



“The Ralph Ellison Library is the HUB for connecting cultural, educational, and community resources. It is the catalyst for open dialogue on issues and concerns in the community, city, and state. Our library is a FUN place to nurture young minds and keep mature minds active and ever learning!!! (That’s US)

Most of all, it is an Environment to CREATE THE MOST STIMULATING, MIND STRETCHING, GROWTH OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL WHO COME TO OUR RALPH ELLISON LIBRARY

WE LOVE OUR LIBRARY

WE LOVE OUR DIRECTOR

WE LOVE ALL THE STAFF & WE CAN FEEL THEIR LOVE EVERY TIME WE ARE THERE!!!”

-Rita McNeal Freaney,  
Co-Founder Sisters in Motion LLC 2010



## **Ralph Ellison Library Service Plan 2011-2012**

Completed September 29, 2010 in conjunction with the Metropolitan Library System.



## >>>Our Focus



### >Satisfy Curiosity: Lifelong Learning

The library provides the resources needed to explore topics of personal interest and continue to learn throughout life.

**Goal:** All ages realize their library offers topics in a variety of formats they find captivating and enriching to their lives.

**Activity:** Provide programs and displays that highlight music, art, history, and culture along with everyday information needs.

**Task:** Interactive programming and displays involving music, storytelling, arts and crafts, drama, etc. that meet the needs our customers and serves to enrich and entertain.

**Examples:** Trip Around the World, 1-2-3 Play with Me, Book Talks from Local Authors, Life Music Performances, Educational Series, and The Afterschool Art Project Series

**Goal:** Residents see their library as a resource for introductions to an assortment of cultural, civic, and/or community interests.

**Activity:** Through our strategic partnerships, the staff will work to provide culturally enriching programs to our community.

**Task:** Culturally enriching programs and displays centered in conjunction with several community organizations.

**Examples:** Banned Books Display, Follow Us to the Top Display, College Preparation Series with local universities, Trip Around the World with the Junior League, Read to a Better World with the YWCA and the Respect Diversity Foundation

Completed September 29, 2010 in conjunction with the Metropolitan Library System. Photos and design by Anna Todd. Contributors: Michael Owens, Anna Todd, JoAnn Walkup, Jean Longo, Taryn Kingery, Reginald Walker.

Ralph Ellison Library, 2000 NE 23rd St., Oklahoma City, OK 73111.

Phone: 424-1437

Email: [ralphellison@metropolitanlibrary.org](mailto:ralphellison@metropolitanlibrary.org)

## >>>Vision and Goals



**Vision**-The Ralph Ellison Library is your inviting, innovative link to the world.

**Mission**-The Ralph Ellison Library facilitates the free flow of knowledge and ideas by providing access to materials, services, and programs to Oklahoma County's diverse community.

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## >>> **Strategic Partnerships**



**“In partnership with the community, the newly renovated Ralph Ellison Library, with great new leadership has begun to empower, reenergize, and revitalize the Northeast Community. Through its educational initiatives, the Ralph Ellison Library will play a critical role in the community’s transformation. The highly trained and compassionate staff is responsible for making the Ralph Ellison Library welcoming to all.”**

**-Flossie Thurston**

**Special Friends of the Ralph Ellison Library, President**

The library recognizes that partnering with community organizations is vital to ensuring that our library achieves its vision. The library hopes to serve as a community hub long into the future, and a major aspect of our success depends on developing mutually beneficial partnerships with local organizations and groups. The list below provides a sample of the community organizations that the library currently partners with. We hope to extend this list in the future to involve the entire community in the exciting progress being made at the Ralph Ellison Library.

- >AM1140
- >Oklahoma City Public Schools
  - >Douglass High School
  - >Martin Luther King Elementary
  - >Kipp Prep School
  - >Northeast High School
- >Millwood Schools
- >Grace Living Center
- >Langston University
- >Local Churches
- >NAACP
- >Oklahoma City Thunder
- >On the Ball Publishing
- >Perry Publishing & Broadcasting
- >Special Friends of Ralph Ellison Library
- >The Brotherhood Association, Inc.
- >S.A.Y.Y.E.A.
- >**Girls Today, Tomorrow’s Young Women**
- >YMCA
- >Oklahoma City County Health Department
- >Junior League
- >Oklahoma Arts Council
- >NABVETS
- >Tinker Federal Credit Union
- >Skyview Nursing Home

## >>>Library Profile



### >Customer Self Service

With the recent renovation to Ralph Ellison Library, we were the first library in the Metropolitan Library System to implement Customer Self Reserves pickup. Customers have enjoyed saving time by locating their own reserves and utilizing our Self Checkout located next to the reserve shelves. This latest program has not only pleased our customers but served to increase circulation of our collection by having the hottest titles that some have reserved in plain sight of other customers to generate interest.

