

NEXT UP

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## Kimberly Johnson: A fantastic first year for the renewed Central Library

By Kimberly Johnson 13 hrs ago 0





We have had such a phenomenally successful year at Central Library since reopening last October, after being closed for three years for a total renovation. We are elated to see so many happy faces walk through our doors each and every day. On average, nearly 57,000 customers have visited Central Library each month since our grand reopening!

One of the biggest successes we have seen over the past year is a huge influx of families bringing their children downtown to the library to spend quality time with their little ones. Our children's department alone has welcomed more than 169,000 visitors, hosted more than 445 programs with more than 21,000 total attendees, and conducted more than 50 school tours to a total of 2,000 students and teachers since Central's grand reopening. It is so refreshing to see all the moms, dads and grandparents having fun interacting with their youngsters at our Build a Reader story times in the Tandy Children's Garden. We know that children learn through play, and these story times, led by our outstanding children's team, incorporate songs, motions and more to help build excited, new readers.

It is wonderful to see so many customers discovering all of the amazing resources and services we have to offer. Everything from 3-D printers, a laser cutter and audio lab in our Maker Space to flight simulators, tape and VHS converters and photo scanners in the Digital Literacy Lab. The equipment is top notch, but the customer stories are even better.

A mom and her daughter learned how to play instruments and recorded a holiday music album for their family last year in our audio lab. Another Tulsa woman uses the same lab for her weekly live talk show and podcast. A local fashion design instructor recently 3-D printed and laser cut fabrics in our Makers Space to construct modern dresses. And a local professor is currently 3-D printing models of the greater prairie chicken for avian research.

Speaking of research, since reopening, Central's Research Services team has honed their specialized skills to answer an average of 1,902 questions a month on a variety of topics, such as local history, government documents, health and nonprofit resources.

Plus, many nonprofits, businesses and individuals have utilized Central's unique venue spaces for

celebrations, corporate events, meetings, conferences, and even a graduation ceremony and a wedding, too. And don't forget about our Starbucks coffee shop. It's been a big hit!

Along with our many successes, we also have received some valuable feedback from our customers. We greatly appreciate hearing from you and want you to know that we are listening! In response to customers' requests to have more materials available for the public to browse at Central Library, we are pleased to inform you that this fall, we will be adding shelving that will allow 9,525 more books, DVDs, CDs and audiobooks to be added to the public floors.

In celebration of this fantastic first year of success at the renovated Central Library, the Tulsa Library Trust is throwing a birthday party, complete with a balloon artist, magic shows, face painting and more fun activities for the whole family. The free party is scheduled Sunday, Oct. 1, from 1 to 5 p.m. Everyone is invited!

If you haven't had the chance yet to check out Central Library, we hope you will visit us soon to take advantage of all the wonderful resources and services we have to offer and to see for yourself why Central Library is truly a 21st century library plus a whole lot more!

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*Kimberly Johnson is CEO of Tulsa City-County Library System.*

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