Dear Friends:

Donors like you are the reason that Emmet O’Neal Library can provide exceptional programs and services to the residents of Mountain Brook. Those innovative and stimulating programs and services for all ages are highlighted in the following pages, including the annual Yule Ball and a standing-room-only guest appearance by New York Times best-selling author, Madeline Miller.

Donors like you are the reason that Emmet O’Neal Library has an outstanding collection of print and digital materials to spark curiosity from cradle to cane. Emmet O’Neal Library has struck a satisfying balance between old and new formats, including magazines, audiobook CDs, DVDs, e-books, downloadable audiobooks, and streaming video.

Donors like you are the reason that the staff at Emmet O’Neal Library are always smiling. The staff enjoy those moments when the answer to the challenging question is revealed or the perfect book recommendation has been delivered. The creative crew at the Library wants to provide the best possible experience for you.

Donors like you make all the difference at Emmet O’Neal Library. It is our honor and privilege to express our gratitude for your investment in our community and our Library.

Sincerely,

LaVonda Keel, President

Penny Page, President

Mountain Brook Library Foundation

Emmet O’Neal Library Board

I am a data nerd. I absolutely love to see the smiling faces in the pictures on these pages because providing a positive experience for our patrons is the number one goal at Emmet O’Neal Library. I also appreciate a good set of data to complement those smiling faces, and I’ve challenged staff to make more data-influenced decisions.

In this annual report, you will see an infographic illustrating the data we most often collect. These numbers are the mathematical personification of what I already know to be true – Emmet O’Neal Library enjoys enthusiastic community support.

I would like to brag a bit on our circulation statistics. This year, Emmet O’Neal Library saw a 21% increase in print book circulation, even though nationwide, most libraries recorded a decline in print materials demand. At the same time, digital book circulation at Emmet O’Neal Library also increased by 40%.

These circulation numbers reflect an undeniable thirst for information, which is unsurprising in light of the fact that 99% of Mountain Brook adults 25 years and older have high school diplomas and 85% of adults 25 and older have a Bachelor’s degree or higher. (US Census)

All these numbers add up to one solid conclusion – I count myself incredibly lucky to be at the helm of such a well-loved library in such an exceptional community.

And while sometimes getting lost in the data is fun, I never want to lose sight of the big accomplishments of staff at Emmet O’Neal Library this year – implementing RFID to add more self check-out kiosks, bringing the Library to the community through Books in the Brook at Overton Park, and hosting innovative programs and award-winning creators like New York Times best-seller Madeline Miller.

As we celebrate the achievements of 2019 and set goals for 2020, I would like to thank you for investing in the success of Emmet O’Neal Library.

Sincerely,

Lindsay Gardner
Library Director

Cover artwork by Meredith Keith
Purchased artwork through Gallery 1930
Your Star Library by the Numbers

CIRCULATION YEAR-TO-DATE BY FORMAT

622,390
Total Items Loaned

161,883
All Other Non-Books Loaned

161,344
E-Books Loaned

299,163
Physical books loaned

239,524
In-person visits

40
Public access computers

21,311
Computer uses

87,659
Library website visits

TOP ADULT FICTION

Where the Crawdads Sing
Delia Owens

Long Road to Mercy
David Baldacci

TOP PICTURE BOOKS

Llama Llama Time to Share
Anna Dewdney

Fancy Nancy: Oodles of Kittens
Jane O’Connor

24,196
Children’s program attendees

555
Programs for children

1,997
Children’s Summer Reading participants

98
Programs for teens

2,836
Teen program attendees

175
Teen Summer Reading participants

193
Programs for adults

4,520
Adult program attendees
UPGRADE TO A FIRST CLASS LIBRARY EXPERIENCE

Things have been changing around your Emmet O’Neal Library, from display and seating spaces to the most exciting upgrade, converting the Library’s collection to a radio-frequency identification (RFID) checkout system. You may have noticed the updated and sleek new security gates in the lobby, but that is just one part of the RFID improvements. The Library’s goal was to remain open during the entire process while striving to make sure the work was done quickly and did not affect library user experience. The conversion started mid-April and concluded mid-July. In a short three months, a staggering total of over 137,000 items in Emmet O’Neal Library’s collection were taken from the shelves one-by-one and tagged for the new equipment!

