



# LIBRARIANSHIP DURING A GLOBAL PANDEMIC





## DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Dear Library Supporter,

What a year! 2020 was, without a doubt, one of the most challenging of my lifetime. Between a global pandemic, political and social unrest and an economic downturn, no one escaped 2020 unscathed.

The Library was no exception. After decades of establishing ourselves as a community center where people come to gather face to face, we had no protocol for a global pandemic that would make such a mission impossible. With that said, the beauty of librarians is that we have a solitary mission to serve the public to the best of our abilities and we did just that.

After closing to the public on March 15, we immediately turned to technology to continue our programs. Within one day of closing, we uploaded our first streaming storytime video. We helped people get new cards or update their expired ones so they could take advantage of the myriad of digital resources we already had available including eBooks, eMagazines, downloadable audiobooks and streaming movies. Book groups, movie discussions, music lessons, trivia nights, homework assistance, crafts and art exhibits all moved to virtual platforms. Even our annual Summer Reading program went entirely digital. All the while, Library staff manned the "Hoover Helpline," assisting citizens with finding answers to their COVID-related questions.

On June 1, we opened for curbside delivery. On our first day of operation, we had over 250 cars needing service. As wonderful as digital books are, our patrons missed physical books and their librarians!

While offering curbside service, the management team worked to create safe protocols for reopening the facility to the community. On July 15, we were one of the first libraries in Jefferson County to open our doors to the public, albeit with limited services.

As we look to 2021 and the distribution of an effective vaccine, we are hopeful for a return to normal. However, there is good that came from this year of experimentation. Curbside service is very convenient for patrons and online programs allow us to extend our reach across the nation and globe. As one patron said, "You are no longer Hoover's library, but America's library."

Yes, it has been a difficult year, but I am proud of the work our staff has done to keep the Library relevant and because of them, I am confident that brighter days are ahead.

Best,

*Amanda*



This year featured a great lineup of writers, artists and performers. Our headliner was renowned mystery writer Laura Lippman. She has published more than 20 novels and multiple short stories, several of which have been anthologized in "The Best American Mystery Stories."



A new addition to this year's festival was our hosting of three romance novelists. Sally Kilpatrick, Sarah MacLean, and Naima Simone discussed the impact and importance of the romance industry.

Our other writers included Kimberly Belle, Emily Carpenter, Lauren Denton, Hampton Sides, George Singleton and Snowden Wright.



Belle and Carpenter are mystery/suspense writers who currently live in the Atlanta area.

Denton is a novelist from Mobile who now lives in Homewood.

Singleton is a short story writer who was born in California but raised in South Carolina.



Sides is a nonfiction writer from Memphis, who now divides his time between Santa Fe, New Mexico, and Colorado College.

Wright is a novelist, originally from Mississippi, who also lives in Atlanta.

We kicked off the Festival with a reception for Opelika oil painter Carlton Nell, also an art professor at Auburn University.



Our mid-week performances featured two one-act plays, "Graceland" and "Asleep on the Wind," written by Ellen Byron and directed by Henry Scott.

"Graceland" tells the story of two ardent Elvis Presley fans, and "Asleep on the Wind" is a prequel set ten years earlier.

# SOUTHERN VOICES

FEBRUARY  
18 - 22  
2020

# PATRON VOICES

 4.8/5

*Always polite and courteous. A good public resource. –Austin*

*The BEST LIBRARY IN ALABAMA !!! –Jacquelyn*

*Great place to bring your kids with tons of books, both board games and console games, comics, music and etc. You won't be disappointed great large humongous variety of all subjects for any age !!! And also don't forget the study rooms and internet access with printers. –MMG*

*Beautiful facility with most helpful employees. Everyone I have spoken to in person or by phone, a pleasure when you need help and advise. –Celeste*

*Love love love the Hoover Library. I always have nothing but great things to say about this place. They have everything & if by chance they don't have it...if you ask for it, they will most likely get it for you. Staff is always helpful & friendly! –Shella*