“The Ralph Ellison Library is the oasis, a temple, a fortress, and a lighthouse for our journey.”

– Talib Mahmoud, a valued customer

## >>>Executive Summary

### >A Word from the Manager

The Ralph Ellison Library Service Plan was designed to meet the Metropolitan Library System’s Strategic Plan objectives. As the manager, I am committed to the goal of making our library an inviting and innovative link to the world. In order to meet these objectives, we pledge to make customer service and satisfaction a top priority. In the following pages, the reader will find a detailed analysis of the library, our community, and the many challenges that we face. Working with and in the community, we have seen these cooperative efforts produce many successes.

As part of the Metropolitan Library System and its mission for Oklahoma City, the Ralph Ellison Library values its customers and community, and strives to provide excellent and unforgettable service. In the end, we strive to make Ralph Ellison Library a safe and welcoming place for the entire community.

*-Michael Owens*

*Manager of Operations*



# >>>Community Profile

## >A History of Activism

Northeast Oklahoma City is a historically Black neighborhood with a rich history of political and social activism. Trailblazers like Roscoe Dunjee helped pave the way for Black Americans in Oklahoma by fighting against racial segregation in the early part of the twentieth century and founding the *Black Dispatch*, the Oklahoma City chapter of the NAACP and serving as president of the National Negro Business League. The historic Deep Deuce community served as a center for Black culture and commerce in **the 1930's and 40's, though much of the area was bulldozed in the 1960's** to make way for I-235. Community activism continued into the civil rights era, with leaders such as Clara Luper, E. Melvin Porter and Hannah Atkins. Groups like the NAACP, Urban League and Black Muslims remain active in the community to this day.

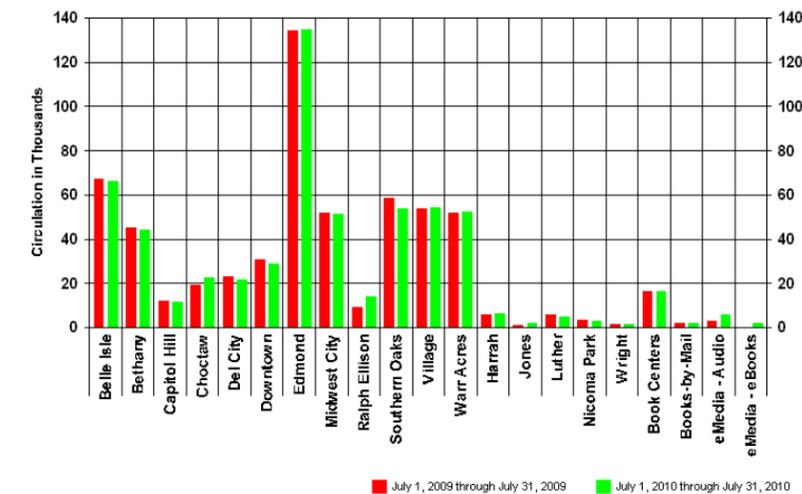


# >>>Library Profile



## Circulation Gains and Losses

July 1, 2010 through July 31, 2010 (8.33% of the 10-11 Fiscal Year)



## >Budget

The annual budget for Ralph Ellison Library for FY 1-12 is \$790,880.00 (Direct cost), \$442,199.21 (Indirect cost), \$1,233,079.21 (Total cost).