The Envisionware RFID system brings patrons three state-of-the-art self-checkout terminals strategically placed in each department to make your library visits convenient and easy. Have a card saver app on your phone? The new terminals easily scan them! If you happen to have any fees, all of the terminals process credit card payments. In addition to giving you flexibility in managing your library account, these terminals will reduce wait times during your visit.

Should you prefer more personalized assistance, never fear! The wonderful staff at all service desks will still be there to help. The streamlined check-in and check-out processes, supported by this new technology, will free up time for your favorite staff member to provide even more of Emmet O’Neal Library’s superb customer service. The ease and efficiency provided also allows staff to more easily locate materials you request, provide recommendations and suggestions for avid readers, and curate a vibrant collection. Your Librarians can focus more on planning entertaining and educational programs for the whole family which support social enrichment and lifelong learning in the Mountain Brook community.

RFID not only addresses present desires for speedy and efficient services for our thriving community, it also provides a window to wonderful future possibilities for the Library and our city. Through the strategic planning process, many library users have expressed interest in added services in other high-traffic areas of the community, such as remote book drops and hold pick ups or book vending machines. RFID puts those amazing services within reach, and, with your continued support, Emmet O’Neal Library will certainly consider these innovations in the years to come.
FIND YOUR WAY

Find Your Way is a life skills and college preparatory program to give young adults the skills to successfully navigate the world of today and tomorrow on the ever-changing road to higher education. Through this program, teens are introduced to basic cooking, auto maintenance, budgeting, and other life skills in a relaxed atmosphere with their friends. In the final session of Find Your Way, a panel of former Emmet O’Neal Teen Advisory Board members who are in college or have entered the workforce are available to answer any questions teens have about life after high school. The students who attend Find Your Way programs are equipped with practical skills to successfully tackle many of life’s challenges.

CROSSOVER

Crossover is a partnership between the Children’s Department and the Young Adult Department to introduce 5th-8th grade students to the Young Adult staff and create a gentler transition as they move into their junior high school years. Crossover programming focuses on crafts, gaming challenges, trivia, and a variety of fun activities that encourage bonding among the participants and ultimately create a greater sense of belonging at the Library.
The Children’s Department transformed into a universe of stories for summer reading. The galaxies, planets, and black holes decorating the department elicited wondrous gasps from young library patrons, but even more astounding was the accomplishment of summer readers. From the end of May to the end of July, children read or listened to over two million pages. The number of kids who signed up for the summer reading program was on par with previous summers (about 1,500), while the number of those who actually participated by reading, checking in with librarians, and earning rewards was the highest ever at nearly 70%.

The Junior Women’s Committee of 100 plays an enormous role in supporting the Children’s Department through fundraising and volunteering. With the annual Summer Reading Kickoff Carnival this year, the JWC not only helped community members celebrate the advent of summer reading together, but also raised $70,000 for the Children’s Department. The donation will translate into continued innovation in meeting the needs of Mountain Brook families through program offerings and collection development, including a new graphic novel book club, a new sensory playtime, and the addition of read-along Wonderbooks to the picture book collection.
Books in the Brook is the recent Children’s Department initiative to encourage patrons to engage with the Library’s services and resources outside the walls of the library building. Monthly pop-up storytimes continue to bring families to parks and community spaces around Mountain Brook, often in conjunction with other events like the Christmas parade and Fire Prevention Month. Librarians are also spending more time at the four elementary schools, sharing stories and book talks and online resources with students, teachers, and parents. New this year was the Library’s Countdown to Kindergarten, a weekly summer storytime at two elementary schools. The program was designed to help incoming kindergartners feel familiar and at ease in the halls of their schools so that when they arrive for their first day, their apprehension has already transformed into confidence and enthusiasm. Between Brookwood Forest and Cherokee Bend Elementary Schools, Emmet O’Neal Librarians and school faculty welcomed over 150 new kindergartners and parents.