*Staff members are kind and always willing to help. –Catherine*

*It's a really nice place. A lot of books and lights. The atmosphere. Various education. Cafeteria. Additional audio. Video tools other than books. It's all fantastic. –Alex*

 **Tripadvisor** 5/5

*The Southern Voices even last week was well organized and interesting. I am proud of our local library. Again. Always. –anantiquemyself*

*Top notch library with a coffee shop, cafe, board room to reserve, basement meeting rooms, theater with fantastic performances in a 200 person venue. We saw Ricky Skaggs perform here and the lady who sings Strawberry Wine...only \$30 if reserved early. –WorldTripperTexan*

*I go to this library 3 - 4 times a week. they have the Best staff and every type of information that you need. AN awesome place for kids, adults and teenagers. –DJBay1*

*We've been to several events at this library. Great parking; clean environment; friendly staff (especially Katie!); fun events. –camm999*

# facebook 4.9/5

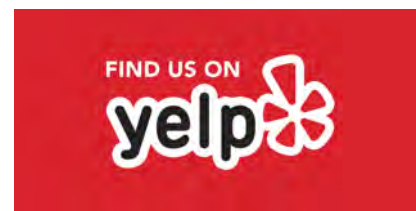
*Best children's department ever! The librarians always take time to make recommendations for my precocious reader and ask him questions about the books he likes. He always leaves so excited about his new books! –Liz*

*They all are kind and helpful. I love their large selection of fiction and non fiction books. The children section for readers are great when the Grands come to stay in the summer. –Sandra*

*Excellent staff! Always helpful and friendly –Scott*

*Large inventory of reading , play area. for tots. –Barbara*

*Been there many times, staff is helping and environment is really soothing –Kiran*



5/5

*This is such an amazing library. Driving past it for years on 31, I had no idea just how expansive it actually. There are so many areas, levels, helper and of course, books!! Not only does the main level consist of tons of adult, teenage and kid resources, but it also has an ENORMOUS read area complete with an Edgar's Bakery. If you are all about the library experience, this is place to come.*

*They also take their event calendar very seriously and make sure that there is constantly something to do. Everything from small gatherings to large fundraisers. If you explore beyond the main level, you will see the meeting areas and a full on theater downstairs. Just an amazing facility with amazing people. –Will*

*I love the Hoover library. I come here for meetings, study, and fun times with my 7yo son. Check out the cafe, East 59. I have reviewed it extensively on their Yelp profile and I can reiterate that it is one of the best "batch brewed" cups of coffee in town and the seating/socializing areas near the cafe are great.*

*What a great selection of books, videos, and games! As is true for any Jefferson Co libraries, they can get you pretty much whatever you want if you special request it. I always feel warm and welcomed here whether I am here alone, with my son, or with a colleague.*

*They have plenty of special events and special displays all through the year so check out their website to see what is happening soon!*

*As you can see in my pictures, the hallway between the teen area and the cafe displays interesting artwork that rotates often.*

*I was there today and will be back soon! –Garrett*

*I had to stop in last week to pick up a book that is not available in book stores. This was the first time I had been in a public library in almost a decade and boy, was it absolutely magical. It brought back so many memories of infinite possibility from my youth. This library is incredibly well appointed and the selection is vast. The staff is friendly and getting a library card was easy and uncomplicated. I ended up picking several other books and wanted desperately to stay longer and just wander. I can't wait to return to their kids area with my toddler son. –Rashmee*

# STAYING TRUE TO OUR MISSION

We officially closed to the public on March 15. Our staff shifted to remote work. On March 16, we posted our first virtual program and began managing the City's COVID hotline fulltime.

As the weeks grew into months, we developed an operational four-phase plan on how to return to work safely and eventually back into full operation.

