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Libraries and Schools Partner Up for Empowering Learning Opportunities

Brytani Fraser started as the Librarian at the Conover branch about the same time that Kecia Hopper became the Media Specialist at Shuford Elementary School in Conover. It didn't take long, though, before they had much more in common than just new jobs. Brytani heard that when Kecia started at the school, the library was under two feet of water. The damage and loss of resources was staggering. Kecia was overwhelmed.

"I looked around me and didn't know where to start. I needed a guardian angel." Kecia remembers with a chuckle. "Brytani came along and we partnered up."

The Conover Branch donated books to the school and Brytani began doing story times with the kids to foster a love for reading and literature. Recently, Kecia began a new reading program with her 2nd graders focusing on the popular *Magic Tree House Series*. Brytani came up with a great idea: why not combine reading and music to engage the kids with the books?

Brytani presented the idea to Suzanne White, Director of the Catawba County Library System, who says, "Definitely, we want to see the library and schools collaborate in new and creative ways to enhance learning opportunities for students."

Brytani reached out to the Hickory Music Factory to bring musicians in to enhance the monthly reading events. On January 20th, the first of three events took place at Shuford based on the book, "A Good Night for Ghosts", that features Louis Armstrong in New Orleans. There was singing, dancing, dramatic readings from the book, and live music. Mark Hefner, a trumpet player from the Hickory Music Factory came and shared his love for jazz, as well as his talent with the horn.

In February, students will read "Lions at Lunchtime", featuring a warrior from the Masai tribe, and incorporate live African drumming. In March, the book will be "Leprechaun in Late Winter", which takes place in Ireland, with a program featuring live traditional Irish folk music.

Kecia says, "This is the perfect partnership. I'm so thankful for Brytani and what she's done for us."

Librarians at the branches countywide look for collaboration opportunities with nearby schools. "We can do so much more when we partner and combine our efforts with others in our community to make an impact," said White, "that's what Catawba County Libraries are all about—empowering lives and building our community by bringing people, information, and ideas together."



About: The Catawba County Library System, headquartered in Newton, NC, serves the citizens of Catawba County as the community's place to connect, explore, and grow. Library services empower lives and build community by bringing people, information, and ideas together. With seven branches throughout the county, the library is a year-round, integral provider of early literacy and lifelong learning, and provides a full complement of digital services, classes and support to bridge the digital divide, empower job seekers, and enhance community quality of life and economic health.