In September, the Children’s Department launched two additional offerings to help families spend time together outdoors. The first, a collaboration with the Mountain Brook Parks and Recreation Department, is a read-as-you-stroll experience called Books in the Brook, based on a concept called StoryWalk®. The StoryWalk® Project was created by Anne Ferguson of Montpelier, VT, and developed in collaboration with the Kellogg-Hubbard Library. At Overton Park, kids and parents can interact with a children’s book as they walk the trail, pausing at placards along the way to read a page at a time and try out a suggested activity. The first book on the trail was Me…Jane, a picture book about the childhood of primatologist Jane Goodall. “My girls absolutely loved the Library’s unique walking storybook experience at Overton Park,” said patron Adrian Zebot at the grand opening of Books in the Brook. “They enjoyed following the story around the park and the little surprises along the way, such as using binoculars to find animals hiding in the trees. The Children’s Department staff did an amazing job making the story come alive!”

In addition to the picture book walk, the Emmet O’Neal Library Children’s Department is also now circulating Adventure Packs to spark interest in nature outings and offer creative ideas to help kids explore the outdoors. Each backpack contains books and tools to take a deeper dive into one aspect of being outside – current themes are birds, plants, water, rocks, and the night sky. Adventure Packs are designed to encourage families to make use of the beautiful parks, trails, and waterways in Mountain Brook.

The Children’s Department strives to be a sensory-inclusive environment with toys and other materials, as well as with the arrangement of space. In an effort to reinforce this mission of inclusiveness and expand the feeling of safety and welcome, Librarians have developed a new monthly program called Sensory Play, Explore, and More. Each Friday morning program begins with a 45-minute sensory play session open to all ages without registration. This is followed by two consecutive small group sessions, each also 45 minutes, requiring registration to ensure a more intimate, lower-stimulus environment. Children’s Librarian, Rachael Struthers, has designed several free-play activities that encourage kids and caregivers to investigate color, texture, light, shape, weight, size, and motion. “We hope all members of our community feel like they’re welcome to all our programs,” says Struthers. “But we understand that some of our programs are more crowded or noisy than some patrons prefer, so we wanted to offer a time and space with less distraction for parents and kids to engage and explore together.”
On September 18, local journalists Chip Brantley and Andrew Beck Grace spoke at the Emmet O’Neal Library about their nationally syndicated podcast for National Public Radio, “White Lies.” This podcast investigates the murder of Rev. James Reeb in 1965 in Selma. Brantley and Grace interviewed witnesses and family members to try to shed light on the murder.

The Library celebrated Burns Night in honor of Scotland’s national poet, Robert Burns, with the help of friends from the St. Andrews Society of the Middle South.
## SCHOLARS
Donors who have generously given $5,000 or more
- Friends of Emmet O’Neal Library
- Junior Women’s Committee of 100
- Mrs. Terri D. Lyon
- Mr. & Mrs. C. Phillip McWane
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- State of Alabama
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- Louise B. Walton

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October 1, 2018 - September 30, 2019
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Angie Webb
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Special thanks to State Representative David Faulkner for presenting a generous donation to the Library from the State of Alabama.

Pictured: State Representative David Faulkner with Library Board President Penny Page and Library Director Lindsy Gardner
For more than 50 years, the Friends of the Emmet O’Neal Library have supported the Library through their annual book sale. Proceeds from the sale support the Library’s adult and teen programs. These varied programs range from author events, book clubs, and weekly yoga for adults to ukulele workshops, cooking competitions, and “cra.esplosion” events for teens.

Over the past nine years, the group has raised over $270,000 for the Library and has shared the surplus of donated books with various charities throughout Alabama. This past year, $30,000 worth of books were sold during the event. During the philanthropy day after the sale, twenty-five non-profit organizations were able to select over 3,500 books to be donated to their organizations.

There is always a lot of excitement surrounding this event. Mark your calendars for the Book Sale weekend on February 20-23, 2020 which kicks off with the much-anticipated Preview Party on Thursday February 20th. By donating $25 or more, you will receive an invitation to the Preview Party where you will have first choice of rare and first edition treasures the Friends have been organizing all year long. All books from the sale (over 20,000 volumes!) are donated throughout the year by members of the community or from the Library’s collection. Those wishing to donate books can bring them to the back door of the Library. Just ring the doorbell, and someone will unload your books and give you a receipt. Please note that we cannot accept encyclopedias, textbooks, or books that are damaged or moldy.

