

## 2021 SPRING NEWS

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## Beyond COVID-19

**How our pandemic response will generate long-term community benefits**

The COVID-19 pandemic has negatively impacted people throughout our community. Beyond health issues, it's left many isolated, jobless, and struggling to learn. That is why the King County Library System (KCLS) Foundation has invested in literacy, economic empowerment, and outreach programs to benefit more people. These programs have inspired and empowered tens of thousands of people in our community during the pandemic and will strengthen our communities going forward.

### *Literacy and Learning for All*

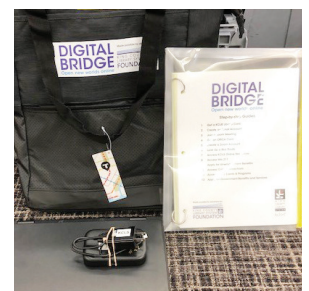
There's never been a more important time to deliver strong grade level reading programs. The OTTER (Our Time To Enjoy Reading) Awards and Sasquatch Award programs pair children's librarians with elementary teachers throughout King County to instill a joy of reading in students. We're also working with community partners to distribute books to low-income families with the Raising a Reader program. All these programs are building literacy at critical stages of childhood learning development.

### *Digital Equity*

As the world has become more digitized, technology has become critical to access education, job, health, and other essential services. Unfortunately, 15% of King County households do not have broadband access to the internet – primarily because they cannot afford it. That is why the KCLS Foundation has invested in the Digital Bridge program to provide loaner computers and internet hotspots to underserved communities throughout King County. To date these programs have reached more than four thousand people. Trained staff called "Digital Navigators" are helping people develop stronger digital skills.

### *Expanded Access to Healthcare and Social Services*

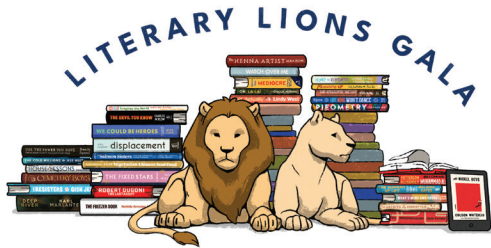
Telemedicine and online social services have grown significantly. Unfortunately, these services are not accessible to many seniors and low-income populations. In response, KCLS is creating tele-meeting rooms at local libraries to allow people to schedule appointments, and meet with health and social service providers, in a safe and secure environment. One example of this program, at the Red Lion Renton Shelter, enabled people to set appointments for their Covid-19 vaccinations!



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# Literary Lions Virtual Gala

Community raises more than \$520,000 to fund the future of libraries



**MARCH 6, 2021**  
TO BENEFIT THE KING COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM

On March 6, our 28th Literary Lions Gala brought guests a new experience: the first free and virtual Literary Lions Gala!

The evening began on March 6 with a VIP Reception that allowed guests to interact with the Literary Lions authors at intimate “tables” of eight. Literary Lion Emma Laukitis said “We had such a fun evening talking to other book lovers involved in the King County Library System. We were impressed by Remo [online event service] and how well this event was organized. Big thanks to everyone involved!”

The main program was livestreamed via YouTube with host Angela Poe Russell (King5 Evening) and KCLS Foundation Executive Director, Ken Ryals, guiding the audience through an evening of thoughtful messages, inspiring stories, and an exciting “raise the paddle”. Kwame Alexander brought a message of hope and anti-racism from London, KCLS Executive Director Lisa Rosenblum shared how KCLS is constantly adapting to meet patron needs, and Melinda Gates reminded us why libraries are important as she introduced critically acclaimed author Colson Whitehead. In his keynote, Whitehead engaged the audience with the ideas, experiences, and stories behind Pulitzer Prize-winning works such as *The Nickel Boys* and *The Underground Railroad*.

Next year’s Literary Lions Gala is set for March 5, 2022 when we will be joined by Rainn Wilson! Wilson grew up in Shoreline but is better known as Dwight Schrute from *The Office*. Wilson is the author of *Soul Pancake: Chew on Life’s Big Questions* (2010) and *The Bassoon King: My Life in Faith, Art, and Idiocy* (2015).



## 2021 Literary Lions Authors

• • • • •	• Kwame Alexander	• Kiku Hughes	• Claire Neaton	• • • • •
• Erica Bauermeister	• Pramila Jayapal	• Steve Olson	• • • • •	• • • • •
• Charles Blow	• Gish Jen	• Ijeoma Oluo	• • • • •	• • • • •
• Mike Chen	• Alka Joshi	• Mitali Perkins	• • • • •	• • • • •
• Hsiao-Ching Chou	• Lauren Ko	• Mattilda Bernstein Sycamore	• • • • •	• • • • •
• Naima Coster	• Nina LaCour	• Aiden Thomas	• • • • •	• • • • •
• Matt de la Pena	• Lily LaMotte	• Jess Walter	• • • • •	• • • • •
• Robert Dugoni	• Emma Teal Laukitis	• Lindy West	• • • • •	• • • • •
• Melinda Gates	• Karl Marlantes	• Colson Whitehead	• • • • •	• • • • •
• A.J. Hackwith	• Ciscoe Morris	• Molly Wizenberg	• • • • •	• • • • •
• Donna Barba Higuera			• • • • •	• • • • •





