

# WHAT'S UP AT WEPAC

JULY 2021

## WEPAC LIBRARIES ARE ON THE MOVE!



Thanks to the influx of federal dollars from the American Rescue Plan, much-needed renovations are now happening at many Philadelphia public schools, including several schools with WePAC-operated libraries. \$20 million worth of renovations already have been completed at Hamilton, including a total overhaul of the school's HVAC system. Blankenburg, which has never housed a cafeteria in its 96-year history, will be getting one in the building this summer. We are thrilled that Blankenburg students will finally have a decent place to eat together, but we will lose half of our library space there as a result.

In the the biggest change of all, Cassidy is being demolished and a new building will go up in the same location over the next two years. In the mean time, Cassidy's students and staff will be housed at Lamberton, another school with a WePAC library.

Over the past few weeks, WePAC staff and volunteers at Blankenburg and Cassidy have been busy packing up books and weeding through collections to prepare for the changes happening to those buildings. The funniest title we weeded from Blankenburg was Hemp Masters : Ancient Hippie Secrets for Knotting Hip Hemp Jewelry. Surely, there must be a resale market for this book!

We are looking forward to getting back into the rest our libraries to prepare them for the return of students (fingers crossed). We also plan on hiring a certified school librarian this school year so that we will have professional expertise to help us update our libraries. Stay tuned for updates on that hire in future newsletters!

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## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!



Many thanks to the volunteers who have informed us of their plans about returning to the libraries in the fall. If you haven't already completed the [21/22 Returning Volunteer Survey](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/130SYbplq2DOOPMY0wIA94s2rqZxEXgoyeOycjzSW-GQ/edit?ts=60c0d788), please do so at: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/130SYbplq2DOOPMY0wIA94s2rqZxEXgoyeOycjzSW-GQ/edit?ts=60c0d788>.

From the results of the survey and conversations we have had with volunteers, we are going to need to recruit at least 50 volunteers (possibly more) so that our libraries are fully staffed in the fall. ***If you know anyone who might be interested in volunteering for WePAC, please have them email us at [volunteer@wepac.org](mailto:volunteer@wepac.org).***

## Philly Schools Plan to Reopen on August 31, 2021

On May 19, 2021, Superintendent Hite and Mayor Kenney announced that Philadelphia schools will open for full-time, in-person learning in the fall for all students who choose it, assuming that the Centers for Disease Control removes its three-foot social distancing requirements for schools.

The District also will provide the option of fully virtual learning for families who want it. Students who choose the virtual option will work with teachers exclusively assigned to the virtual learning model. **August 31, 2021** is currently scheduled to be the first day of school for students.

For more details about school reopening in Philadelphia, the following article in *Chalkbeat* (an online newspaper which reports on education issues) provides additional information: <https://philadelphia.chalkbeat.org/2021/5/19/22444436/philadelphia-plans-full-in-person-learning-in-the-fall-will-also-offer-remote-option>.

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WePAC extends our sincere thanks to the following foundations for recent grants:

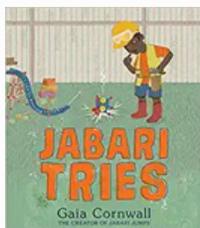
The Hamilton Family Charitable Trust  
The Hassel Family Foundation  
The Christopher Ludwick Foundation  
Team First Book Philadelphia

THANK  
YOU

Please visit [www.wepac.org](http://www.wepac.org) to learn more and to donate online.

## VIRTUAL LIBRARY SESSIONS' ROUNDUP

We were able to schedule virtual library sessions at three of our schools - GLA West, Longstreth, and Powel - from April 2021 through the beginning of June 2021. We provided nearly 60 virtual library sessions during this time. We are grateful to the volunteers who stepped into the brave new world of Zoom library sessions to do story read-alouds and bring the joy of reading to students at these schools! Many thanks to Carrie Sampson, our Program Director, for her persistence in working with the schools to schedule the sessions, for training volunteers to use Zoom, and for filling in when volunteers were not available.



### BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS

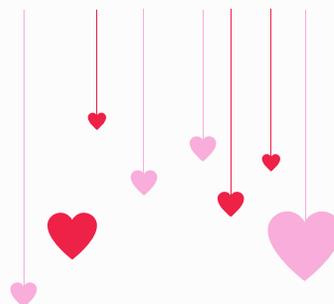
Jabari Tries by Gaia Cornwall

V is for Voting by Kate Farrell



### PARTNERING WITH THE WEST PHILADELPHIA READING CAPTAINS

We have been working with the West Philadelphia Reading Captains to get new books into the hands of neighborhood children while our libraries remain closed. We provided them with books to distribute at a Father's Day Event they organized with Sharp Skillz Barbershop and at a Father's Day cookout held by a West Philly Reading Captain. We look forward to partnering with them in the future.



### VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION

- *Weeded Books at Blankenburg*
- *Packed up Books at Cassidy*
- *Assembled Book Kits for Book Giveaways in April & July*
- *Participated in April 16th Book Giveaway*
- *Volunteered for Virtual Library Sessions*

*Thank You for All You Do!*