We are always looking to add new members to our group. If you or someone you know would like to join this fun and passionate group, please contact Friends President, Barbara Blair at barbaramblair@gmail.com.

2019 TYNES AWARD

The William Tynes Award is an honor bestowed upon an individual or group who is recognized for meaningful and devoted service to the City of Mountain Brook and especially Emmet O’Neal Library.

William “Bill” Tynes, Jr. was on the Mountain Brook Library Foundation Board from 2000-2008 and served as chairman from 2003-2008. Mr. Tynes also served on the Mountain Brook City Council from 1988 to 1996, during which time he advocated strongly for Emmet O’Neal Library.

Past recipients of the William Tynes Award include Lee Gewin, Forsyth Donald, Dr. John Poynor, Larry Faulkner, Western Supermarkets, and Sue DeBrecht.

The Board of Trustees of the Emmet O’Neal Library and the Mountain Brook Library Foundation congratulate this year’s recipient of the William Tynes Award, Alice Williams, for her role as a significant community partner. Mrs. Williams played a major part in the Library’s late 1990s building project when she was on the Mountain Brook City Council where she was a city council representative on the committee to build the new library, as well as liaison to the Library during her time on the council.

Congratulations, Alice Williams!

Left to Right: Lauren Hayes, Book Sale Chair, Friends President Barbara Blair, Penny Page, Library Board President, and Lindsey Gardner
Honorariums
October 1, 2018 - September 30, 2019
Donations were made to the Library in honor of the following individuals:

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Mr. & Mrs. Frederick W. Renneker, III

MELINDA ALDAG
Ed Aldag, Jr.

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HONOR YOUR CHILD OR GRANDCHILD WITH THE GIFT THAT KEEPS ON GIVING

Consider purchasing a book for the Children's Department in honor or memory of a special child in your life through the Book Buddies program. The Library will choose a book and attach a nameplate with the child's name, and the child will also receive a special card from the Library describing your special gift. If you would like to make a child a Book Buddy, please visit www.eolib.org and click on Donate, then select the JWC of 100 page to find out more.
Memorials
October 1, 2018 - September 30, 2019

Donations were made to the Library in memory of the following individuals:

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ELLEN ALAND
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Mr. & Mrs. Joseph C. South, III

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Patty & Larry Faulkner
Mrs. Irma St. John

JOHN HIGGINS "JACK" MARTIN
Mr. & Mrs. Sam Gaston
Suzanne Woodall

JOHN LOUIS MARTY, JR.
Mrs. John L. Marty

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Suzanne W. Lucas
Lelie & David MacLeod
Betsy Marbury
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Charitable bequests ensure that the Library continues to provide enriching programs for all ages and inspire a lifelong love of reading within the community.
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Mrs. Joseph M. Donald, Jr.
Mr. & Mrs. Joseph M. Donald, III
Me. & Mrs. Richard Latham
Kathryn Shook

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Holley Wesley

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Mr. & Mrs. Joseph M. Donald, III
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Mr. & Mrs. John H. Schuler
Memorials
October 1, 2018 - September 30, 2019

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Patty & Larry Faulkner

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Patty & Larry Faulkner
Mr. & Mrs. Sam Gaston
Mrs. Elbert S. Jemison, Jr.
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Mr. & Mrs. Allen D. Rushton
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ROBBIE SEVIER
Elna Brendel
Patty & Larry Faulkner

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Kathryn Shook

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Argus Club

LYNN L. WOEHLEE
Frances & Miller Gorrie
Lisbeth Morrison
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• December 3 – Spirituality of Wine
• December 5 – The College Path with Lance Beverly
• December 8 – Storytime Under the Bromberg Christmas Tree
• December 10 – Miss Kit's Storytime in Mrs. Claus's Kitchen
• December 11 – Murder Mystery Event: Who Slayed Santa?
• December 18 – Fancy Nancy Splendiferous Hairdo Hullabaloo
• January 16, 23, 26, 30 – Holocaust In Film
• January 24 – Zelda's Ball
• January 25 – Gatsby Ball
• February 20-23 – Friends of Emmet O'Neal Library Book Sale

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