

10-1-2020

Georgia Library Spotlight - Thomas County Public Library, Story Walk®

Samantha Hanchett

Thomas County Public Library System, marketing@tcpls.org

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Recommended Citation

Hanchett, S. (2020). Georgia Library Spotlight - Thomas County Public Library, Story Walk®. *Georgia Library Quarterly*, 57(4). Retrieved from <https://digitalcommons.kennesaw.edu/glq/vol57/iss4/6>

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GLA SPOTLIGHT

Thomas County Public Library Story Walk®

What could a family love better than a bagful of books from the library? How about a beautiful story book that gets them outside and encourages them to run and have fun? The Thomas County Public Library has done just that with their recently installed Story Walk®.

You may have heard of Story Walk®. Conjured up by Anne Ferguson of Montpelier, Vermont, it was developed to promote reading and exercise in collaboration with the Vermont Bicycle & Pedestrian Coalition and the Kellogg Hubbard Library. Basically, a Story Walk® is a book that has been dismembered, laminated, and spread out page by page on a trail, bike path, or in building windows.

The Thomas County Public Library has long been an advocate of offering movement-based programming to its patrons to not only promote learning in an active setting but also to promote and encourage its patrons to explore and find new ways of maintaining a healthy and active lifestyle. The library offers programming ranging from alternative medicine seminars to yoga to nutritional literacy. The library has also been a Live Better partner with Archbold Medical Center since 2018, which aims to promote the overall health of the community countywide.



Establishing a Story Walk® has been a goal for the health- and wellness-conscious library. The city of Thomasville itself is striving to grow into a more walkable and active destination and promote its green spaces. It was only natural for the library to reach out and suggest a partnership. The library and the city initially planned on installing the Walk on a stretch of the projected bike trail that will wrap the city. In the end, the library chose to install the Walk in

one of the underused and overlooked parks within walking distance of the library system's main branch.

“Not only is Paradise Park in the heart of our beautiful and popular downtown, but also it is just a few blocks from our main library. Its location is excellent

to future use for our school systems (who take weekly trips to visit us for personal StoryTimes), but we will use it in our own movement-based public StoryTime programming,” said Marketing Coordinator Samantha Hanchett. “We want to encourage kids to find the joy of reading in new ways. That reading can be an active and group activity, not just a solitary, sedentary one.”

The Story Walk® takes the reader on a leisurely half-mile stroll through the canopy-covered park. The wooden story boards display not only the pages of the book, but also active reading and thinking breaks encouraging the reader to hang from the monkey bars or take a moment to meditate—small breaks that coincide with the current book on display. The book is

changed on a monthly basis to keep the Story Walk® fresh and relevant throughout the year.

This is just another way that Thomas County Public Library is reaching out to bring the library to the community and encouraging it to view the library in a new way. Since its installation at the beginning of June, the Story Walk® has received glowing reviews and use from the community. According to Hanchett, “I think the universe had us launch our project at just the right time. Now more than ever our patrons are looking for ways to stay safe and healthy but at

the same time are wanting to get outside and enjoy life. We have received a nice stream of images and messages from our patrons using the Walk telling us how much they love it! I foresee it continuing to gain momentum as the year progresses. We hope to install another when the city’s bike path grows in 2021.”

You can follow the Thomas County Public Library on Facebook and Instagram @TCPLS! For more information on the Story Walk®, email the library at info@tcpls.org or marketing@tcpls.org.