



Boyle County Public Library receives major grant to expand local history outreach

December 14, 2023 – The Mellon Foundation recently awarded the Boyle County Public Library (BCPL) a \$1 million grant for a five-year project to significantly expand its local history collection and programming by preserving and sharing stories of local life.

The project will help local residents digitize documents and media through an expanded Memory Lab. In addition, people can share their items in a community archive. The library's proposal calls for working with local historical groups to create a new Story Center, which will collect and share stories of local life and events throughout Boyle County's history.

“We are elated about the opportunities to collect the stories of all Boyle Countians,” said Library Director Colleen Hall. “It will allow us to enrich and expand the quilt of experiences and events that describe who we are by sharing tales familiar to us and many more that we have not yet heard.”

Five years ago, BCPL won a national grant to establish a memory lab, which provided scanners, computers, audio and video converters and more to turn snapshots, movies, and documents into electronic files. Library leaders saw the Mellon Grant opportunity as a way to expand its ability to offer new services to residents of Boyle County and also build its local history work and collection.

The grant will fund a space in Danville fully equipped for story creation and conversion of people's photos, recordings, and documents. The project will also incorporate the library's existing genealogical records, databases, and collected materials and records to expand opportunities for learning and sharing by individuals and the wider community.

At its heart, the Story Center will promote community and is a natural extension of many things the library already does. BCPL believes that every person has a story to tell. From cherished family photos to stories passed down through generations, the grant will provide a home for the memories of Boyle County and its residents. The project seeks to collect important slices of local history from all parts of the county across all time periods, especially seeking input from those who may feel their stories have not been heard before.

Local history and community organizations have been invited to participate in the creation of the Story Center. Through partnerships including the Danville-Boyle County African American Historical Society, the Boyle County Genealogical & Historical Society, the Kentucky School for the Deaf, the Forkland Community Center History Museum, and the Lexington History Museum, as well as Centre College and the Bluegrass Community and Technical College campus in Danville, Boyle Countians will have the opportunity to create, conserve, and collaborate on the histories of the county.

Additionally, individuals and organizations are invited to join in partnership with BCPL for

development of the project. Anyone interested in getting involved may contact Jason Cooper, Assistant Director of Library Operations, at jcooper@boylepublib.org.

More information will be available online at BoylePubLib.org/StoryCenter in the coming weeks.

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation is the nation's largest supporter of the arts and humanities. Since 1969, the Foundation has been guided by its core belief that the humanities and arts are essential to human understanding. The Foundation believes that the arts and humanities are where we express our complex humanity, and that everyone deserves the beauty, transcendence, and freedom that can be found there. Through its grants, Mellon seeks to build just communities enriched by meaning and empowered by critical thinking, where ideas and imagination can thrive. Learn more at mellon.org.

The Boyle County Public Library serves the city of Danville and the surrounding communities, and is actively committed to enriching the lives of its patrons.