*"...the beauty of librarians is that we have a solitary mission to serve the public to the best of our abilities..."*

## VIRTUAL PROGRAMMING

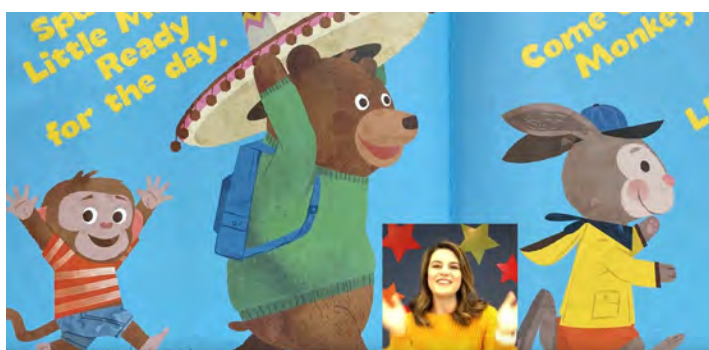
From mid-March to mid-May, Library staff worked remotely producing virtual content for our patrons. Our staff used Microsoft Teams to meet and stay in contact with coworkers. The Library managed the City's hotline remotely, with members working in four-person teams in rotating shifts throughout the day.

### STORYTIME

As one of our most critical programs, storytime was the first one to go virtual. The day after we closed our doors, we began sharing storytime videos on Facebook and YouTube. These storytime videos were greatly appreciated by parents and teachers who needed ways to engage their children during this time. Also, APT Education posted our videos on their page for summer content. Our videos became so popular that we developed an international reach including the UK, Australia and a 1,000 new fans in Thailand!

### LIVE FROM MY LIVING ROOM

As we all missed the joys of sharing live music each week on our Plaza stage, we began looking for ways to bring that live experience to a virtual audience. "Live From My Living Room" gave us a real-time online event where music lovers could interact and connect with the artist as well as with each other. We featured artists from all over the country and some from other countries to thousands of viewers, who raved about this program. All episodes are archived on Facebook and YouTube.



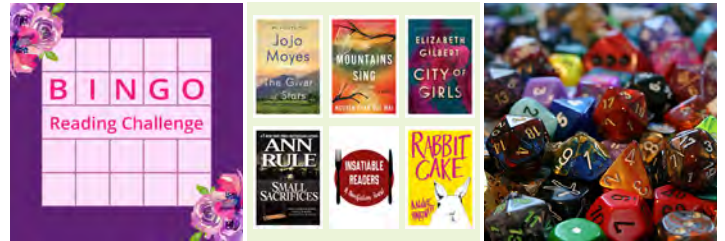
## GRAB-&-GO CRAFTS

Our grab-and-go crafts have been a huge success for both children, teens and adults. We featured fun crafts, STEAM experiments and tie-dyed Thursdays. Patrons simply had to stop by and pickup all the necessary supplies; they then could share their creations or experiments on social media. These are ongoing programs that continue to delight all ages.



## BOOK GROUPS, TRIVIA NIGHT & GAMING

We looked for creative ways to provide other popular programs online. We had to find unique ways of using online platforms and the basic rules of each activity to devise a new way of playing an old game. In Bingo for example, we turned it into a



## SCIFI/FANTASY FEST

We held this year's event entirely online. We had conference days on Saturday and Sunday, and added various online activities throughout the week leading up to the actual conference. Even though we were virtual, we still had special guests, discussion panels, a costume contest, gaming, the Superfight bracket, a virtual breakout room and vendors! This new format was a lot of fun, and we had over 900 active participants.

reading challenge. Participants had to read a book from a certain genre before they could fill in a specific square. Other offerings included role playing games, trivia night and all of our book groups. We used Facebook, Zoom, Instagram, YouTube, Discord and D&D Beyond to make all of these events happen.



## DRIVE-IN & OUTDOOR STORYTIMES

Our Kids department never stopped looking for new and creative ways to engage and interact with families and all our wonderful children. Two succesful ideas they developed were drive-in storytime and outdoor storytime. Drive-in allowed families to experience a live storytime from the safety of their own cars. Outdoor storytime allowed families to experience live socially-distanced storytimes at the Library and at various locations throughout the city, including East Hoover. With a little preparation, family registration and favorable weather, these programs were a "sell-out" every time, starting in the summer and continuing throughout the fall.





# reopening the **LIBRARY**

## **PHASE 3**

### **LIMITED ACCESS**

#### **When**

July 15, Mon - Sat 9 - 6 pm

#### **What**

Continue Phase 1 services  
Continue curbside service  
Browse & checkout materials  
1-hour computer usage  
East 59 Café open

#### **Considerations**

Limit visits to one hour as needed  
Remove all furniture & play areas  
Limit patron capacity in the library (initially 60, then 75)  
Small socially distanced outdoor programs as feasible

## **PHASE 2**

### **CURBSIDE SERVICE**

#### **When**

June 1, Mon - Sat 10 - 6 pm

#### **What**

Advertise curbside service  
Manage curbside staff for seamless service  
Modify procedures as necessary  
Continue Phase 1 Services

#### **Considerations**

Monitor for cross-contamination  
Plan for facility opening  
East59 requirements to reopen

## **PHASE 1**

### **STAFF REPORTS BACK TO WORK**

#### **When**

May 11

#### **What**

Open book drops  
Phone service  
Expand virtual programs  
Advertise digital materials  
Establish curbside service  
Safe renewal of internal work

#### **Considerations**

Work areas socially distanced  
Materials quarantined safely  
Sanitation daily requirements

## **PHASE 4**

### **FULL ACCESS**

#### **When**

All Restrictions Lifted

#### **Considerations**

What procedures and services developed during the pandemic should we keep

#### **What**

Full library access  
Resume in-person programming and special events  
Restore furniture and play areas



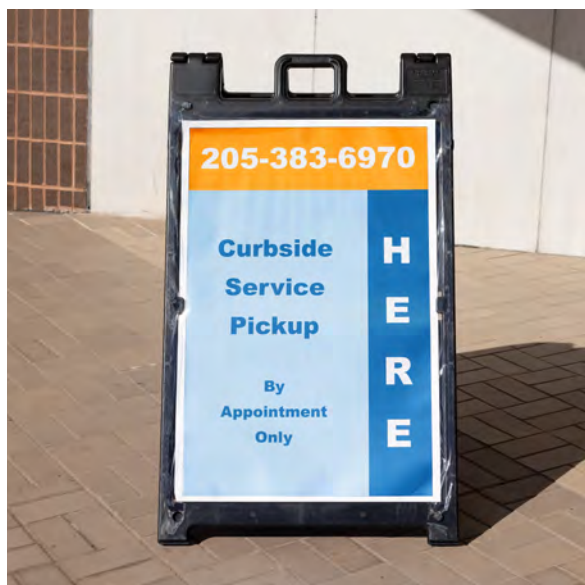
# CURBSIDE PICKUP

We started curbside service on June 1st, allowing us to serve our patrons while keeping them and our staff safe. We served over 250 patrons on the first day alone.

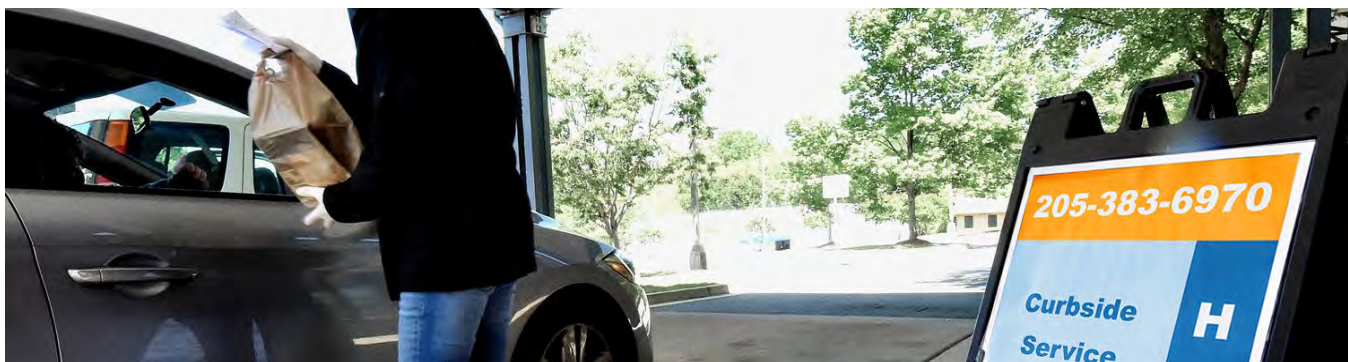
We spent most of May planning the best way to handle materials, meet patron demand and keep our staff and patrons safe. After our first week, the demand was so high we had to streamline our process to make it more convenient for our patrons and less of a burden on our staff, so that we could eventually open to the public.