## >Circulation

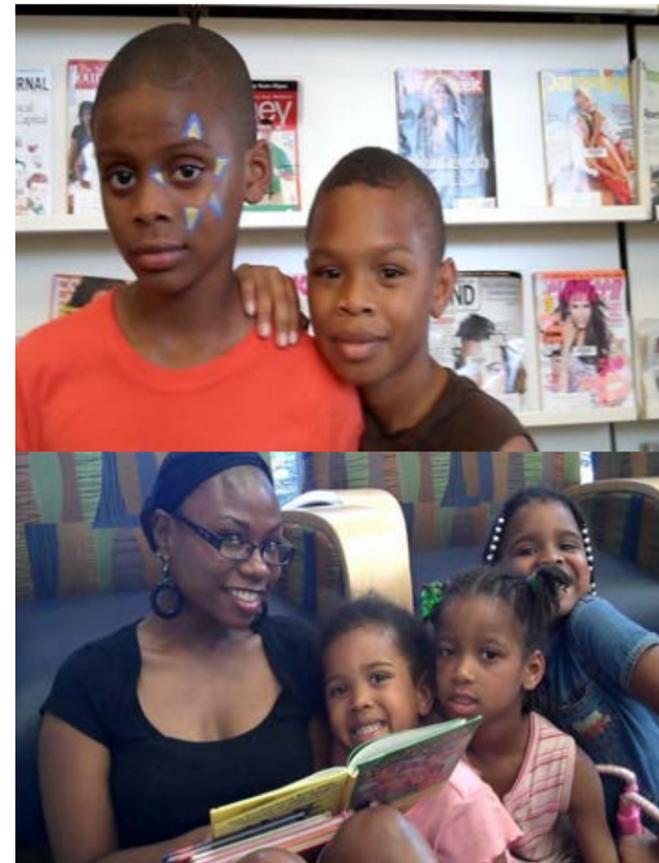
In 2010, Ralph Ellison's circulation increased by 55.1% between July 1, 2010 and July 31, 2010. While our circulation has increased greatly in the past year, the library recognizes the need to continue to increase our circulation and plans to implement measures in the upcoming year to accomplish this. These measures include making the community aware of the resources available at the library by providing displays around the library and for programs, word-of-mouth marketing, providing a "Staff Picks" area, advertising in local media outlets (including AM 1140), visiting local schools for book talks and story times, taking measures to ensure that our collection meets our community's needs as well as professional standards, and planning programs and events that encourage community members to utilize library resources.

## >>> Library Profile



### >Programs and Events

The library offers dynamic, community-centered programming for all ages. Reading programs for designated age groups include the Summer Reading Program (Children and Teens), Booktoberfest (ages 18-54), and the Winter Readfest (55 and up). Annual activities involving all ages include our Juneteenth Celebration, the Fall Festival, and our Black History month programs. Senior programming offers a Scrabble Club, local author book signings, and Wii Bowling. Adult programming offers resume and interview workshops, social networking workshops, genealogy workshops, an Adult Book Club, a Diabetes Prevention Program, GED classes, and several multicultural events. Young Adult programming offers an annual College Preparation Series, craft programs, game nights, bi-annual **Guy's and Girl's Nights**, and volunteer opportunities through the **Teen Advisory Board**. **Children's programming offers annual holiday parties, Children Read to Dogs, Trip Around the World** in association with the Junior League, and 1-2-3 Play with Me and much more. In addition to these programs, Ralph Ellison plays host to several mentoring programs for the **community's youth including The Sisterhood (S.A.Y.Y.E.A.), The Brotherhood, Girls Today Tomorrow's Young Women, and Enlightening Youthful Connections**. The library also hosts The Conversation which is a program involving several discussions led by prominent community leaders on the American Black Experience.



### >The Importance of Education

The first Black school in Northeast Oklahoma City opened in March 1891. Douglass High School would go on to produce many graduates who would make important contributions to the community, including renowned author (and the library's namesake) **Ralph Ellison**. **In 2006, with the help of bond money from MAPS for Kids, a brand new Douglass High School opened its doors to the community.** The library recognizes the importance of educating young people in the community and strives to partner with local schools, including Douglass, to promote a love of knowledge, a sense of community and a desire for lifelong learning.

Resources: Moore, Kendrick. 2000. *The Oklahoma City African American discovery guide*. Oklahoma: Oklahoma African Trail of Tears, Tours, Inc.

OCMAPS. *Oklahoma City Metropolitan Area Public Schools Trust 2006 annual report*. 2006. [http://www.okc.gov/OCMAPS/ocmaps\\_library/ocmaps\\_2006.pdf](http://www.okc.gov/OCMAPS/ocmaps_library/ocmaps_2006.pdf).



## >>>Community Profile

### >The Community Today

The Northeast 23rd Street Corridor boasts a community of just over 7,000 (as of January 2008), with Black Americans making up almost 90% of this population. The median household income is \$17,612 compared to \$34,947 for the city-at-large. Thirty-seven percent of residents live below the poverty line. Twenty-two percent of houses in the area remain vacant, while housing values average around \$37,000 (compared to \$80,000 in the city-at-large). The area has a 15% unemployment rate, ten percent higher than the Oklahoma City metro. Education is also a major issue in this community, with a 68% high school graduation rate, compared to over 80% in the metro.