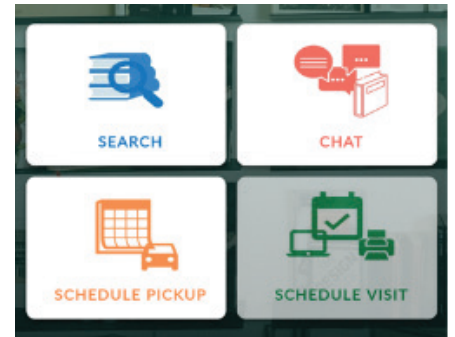
# Beyond COVID-19

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## Library Innovation

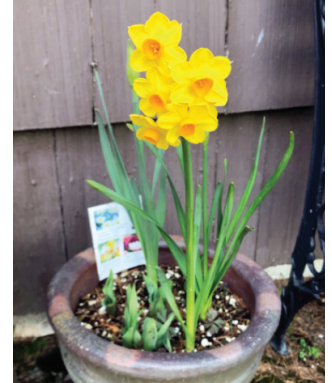
During the pandemic, our library system saw demand for digital check-outs increase by more than 25 percent. In fact, the King County Library System has the highest per-capita digital usage in the United States! To enhance the online experience, we invested in Artificial Intelligence to make it easier for patrons to access knowledge and materials online.

Also, in 2020 we funded a program to test two contactless locker systems to make it safer and more convenient for patrons to retrieve checked out materials. Installed at the Bothell and Covington libraries, the lockers have proven to be highly utilized and popular. For example, we received feedback on how convenient it is to be able to pick up materials after hours. The success of this pilot program has sparked research into funding more lockers at KCLS locations so stay tuned for more information!



## Summer Bulbs: Gorgeous Glads, Fabulous Freesia & Irresistible Iris *Kits and Online Program*

These “take and make kits” are part of an ongoing online gardening series that has been incredibly popular with students. They included seven gladiolus bulbs, seven iris bulbs, two freesia bulbs, a stake, a laminated sign and planting instructions. Patrons could simply follow the instructions or attend an online program with expert gardeners. A Federal Way teen participant shared this wonderful photo of daffodils blooming!



## Library Giving Day 2021

*We celebrated libraries on Library Giving Day, April 7, 2021*

Library  
Giving  
Day

Library Giving Day returned for its third year in 2021! Library Giving Day started in 2019 in Washington and it has spread across North America with over 400 libraries in the United States and Canada participating in the 2021 campaign. This year we raised over \$67,000 to fund critical programs in our community!

# Planned Giving: Michelle Mathieu

## A Library Giving Story



*At the start of 2021, Michelle Mathieu, longtime KCLS Foundation donor and current Board Member, let us know that she would be including the KCLS Foundation in her estate plan, and we asked her to share more about why library giving is important to her.*

*"Ever since I was young, I've donated my time and treasure to causes that are meaningful to me. Libraries are at the top of my list. **The library has always been a refuge for me. It's where I feel welcome and safe. It's a place where I can escape from or in to. The library is my lifeline to knowledge, to inspiration, and to connection.***

"In 2017 a survey in America found that nearly half of Americans don't have an estate plan or a will. Fast forward to 2020, and that number dropped from nearly half to 32% - fewer than a third. In fact, **two out of three Americans don't have a plan in place for what happens after they pass.** And you know what? I was one of them.

"So, at the start of 2021, I talked to my estate attorney, and we put a plan in place. It gave me the greatest joy to name the King County Library System Foundation as a primary beneficiary to my IRA. Also, I made sure to let the KCLS Foundation know about the planned gift. There can be changes in personal representatives and over time things can get lost, so it's really good to let them know when you've named them in a bequest, the estimated amount, and also the custodian.

"I encourage you, if you don't have a plan, get a plan. **A little planning goes a long way.** It's a giant leap toward preparing for your future and ensuring your treasure goes to the people and the causes that are meaningful to you."

*To learn more about leaving a legacy gift to the KCLS Foundation and joining our Literary Legends Society, please contact Cindy Sharek at [cjsharek@kclsfoundation.org](mailto:cjsharek@kclsfoundation.org).*

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### Supporting libraries—today, tomorrow, and always

Have YOU considered creating a legacy gift to support the King County Library System Foundation? Legacy gifts in your will or other estate plan are powerful ways to ensure our libraries can continue serving the needs of our community for generations to come.

To make it easier to create your legacy, use this online tool to write your legal will, for **free**. In 20 minutes or less, you can protect the things you love, and make a lasting commitment to literacy, learning, and libraries.

**FREEWILL** 

**Get started on your **free** will at [FreeWill.com/KCLSFoundation](https://FreeWill.com/KCLSFoundation).**