



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 25, 2019

Contact: Meg Paulette, Director

Phone: 269-695-1911

Email: m.paulette@buchananlibrary.com

Buchanan Library to Eliminate Late Fines

BUCHANAN, Michigan — Late fines will soon be a thing of the past at Buchanan District Library. Beginning October 1, 2019, the library will stop charging fines for overdue materials.

“It’s about access,” said Meg Paulette, library director. “Fines can prevent people from using library materials and services for a variety of reasons. Our goal is to encourage everyone to enjoy and use the library, and charging fines is counterproductive to that goal.”

This change in policy for the library includes eliminating all overdue fines, and forgiving any fines patrons have accrued in the past. Materials will still have due dates, and as always, patrons will be responsible for replacement costs if an item is lost or destroyed.

Eliminating late fines is a growing trend among libraries, though it is less common in our region. This year, the American Library Association released a *Resolution on Monetary Library Fines as a Form of Social Inequity*, and “urge(d) libraries to scrutinize their practices of imposing fines on library patrons and actively move towards eliminating them.” The resolution also compels governing bodies to strengthen their funding support so libraries are not dependent on fines as a source of revenue.

The Buchanan District Library is able to eliminate overdue fines thanks in part to a grant from the Michigan Gateway Community Foundation.

“We are able to offset the lost revenue from collecting fines this first year because of the of the MGCF grant,” said Paulette. “In the future, we need to increase fundraising efforts so that this change in policy will be financially sustainable. Fines aren’t a large percentage of our budget, but as a small library with ever-increasing costs, we rely on the generosity of our supporters to continue to improve and expand our services. Fortunately for us, Buchanan is a wonderful, tight-knit community of neighbors who look out for each other, and we know we can count on them.”

Buchanan District Library joins a nation-wide movement to end library fines. Studies from libraries around the country (and the world) have shown that library fines are not effective as a mechanism to encourage timely return of materials, and instead serve as an economic barrier. In addition, eliminating fines has been shown to increase library usage.

“We hope to see more people using the library,” said library Board President, Dave Perez. “But first and foremost, we are eliminating fines because we think it’s the right thing to do.”

“Libraries are for everyone—a place to be a citizen and not a consumer,” concludes library director, Meg Paulette. “We’re proud to become a fine-free library.”

More information about Buchanan District Library’s decision to eliminate fines and the details of their new policy can be found at www.buchananlibrary.org.

###