After several revisions, we now have an appointment system. The patron chooses their materials and reserves a pickup time at our theatre entrance. This new system has proven tremendously successful for both patrons and staff.

As we look forward to a full reopening of the Library, curbside service is one pandemic activity we want to keep. Not only is it convenient for busy patrons, but also it provides easy access to materials for patrons with mobility issues.



Patrons can reserve books, movies and games at [hooverlibrary.org/curbside](http://hooverlibrary.org/curbside), on our app, or by calling us at 205-444-7800.



# WORKING TOGETHER



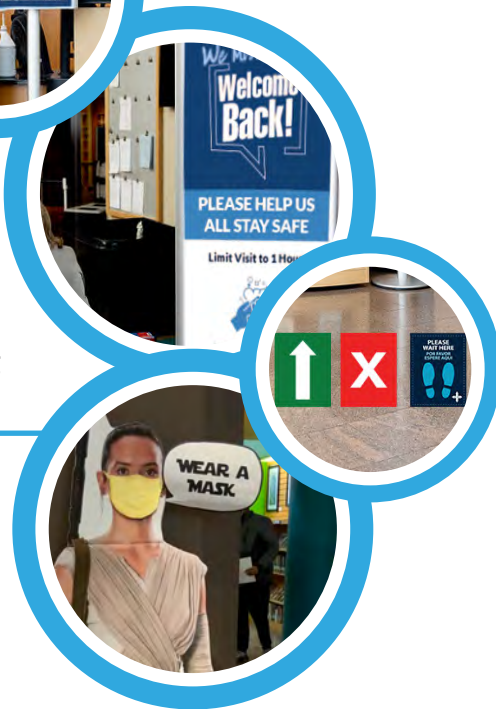
**Personal Protective EQUIPMENT**



# STAYING SAFE



**Social Distancing SIGNAGE**



**Materials Management & QUARANTINE**



BY THE NUMBERS



**478,064**  
Digital Visits



**252,786**  
Visits

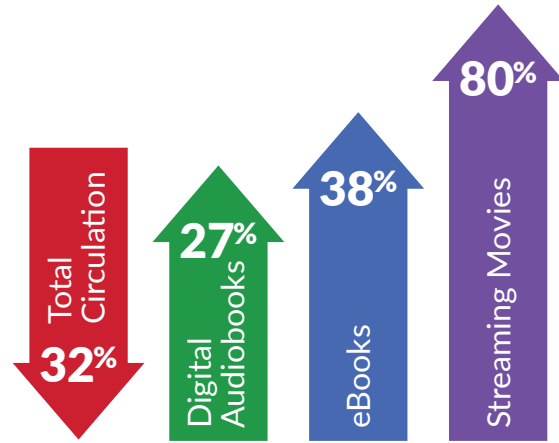
Facility closed March 14 - July 15.  
Limited services July 15 - September 30.



**1,135**  
Events

Live, Passive & Virtual

**86,830**  
Attended



**1.119M**  
Items Checked Out



up 15%  
up 86% (@hplkids)



up 41%  
up 67% (@hplkids)



up 22%



up 18%

