

Mommy & Me Book Shower 2025

By Cherold Rhodes, Children's & Youth Services,
Ben May Main Library



The Mobile Public Library strives to support literacy and connect the community. Babies, the youngest members of our community, and their families are part of this mission. A baby shower is a way for friends and family to celebrate with expectant parents by giving gifts and support, and it was a perfect way for Mobile Public Library to welcome babies as the newest members of our community and inspire their families to help them get a great start in life! It was also a fun avenue to connect new parents with other valuable resources.

Mobile Public Library partnered with other community organizations that support babies and their parents to have a community baby shower on March 22. It was a Mommy & Me Book Shower, a book-themed shower with literacy inspiration and information for all the families who attended. Literacy for babies is as easy as reading, talking, singing, & playing with them, and it is a priceless gift!

Each organization offered families helpful information and swag to make life easier. The shower games were literacy-themed with hidden messages of inspiration to introduce the family to early literacy practices. The prizes for the games were tools to help families enjoy storytimes at home. The entire focus of the shower was to usher the youngest members of our community onto a path of literacy success and start building a love of reading. The food was even book-themed!

It's never too early to start reading, singing, talking, and playing with a baby, and themorning of the Mommy & Me Book Shower was ripe with activities to inspire parents to begin reading, singing, talking, and playing right away!



Going All In at the 2025 Mobile Literary Festival

By Jodie Cain Smith, Mobile Literary Festival Founder and author of the upcoming *Brackish Waters* series



Over 100 writers bet on themselves at the seventh Mobile Literary Festival. Held annually each spring at the Ben May Main Library, the April 5, 2025 festival packed the day with panel discussions and writing workshops on both the craft of writing and the publishing industry. Attendees were also treated to poetry readings, the Writerspace Writers' Space, The Haunted Book Shop popup shop, and the Writing Away Refuge Pitch War.

The day kicked off with a brief welcome in Bernheim Hall by festival founder Jodie Cain Smith. Then attendees dove into a discussion on marketing trends and tips, including best practices, the marketing tasks authors face, and how AI may help promoters lighten that load. Additional Bernheim Hall panel discussions examined plotting, giving and receiving feedback, and how to craft a hook that will make readers 'go all in' on a story.

Besides the Bernheim Hall sessions, attendees enjoyed the Smart Bet Series of workshops in the Armbrecht Meeting Room. Book Formatting for the Self-Publisher, Editing: What editors expect and what authors need, and Submitting Short Works for Publication proved popular among attendees.

The last session of the day has become the most anticipated event during the Mobile Literary Festival – the Writing Away Refuge Pitch War. Twenty writers received feedback on their book pitches from literary agent Alexandra Grana of the Corvisiero Agency. The opportunity for pitch feedback from a literary agent is invaluable to writers, but what makes Pitch War fun for audiences is the format. Book pitches are read aloud

anonymously, then audience members vote whether to buy or pass on the pitch.

While the Bernheim Hall and Armbrecht Meeting Room sessions were entertaining and informative, the fun didn't stop there. In the Ben May Main Library lobby, attendees enjoyed Sue Brannan Walker's Brown Bag Poetry Lunch & Listen, shopped local author books in The Haunted Book Shop popup shop, and shared resources, publishing opportunities, and writing insights in the Writerspace Writers' Space. This was the first festival appearance by Writerspace.com, a promotions firm that bridges the gap between authors and readers and won't be their last. The Writers' Space also featured a community story collaboration with contributors creating an original story, one writer and one line at a time.

The 2025 Mobile Literary Festival closed with a reception where attendees could mingle with each other, ask authors for signatures, vie for door prizes, and indulge in sweet treats and snacks.

Jodie Cain Smith, founder of the Mobile Literary Festival shared, "This FREE festival depends on the support of volunteer staffers and faculty members, the Mobile Public Library, Writing Away Refuge, Mobile Writers Guild, The Haunted Book Shop, and Writerspace.com. It brings Mobile's literary community together for a day of learning, creative support, and relationship building – new and old – like no other Mobile event does." To receive updates for the 2026 festival, visit and join the Mobile Literary Festival Facebook page at <https://bit.ly/mobileliteraryfestival>.