In light of the high poverty levels, decreasing property values and low education rates in the community, the library serves a particularly important role as a community center. Since it opened in 1975, the library has served as a cornerstone for community projects and development, as well as a source of information and programs for the enrichment of all ages.



## >>>Library Profile

### >Librarian Assistance

Two full time librarians and two half-time librarians assist customers in solving both routine and complex reference questions. Four staff members hold MLIS degrees. One staff member is working on her MLIS degree.

### >Library Services

In addition to providing reference assistance, the library also offers online computer services, meeting rooms for public use, tours and instruction in use of library resources, a public copy machine, a Job Information Center, and a College Resource area.

### >Computer Services

The library provides four “CyberMars” computers offering access to the library catalog and borrower services, twenty-four multi-use computers offering Internet access and Microsoft Office programs, four children’s computers offering educational programs and games, free Wireless Internet access, 24/7 library services via [www.metrolibrary.org](http://www.metrolibrary.org) and one-on-one computer classes with a technology assistant.



## >>> Library Profile



### >General Collections and Black History Collection

The library offers over 42,000 items for all ages, including books, magazines, newspapers, CDs and DVDs. In the past year, the library has begun to offer eMedia materials such as ebooks to customers with access to the Internet. In addition, the library provides reference materials for in-library use, access to the Internet and the library system's databases, and materials via interlibrary loan. Ralph Ellison is also home to the Black History Collection, a special collection celebrating the Black experience in America with an emphasis on Oklahoma. The collection has been evaluated by community leaders and library representatives to ensure the collection meets quality standards and achieves its vision of preserving and promoting awareness of the unique history of Black Americans. The library also offers the Job Information Center which provides several resources to those looking to further their education and needing career assistance.

## >>> Community Profile



In 2008, the library began a year-long renovation project, the first major project since the library opened. The \$2.3 million project (approved by a 2000 bond issue) includes the addition of a new meeting space for programs and community development, a new lobby and restrooms, new furnishings, and a mechanical systems upgrade.

Resources: City of Oklahoma City, 2008. *NE 23rd Street Corridor plan*. <http://www.okc.gov/Planning/ne23/NE%2023rd%20Corridor%20Plan%20FINAL%20with%20resolutions.pdf>. Metropolitan Library System. 2008. *Ralph Ellison Library undergoing renovations*. [http://www.mls.lib.ok.us/mls/mls\\_news/2008/](http://www.mls.lib.ok.us/mls/mls_news/2008/)

“The reemergence of the Ralph Ellison Library as the central information, meeting, and networking entity in the Northeast community is due to exceptional leadership. As we seek to solve the educational challenges in our community, the Ralph Ellison Library will play a critical part in its success.”

– Mike Shelton, House Representative District 97

## >>> Library Profile

The Ralph Ellison Library is located in one of Oklahoma's historically Black neighborhoods. The community has a rich history of activism, punctuated by the efforts of civil rights leader Clara Luper, who still lives in the community. The library serves as a community center for an economically depressed, but culturally vibrant neighborhood. Customers rely on the library to find basic information about voting, taxes, tutoring, government assistance, and a variety of other fundamental needs. In addition, the library serves a dynamic population of motivated young adults, college students, business people, authors, and community leaders. Our collection and programs are geared to meet the needs of all age groups, including children, teens, adults, and elders. Our Black History Collection highlights the achievements of Black Americans in politics, business, social activism, literature, and the arts, and also provides a rich history of the Black struggle in America from slavery to present. **The library's vision (in conjunction with the Metropolitan Library System) is to serve as the community's inviting, innovative link to the world.**



## >>> Library Profile

### > Facility

The newly renovated Ralph Ellison Library opened its doors in December 2009. The renovation included a newly designed meeting room used for community meetings as well as library programs and events, a new lobby area, new public restrooms, and updated furnishings and technology. **The new building is 16,500 square feet and includes designated children's and teen area as well as plenty of space for customers to study quietly or mingle.**



### > Service Hours

The library is open 61 hours per week. Regular service hours include: Monday through Thursday 9am-8pm, Friday 9am-6pm, and Saturday 9am-5pm.

