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Tena Wilson

Stark County District Library: Incubating New Ideas

The Stark County District Library is reimagining what a library can be, as it works to help Stark County start smart, stay smart, and share smart. At the Foundation's August Board meeting, Library Executive Director Tena Wilson discussed the exciting changes occurring within the libraries' walls and between the library and the communities it serves.

Since assuming her post in 2012, Tena has led the library through dynamic changes to its branding and information sharing efforts, and approach to collaboration. In leading this renewal, Tena has applied her experience in corporate marketing and sales, as well as her library leadership in other communities.

Recent efforts include launching the Smart Store® brand and website, offering the Bike Smart bicycle sharing program, eliminating overdue fines, and collaborating creatively throughout the community to improve services. Collaboration efforts include employing six parent partners who help Stark County's SPARK families get ready for kindergarten. Together with several other community foundations, the Sisters of Charity Foundation awarded a grant in 2015 to support capital improvements throughout the Stark County District Library system. This funding helped the library continue the changes that began

in 2012 by rethinking and renovating layouts in several branches, including those frequented by many low-income families.

Tena reports that these efforts have paid off handsomely: circulation has increased, and more items are being checked out by more patrons than ever before.

Riding the wave of that success, the library is testing out more innovative ideas in its reimagined Jackson Branch, which is temporarily located in Noble's Pond Plaza while the original building is being replaced due to structural issues. This temporary location is one-fifth the size of the old building. It features a 24/7 lobby with dispensers for sought-after books and movies. The large, imposing desk where librarians once sat is replaced by a small information desk and librarians who offer assistance throughout the branch.

We thank Tena and her team for helping Stark County get SMART!

To learn more and to browse the collection, visit

www.starklibrary.org



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