Library Connections

The MOBILE PUBLIC LIBRARY Newsletter

ISSUE 18
SUMMER 2025

Summer Library Celebration 2025: Color Our World

By Cherold Rhodes, Children's & Youth Services- Ben May Main Library



Summer is a season to relax, explore, and celebrate. The Mobile Public Library invites all ages of the community to celebrate and explore together during the Summer Library Celebration! The Summer Library Celebration is an annual event that takes place during June & July. The theme for this summer is Color Our World. All ages of the community are encouraged to go on a reading journey and have fun celebrating and exploring with an assortment of engaging programs for various interests and skill levels. The goal is to promote literacy and a love of reading by encouraging exploration, curiosity, and discovery.

All ages are encouraged to sign up for the reading challenge, set a reading goal, relax with a book, and possibly win a grand experience. Everyone who registers for the reading challenge and sets a reading goal will receive a special prize to encourage them on their journey.

For eight weeks this summer, there will be a wide variety of delightful programs offering experiences to ignite curiosity and inspire creativity throughout the summer. There will be performances from some community favorites, such as The Excelsior Band and The Mobile Environmental Studies Center, as well as, some new acts to explore, such as Bill Packard the Magic Man and The Story Ship.

Each Mobile Public Library location will offer tantalizing experiences designed to inspire all ages to continue reading, learning, creating, exploring, and discovering for a lifetime.

For more information about our Summer Library Celebration and upcoming programs, please visit [www. mobilepubliclibrary.org](http://www.mobilepubliclibrary.org) or follow us on Facebook or Instagram.

Our mission is to support literacy and connect our community.

MOBILE PUBLIC LIBRARY
mobilepubliclibrary.org

INFORM ENTERTAIN INSPIRE

 /Mobile.Public.Library

 /MobilePublicLibrary

 /MobPubLib

 251-340-1535



Required or Inspired: Finding Children's and Teen Books for the Summer and Beyond

by Robbin Glaser, Reference Librarian

Will your children or teens be required to read over the summer? Would you also like to inspire them to love reading? The library has titles in print, ebook, and some audiobooks. Find school reading assignments, and foster a love of reading by getting them books they choose with your guidance.

The library owns many titles on school reading lists, but with a limited number of copies, at least in print. If your child wants a print copy, place a "Hold" on a title. You may get it right away, or you may have to wait.

The longer you wait to place a Hold on a title, the less chance there is to get a copy before the school year begins. You may place one on a print copy through the MPL to Go app, the library website, or call the library. If there are other Holds on the book, your child will only have three weeks to read it.

Don't forget that ebooks are also available. Ebooks can be found in the library's catalog with the print copies and audiobooks. The digital titles can be downloaded from the catalog through the Hoopla and Cloud Library apps. You may set these apps to "Kids Mode," so that only children's materials will be visible.

If the ebook is in the Hoopla app, there is no waiting. You may download it right away. In the Cloud Library app, it may not be available immediately. You may place a Hold on it.

After three weeks, the digital title will automatically be returned. You may download it again in Hoopla. However, it may not be available in time for summer reading in Cloud Library. Because of school reading lists, there is a high probability that it will be used to fill someone else's Hold.



Often a child or teen is required to read an Accelerated Reader on a certain grade level, but they may choose which book. Most books, except for ones published in the past two or three years, do have an AR test.

The library website has limited lists by grade level and "Top 100" titles under the Services tab at the top of the homepage. For a complete list of titles in the AR database, check Accelerated Reader apps, such as "Pointscan" or "AR Book Finder," or www.arbookfind.com.

The apps are especially convenient for browsing in the library. Your child may choose a title, then just scan the publisher's barcode on the back of the book. If

there is a test, the AR level, points, etc. appear.

To inspire your child to read, choice is an effective way to develop a life-long love of reading, as well as develop reading comprehension. Whether it is at, below, or above grade level, reading enjoyment predicts reading success.

