Orange County Public Library Goes Fine-Free

Orange County, NC (November 17, 2021) — Effective Wednesday, November 17, the Orange County Public Library will no longer collect fines for overdue materials. Customers may return late items to the Main Library in downtown Hillsborough or the Cybrary in downtown Carrboro.

County Commissioners were asked to approve the fine-free policy as part of an effort to remove barriers to library use. "This is an issue of equity. Library fines disproportionately affect community members who face economic challenge. We want to ensure that all residents have equal access to services and removal of this barrier moves us forward in that effort," stated Erin Sapienza, interim director of the library system.

The library will continue to charge repair and replacement fees for damaged or lost materials.

For years, the Orange County Public Library has had programs whereby library patrons could reduce or eliminate fines for overdue materials. One such effort – *Food and Toys for Fines* – occurred each autumn.

"Patrons loved this program," said Nancy Crews, branch manager at the Main Library in Hillsborough. "That's why we're still going to host the event and now call it *Food for Families. Toys for Tots.*"

Library customers may bring non-perishable food for people and pets and new unwrapped toys to either library location from Wednesday, November 17 through Friday, December 17. Library staff will take food and toys to Orange County Department of Social Services and pet food to Orange County Animal Services.

"Orange County residents are generous, and the desire to help others in our community is strong," said Sapienza. "We are happy to make operational changes so that all feel welcome and to be part of a community effort to help those in need."

The Orange County Public Library has two locations, the Main Library at 137 W. Margaret Lane in downtown Hillsborough, and the Cybrary at 100 N. Greensboro Street in downtown Carrboro. For more information, visit OrangeCountyLibrary.org, call 919.245.2525, or email library@orangecountync.gov. Follow the library on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube.