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Audio Kiosk Brings History to Life at Genealogy Center

MCPL's Midwest Genealogy Center Adds Interactive New Feature for Community to Explore

Independence, MO – This week, Mid-Continent Public Library's Midwest Genealogy Center launched a new component to its Tell Me a Story oral history initiative, which seeks to help metro residents collect, preserve, and share oral history with future generations. The Center is now home to an Oral History Audio Kiosk that can be used to listen to segments of recorded stories from fellow community members.

Made possible by grant funding from The Missouri Humanities Council,* the new Kiosk is currently located in the Center's Community Hall alongside its Gallery Wall, which exhibits historic photos and artwork. From now through March, both the Kiosk and the Gallery Wall will feature content that was gathered during a community archiving event at the Englewood Arts Center in Independence last summer. The focus of the event was to highlight connections to the KC Opry inside the historic Englewood Theater.

"This new audio kiosk is yet another way we can help shine a light on the chapters of our community's past," said Emily Wildhaber, Midwest Genealogy Center Assistant Manager. "It's one thing to read about an event or ancestor, but hearing a first-person account of an experience really brings history to life. We're proud to expand our Tell Me a Story program and hope to continue building our archive of stories."

MGC's Tell Me a Story initiative launched in 2010 with the installation of recording equipment at the Center and the creation of "kits" that customers could check out and take home. Both the in-branch equipment and kits are used to record memories, and patrons receive a free copy to keep. The stories are also archived by the Library if patrons grant permission. In 2024, the Library expanded the program with the addition of a traveling recording booth called the "Tell Me a Story Pod," offering customers the opportunity to tell and record a short story about themselves in a two-person booth, which has made its way to MCPL branches across the three-county Library district.

More information about the Tell Me a Story program can be found on the Library's website at mymcpl.org/Genealogy/TellMeAStory.

*Funding in the amount of \$1,480 (grant#3036) for the Midwest Genealogy Center Oral History Program Audio Kiosk Project, was awarded by The Missouri Humanities Council (MHC) to MCPL through the Mini Grant Program. The MHC is the only statewide agency in Missouri devoted exclusively to humanities education for citizens of all ages. It has served as a state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities since 1971.

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About Mid-Continent Public Library

Founded in 1965, [Mid-Continent Public Library](#) is the largest library system in the Kansas City metropolitan area, operating 34 branches and two Library-To-Go locations and serving approximately 850,000 people in Jackson, Clay, and Platte Counties. MCPL is an award-winning library system that strives to enrich citizens and communities through expanding access to innovation, information, ideas, and inspiration. Connect with the Library on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).