The library offers ways for children and teens to find books they love. Library staff are a good source. Assistance is available in the library and through "Your Next Book" located on the homepage under the Borrow tab.

A great online resource for children and teens is the database NoveList K-8 Plus, located by choosing "Online Research" on the library homepage. This database gives reading recommendations for fiction and nonfiction. Many search options, such as the following, are available.

"Appeal" factors let children and teens choose between dozens of options including character, storyline, pace, tone, writing style, and illustration. Another great feature is lists such as "Must Reads" and "Trending Now." Also, if they want a book similar to one they've already read, they can click on a title, and a list of "Read-Alikes" will appear.

For summer and beyond, the library is here to help your children and teens get what is required, and to inspire them with a world of choices.



Reflecting on a Special Event: An Afternoon of Stars with the Mobile Opera

by Adrienne McSwain-Dawson, Special Events Coordinator for MPL

The Mobile Public Library proudly continued its tradition of community partnership by teaming up with the Mobile Opera for a pair of unforgettable musical evenings. As part of our annual celebration of the arts, these special events were held on October 6, 2024, and March 9, 2025, in the beautiful Bernheim Hall at the Ben May Main Library.

Guests were delighted by performances featuring favorite musical selections from the cast of Mobile Opera's October production of *Hansel and Gretel*. The program continued with selections from the March cast of *Trouble in Tahiti* and *The Ghosts of Gatsby*, all presented

in an intimate, dimly lit setting. The evenings were made even more enjoyable by opportunities to interact with the performers afterward while savoring light refreshments. Most importantly, the event was free and open to the community.

We are grateful to everyone who joined us for these magical nights of music and community. Stay connected with the Ben May Main Library and Mobile Opera for future events celebrating the arts in Mobile! Visit mobilepubliclibrary.org/events to stay informed about all special events.



LOCAL HISTORY & GENEALOGY DIVISION

Elizabeth-Theris Boone, Manager, Local History & Genealogy Division

As spring has sprung over us all, we at the Local History & Genealogy Division are thankful for warm weather with cool breezes, beautiful Mobile azaleas, and our many community partnerships that allow us to provide wonderful and informative programming for all of you!

Was your ancestor involved in the fight for independence in the American Revolution, or are you stuck at a road block in your genealogical endeavors? **The Tristan de Luna Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution** are at the Local History & Genealogy library on the 3rd Saturday of every month from 10am – 1pm, and they are ready to assist you in your research! Come meet them at the upcoming dates of April 19, May 17, and June 21!

Is your ancestral research getting stalled by uncertainty over where your people were living, or has your ancestor disappeared from

the records of their usual locale and you can't find where they went? Join us on April 26 at 10am in the Ben May Technology Lab, or online via Zoom, with the **Mobile African American Genealogical & Historical Society** for a workshop presented by professional genealogist Mary Jones-Fitts. This session will focus on how to research migration patterns to learn about your African American ancestors. And fret not if you miss the April session; Mrs. Jones-Fitts will be back on June 28 to teach us about boundary changes and how to know where to look for your ancestor's records.

Of course, we at LHG are always here for guidance and assistance in your research, Monday through Saturday, 9am – 5pm. We look forward to your next visit and we remain, as ever, your friendly neighborhood Local History & Genealogy Division. Come see us!

Money Moves Bootcamp at the Mobile Public Library



The City of Mobile's Office of Supplier Diversity and Community Affairs, in collaboration with the Mobile Public Library, presents Money Moves Bootcamp, a free financial workshop series designed for residents looking to strengthen their finances or start a business. Topics include credit repair, down payment assistance, and the HOPE homeownership program.

Previous sessions were held in January and April at the Toulminville Branch Library. Both events were a great success and provided participants with valuable, actionable information. Each session featured presentations from financial experts, local banks, and industry professionals offering practical tips and real-world insights.

The next workshop is scheduled for August 23, 2025, at the West Regional Library. We encourage all community members to take advantage of this opportunity to access expert guidance and essential financial tools and resources.

The event is free but requires registration. For more information, please look for the event posting at mobilepubliclibrary.org/events.

