Charles County Public Library Expands Access For Patrons During COVID-19 Closures With Live Web Chat, New Digital Resources

(La Plata, MD – April 21, 2020) The Charles County Public Library is now providing online customer service through a live web chat feature on its website, as well as expanding its digital collection to include two new digital platforms. Available now, the new live web chat service connects directly to staff to answer library questions, and provide assistance via its website. CCPL has also added two new digital resources, Freegal® Music and Kanopy.

The new live web chat service is available during the library's regular business hours, with brand new hours on Sundays from 12- 4PM, which the library has never offered before. There is also a direct translate feature. Users can type their questions in Spanish and will receive their replies in Spanish as well.

"We wanted to be able to connect with patrons even though our physical locations are not open during this time," said CCPL Executive Director KennethWayne Thompson. "An online chat service was the best way to stay in contact with our users in real time in order to help answer questions about library accounts and our digital resources, as well as be able to guide those patrons who might not have used our digital collection before. This chat service, as well as the two additional services, Freegal and Kanopy, allow patrons to read, listen and learn from the comfort and safety of their homes."

Freegal® Music is a free music service that offers 3 hours of streaming every day and 3 downloads per week to keep forever. The catalog includes over 16 million songs, millions of albums, hundreds of curated playlists, the ability to create your own playlists, thousands of audio books and thousands of music videos. In total the collection is comprised of music from over 40,000+ labels with music that originates in over 100 countries. Free apps are available at the App Store and Google Play.

Kanopy showcases more than 30,000 of the world's best films, including award-winning documentaries, rare and hard-to-find titles, film festival favorites, indie and classic films, and world cinema with collections from Umbrella Entertainment, Madman Entertainment, Under the Milky Way, SND Films and thousands of independent filmmakers.

Freegal and Kanopy are free for users with a library card.

The Library previously announced expanded offerings for two other digital resources, Hoopla and RB Digital. An increase in borrowing limit was raised from five checkouts per month to eight for its most popular digital resource, Hoopla. Hoopla provides access to thousands of movies, TV shows, eBooks, audiobooks and more with no hold lists. RB Digital provides access to more than 3,200 free online versions of the most popular magazines. The service is funded through the Southern Maryland Regional Library Association, Inc. (SMRLA).

For more information about these resources, to sign up for a library card, and more, please visit our website www.ccplonline.org.

About Charles County Public Library

Charles County Library System (CCPL) has four physical buildings and one mobile library. The Waldorf West and P.D. Brown Memorial branches are both located in Waldorf. The La Plata branch serves as the administrative headquarters for the system and is located in the town of La Plata. The western side of the county is served by the Potomac Branch located in Ruth B. Swann Park in Indian Head. CCPL has a staff of more than 100 full-time and part-time employees. Their branches house over 200,000 volumes of printed material, audio books, film, and other documents. Currently, there are over 75,000 county residents who have library cards and that number grows every day.

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