multi-generational community of library users. These timeless images pay tribute and respect to the lives and heritage of the community.

Having spent a significant amount of time at the library, Staples said she found the process “a wonderful opportunity to bring to the forefront the unreported, underrepresented stories of the community.”



PHOTO CREDIT: JEFFREY TOTARO

WITH GRATITUDE:

Honoring Contributors to the *Building Inspiration: 21st Century Libraries Initiative*

The Free Library of Philadelphia gratefully acknowledges the many generous contributors who helped bring our new libraries to life.

This transformational endeavor has been made possible in large part by a historic \$25 million gift from the **William Penn Foundation**—the largest private gift ever received by the Free Library—as well as with generous support from the **City of Philadelphia**, the **Commonwealth of Pennsylvania**, and the public and private individuals and organizations listed here.

Anonymous	Rhonda and James Mordy
Barbara B. and Theodore R. Aronson	Martha and I. Wistar Morris
Cindy and John Affleck	Office of Commonwealth Libraries, Pennsylvania Department of Education, Keystone Recreation, Park and Conservation Fund
Janet and Jim Averill	The Patchwork Foundation
Carolyn Cannuscio and Daniel Rader	Philadelphia Water Department
Councilwoman Cindy Bass on behalf of the 8th District of Philadelphia	Pennsylvania Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program (RACP)
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Toba and Lawrence Kerson	Wellington Management
Patricia Kind*	Ruth W.* and A. Morris Williams, Jr.
John S. and James L. Knight Foundation	Ted and Stevie Wolf
Patricia A. LePera and Arnold Lurie	
Dale and Richard Levy	

*deceased

PHOTO CREDIT: JAIME ALVAREZ



Exploration and This Place

STAINED-GLASS INSTALLATIONS AT LOVETT MEMORIAL LIBRARY
CREATED BY COOPER O'NEIL

Through his engagement with the community, O'Neil and the library staff developed a vision statement, which led them to think about the library as “the neighborhood’s kitchen table” and “as a home for community literacy.” Both stained-glass pieces are brightly colored and alluring and draw upon architectural elements from the immediate Mt. Airy community and Mt. Airy’s history of stained-glass construction. A stained-glass window in the library’s historic community room was also restored as part of the library’s renovations, thanks to the Friends of Lovett Memorial Library.



PHOTO CREDIT: STEVE WEINIK

Reflect Tacony

INDOOR MURAL AT TACONY LIBRARY
CREATED BY BENJAMIN VOLTA

Drawing upon the area’s rich industrial history, this mural focuses on the Disston Saw Works, an industrial giant that left an indelible mark on the neighborhood. In addition to meeting with the community, Volta also spent a considerable amount of time researching with the Historical Society of Tacony to source historical images. Volta has collaged these images to adorn the walls of the library.



THE FINAL WORD

WITH
JIM KELLER, architect

Jim Keller has spent his career helping communities reimagine their libraries. He explores a library from every angle—access, services, structures, furnishings, and technology—to determine how best to serve its community. He has helped develop transformative physical solutions for over 100 new and renovated libraries on three continents. The Free Library was so pleased to collaborate with him in bringing our four new 21st Century Libraries to life.

OTS WHAT DRAWS YOU TO WORKING WITH LIBRARIES?

JK The public library is the most democratic of institutions—it is a place where every person has access. Creating places that universally welcome each person offers meaning and purpose to my work. Our project title describes this draw: “Building Inspiration.”

OTS FOR THIS PROJECT, YOU WERE TASKED WITH REIMAGINING FOUR LIBRARIES IN FOUR DIFFERENT COMMUNITIES. HOW DID YOU ENSURE EACH BUILDING REFLECTED ITS SURROUNDING NEIGHBORHOOD?

JK We began our process with community conversations. We listened carefully and recorded the concerns, ideas, experiences, and aspirations of each community. The themes of the commissioned artists’ work and other design elements also reflect community input.

OTS WHAT NEW BUILDING ELEMENTS ARE YOU MOST EXCITED ABOUT?

JK The element of each library that I am most excited about is making each building universally accessible. These projects are “aspirational,” meaning that the intent and goals are to create places that are warm, welcoming, intuitive, comfortable, and, most importantly, accessible to every person.

OTS TO YOU, THE FREE LIBRARY OF PHILADELPHIA IS ALSO THE FREE LIBRARY OF _____, WHY?

JK It is the Free Library of Access! The Library provides access to every person through technology, collections, and community—this is the wonder of the Free Library.

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Building Inspiration **UPDATES**

PARKWAY CENTRAL LIBRARY



Deconstruction of the original six levels of stack-shelving units is now complete, clearing the way for exciting new public spaces, including **The Common**, the **Business Resource and Innovation Center (BRIC)**, the **Marie and Joseph Field Teen Center**, and other innovative areas and services.

These spaces are expected to open in fall 2018.



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