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## Georgia Library Spotlight: Sparta-Hancock County Library Honey Bee Observatory

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# GLA SPOTLIGHT

## Sparta-Hancock County Library Honey Bee Observatory

Sparta-Hancock County Library is all abuzz as a result of its in-house Honey Bee Observatory! Local beekeepers with the Lake Country Beekeepers Association (LCBA), who hold their monthly meetings at the library, realized that the library was a perfect place for an observatory to teach the community about the importance of bees and to provide engaging programs for patrons of all ages. Partnering with the Bee Cause Project, LCBA members worked with library trustees and staff to establish an in-house bee observatory in one of the library's study rooms.

shelving in the study room to conveniently house and display these books, and members of LCBA added information slides created from beehive frames and a display unit that included examples of beekeeping equipment.

Working with volunteer beekeepers, the library manager organized programs which revolved around learning about the importance of honeybees. The beekeepers organized a five-week program for children called *The Basics of Bees*, teaching these students all about bees, beehives, beekeeping honey, and creating

pollinator beds. During their monthly meetings, the beekeepers made themselves available to answer questions about the honeybees and beekeeping.

Additional programming opportunities included a contest to name the queen bee, homeschool group visits, a Meet the Beekeeper event, story time, classes for all ages, creating pollinator gardens, and an annual program for National Honey Bee Day. On this day, volunteer beekeepers and



Adding the bee observatory to the library opened the door to quite a number of opportunities for the library and its patrons. The first avenue of opportunity involved updating and improving the library's collection of books about bees and beekeeping for adults and children. The library manager added

community groups came together to create a festival-like event, sharing with visitors everything about honeybees: learning about beekeeping equipment, creating pollinator gardens, and honey tasting. The Honey Bee Observatory has also inspired the library's trustees and staff to create a library learning

garden in the acre lot behind the library. This garden will further create opportunities for educational programming and provide a fun place for the community to visit while stopping by the library.

The bee observatory is very compact and easily accessible for patrons to visit daily. The library staff has learned a lot about bees and are always eager to ask visitors, "Have you seen our bees?" Visitors are delighted and surprised to see the in-house observatory and are impressed with the amazing bees; they can see the bees safely come and go into the hive, how well bees work together, and that they each have a

particular job in the hive. It is always fun when a patron or staff member spots the queen bee. The staff members and trustees of the Sparta-Hancock County Library are delighted to be the first library in Georgia to house a bee observatory and hope that other libraries will find an opportunity to add this wonderful, inspiring program to their libraries.

To learn more about the Sparta-Hancock County Library, go to

<http://www.azalealibraries.org/member-libraries/hancock-county-library/>

*Kathy Ransom is the manager of  
Hancock County Library*