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## Georgia Library Spotlight - Cobb County Public Library System

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# GLA SPOTLIGHT

## Cobb County Public Library System

The Cobb County Public Library System (CCPLS) is dedicated to increasing the library's impact on the community in 2014. This year, we are focusing on expansion of the library's outreach services and services to community members with special needs. With the help of several community partners, these initiatives are a highlight of the library's plans to bring services to people wherever they are—even if they are away from library buildings.

The library has developed two new collaborative partnerships, both launching this year, which will offer an increased level of service to people with physical and mental disabilities. According to the US Census, about 8 percent of Cobb residents have special needs. While CCPLS staff members already provide sign language story times, services to people with vision disabilities, and special story times for children with learning impairments, CCPLS is dedicated to developing new and innovative services and programs to further engage special needs patrons.

The first partnership is with Cobb County's Parks, Recreation, Cultural Affairs Department. CCPLS is partnering with the department to develop a library at the new Windy Hill Therapeutic Community Center, which will provide Cobb residents with disabilities a centralized facility for special services. Inside the new facility is a library, which will feature



low-literacy reading materials, games, audiobooks, movies, and accessible technology. The library and the parks departments will collaborate on special programs, book clubs, and computer classes to bring literacy and technology to this population. Funding for this new library location, including the technology, collection, and furnishings, was provided in part by the Georgia Public Library Service and the Cobb Library Foundation.

CCPLS is also working with Southern Polytechnic State University to develop computer games for adults with learning disabilities. Students in the university's award-winning Computer Game

Design and Development program, under the leadership of Dr. Jon Preston, are developing a library-themed game to help patrons at this location learn about the library and popular reading materials.

The outward focus of these two projects is expected to change the public image of Cobb libraries. Traditional services, such as lending books and providing children's story times, are now complimented by creative outreach programs. Cobb librarians often visit the county's senior centers, apartment complexes, childcare centers, and other locations to bring library services to underserved people.

Quality customer service involves actively engaging as much of Cobb's population as possible, says Cobb County Library Director Helen Poyer. "Stepping out from our facilities

and effectively using communication and technology are critical for our libraries,” she says. “We hope to turn the Therapeutic Center and games development projects into models for Georgia libraries, and, in turn, we are

inspired by innovative and collaborative efforts of our peers throughout the state and nation.”

To learn more about Cobb County Public Library System, visit the website at [www.cobbcat.org](http://www.cobbcat.org).