



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contacts:

Paul Burns, LFPL: (502) 574-1683

Kiera Hall, Library Foundation: (812) 697-1158

LOUISVILLE FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY BRINGING “FOREVER” BOOKS TO BOOK DESERTS

*SUPPORT FROM LIBRARY FOUNDATION AND \$123,000 GRANT FROM PNC FOUNDATION TO
HELP LFPL REACH UNDERSERVED CHILDREN AND FAMILIES*

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Feb. 8, 2023) – It was all smiles during a special Storytime today at the Shawnee Library as the Louisville Free Public Library (LFPL) handed out free "forever" books to preschool-aged children. The book distribution kicked off a library-wide effort made possible by a \$123,000 PNC Grow Up Great® grant announced today. The funding from PNC Foundation is expected to help deliver approximately 35,000 books to local children from birth to age 5 who are at risk of falling behind in educational development.

“At PNC, we recognize that education is a powerful means for economic and social mobility – and that early access to high quality resources, including books, helps children develop a lifelong love of learning,” said Kristen Byrd, PNC regional president for Louisville. “Our ongoing collaboration with LFPL is reflective of our commitment to help prepare Louisville’s children for success in school and life.”

With a growing body of research demonstrating that childhood literacy and kindergarten readiness scores increase when children own books and caregivers engage in early education, LFPL’s librarians are committed to breaking down barriers to kindergarten readiness. By delivering thousands of books to children in low- and moderate-income neighborhoods, especially those living in “book deserts” where printed books and other reading materials are difficult to obtain, LFPL will empower families with access to the tools they need to launch Louisville’s newest generation of readers.

“Reading to our children, starting at a young age, is essential in preparing them for future school success,” said Library Director Lee Burchfield. “And getting books into kids’ hands is one of the things the Library does really well. Thank you PNC for helping make it possible.”

A wide range of diverse titles will be available, allowing children to see themselves and their communities reflected. Access to print resources — board books, stories, and informational books — has immediate and long-term positive effects on children's vocabulary, background knowledge, and comprehension skills.

“Making sure kids are prepared with the skills they need to start kindergarten ready to learn is one of the reasons I have made universal pre-K a priority in this administration,” said Mayor Craig Greenberg. “And having access to books is vital for building early literacy skills that are the foundation to future school success. Thanks to PNC, the Library Foundation, and the Louisville Free Public Library, thousands of children in our community will now have “forever” books to keep in their own homes.”

"LFPL is doing outreach in our communities every day, helping place the right book in the right hands at just the right moment," said Chandra Gordon, executive director of the Library Foundation. "The Library Foundation is proud to help connect our skilled library staff with the resources they need to improve access to literacy tools in the homes that need them most, and we are grateful for PNC's ongoing support to help us maximize our reach."

Today's grant announcement builds on previous support from PNC Foundation, which most recently resulted in LFPL's introduction of the city's first-ever Book Bike, an outreach vehicle that allows LFPL's librarians to deliver library services directly to children and families who lack transportation or access to a library.

###

The PNC Foundation, which receives its principal funding from The PNC Financial Services Group (www.pnc.com), actively supports organizations that provide services for the benefit of communities in which it has a significant presence. The foundation focuses its philanthropic mission on early childhood education and community and economic development, which includes the arts and culture. Through PNC Grow Up Great®, its signature cause that began in 2004, PNC has created a bilingual \$500 million, multi-year initiative to help prepare children from birth to age 5 for success in school and life. For more information, visit <http://www.pncgrowupgreat.com>.

Louisville Free Public Library connects the residents of Louisville and Jefferson County to knowledge and information at our library locations and on the web at LFPL.org. Come on in, the whole world's inside.

The Library Foundation strives to ensure every Louisvillian has the tools, resources, and information they need to flourish in their community and their lives by opening the doors for community members to engage with, advocate for, and dedicate time and treasure to the Louisville Free Public Library. Learn more at LFPLfoundation.org.