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For Immediate Release:

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## Libraries partner to offer food for fines

**October 24, 2016**

**Newton, NC** – Local libraries are again collaborating to accept canned goods in place of payment for overdue fees for two weeks in November--from November 7-21. The Food for Fines Amnesty Weeks initiative offers public library customers countywide a break with overdue fines while helping the hungry.

As a part of National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week, Catawba County Library and Hickory Public Library systems are partnering to allow patrons to pay their fines with canned goods at the rate of one item for each dollar in fines. The food will benefit local food pantries.

Fines will be waived on any overdue materials returned no matter how long ago the materials were due. However, donated food may not be used to pay for lost or damaged items.

Customers need not have outstanding fines to participate in the food collection. Collection boxes will be placed in each location of both library systems.

In collaboration with Catawba County Health Partners' Give Healthy Initiative, the drive also encourages the donation of foods filled with the nutrients adults and children need for healthy living, in partnership with food collection agencies across Catawba County. The library will share a list of healthy foods to guide selection of donations for the drive.

Acceptable food should be nonperishable and in date (*not expired*). Welcome items include canned meat, soups, canned vegetables, canned fruits, boxed cereals, grits, dried beans, rice, pasta, spaghetti sauce, baby food, Jell-O, jams, or small bags of flour or sugar. Also welcome are individual-serve pop-top cans and other ready-to-eat foods that do not require refrigeration or cooking such as peanut butter, crackers and individual fruit cups.

All public library locations in Catawba County and Hickory are taking donations: Patrick Beaver Memorial Library and Ridgeview Library in Hickory, and any location of Catawba County Library System: Newton, Conover, Claremont, Maiden, St. Stephens, Southwest and Sherrills Ford-Terrell.

For more information about the library amnesty weeks, contact your local branch.

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**About:** The Catawba County Library System, headquartered in Newton, NC, serves the citizens of Catawba County with seven branches throughout the county and is a year-round, integral provider of early literacy and lifelong learning. In addition to traditional services, the system provides a full complement of computer and digital services, classes and support to bridge the digital divide, empower job seekers, and enhance community quality of life and economic health.