

Bloomington Public Library

Books are just the beginning.



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Bloomington Library staff to conduct door-to-door conversations near Miller Park

BLOOMINGTON — Weather permitting, between the hours of 10 a.m. and noon on Saturday, September 8, staff from Bloomington Public Library will conduct door-to-door conversations in a portion of the neighborhood that surrounds Bloomington's Miller Park.

"This will be the second time Library staff have traveled door-to-door in hopes of sharing information about the library and its services," said Michelle Cope, Bloomington Library Outreach Associate. "We'll also be able to issue library cards to residents we meet who don't already have one."

At least three teams of two people each will set out to cover a portion of the neighborhood using routes created by a 2017 Multicultural Leadership Project Team. MCLP — an eight-month leadership development program — includes a curriculum element in which members are broken into teams and assigned to complete a community project for a non-profit agency. In 2017, one MCLP Team was paired with the Library to develop the Door-to-Door Campaign.

"Last October, we set out thinking that as we went from door-to-door, people would tell us what keeps them from coming to the Library. And while we did hear that things like late fees and bus stop locations can be a hinderance, overwhelmingly, the people we spoke with were extremely complimentary of the Library," said Bloomington Library Marketing Manager Rhonda Massie.

In the end, the 2017 door-to-door canvassers found that most of their time was spent sharing information about the library and about some of its lesser known services as opposed to gathering information about people's views of the Library.

"For instance, I take it for granted that people know that library cards are free. When you come to the Library and ask to sign up for a Library card, no money changes hands. But, I've been asked at least 15 times in the past year, 'How much does a library card cost?'" said Massie.

Cope cited that the initial campaign was an experiment of sorts, and the Library is now hoping to transform the efforts of the MCLP Team into recurring door-to-door conversations.

"We want people to know that if they're temporarily or permanently unable to travel to the Library, home delivery may be an option. We want people to know that having a Bloomington Library card gives them access to free tutoring, foreign language courses, Lynda.com, Consumer Reports, genealogical resources, eBooks, and a lot more," Cope said. "And if we have to go to people's front doors to share that information, we're willing to try to do that."

If the media is interested in taking photographs or obtaining footage of library staffers as they go door-to-door, please reach Michelle Cope by cell phone at 309.664.6641 during the time that canvassing will occur. Michelle is open to both texts and phone calls from the media.