

AFTER TORNADO CLOSURE, CABANNE LIBRARY WELCOMES READERS BACK, REVEALS FORGOTTEN HISTORY

BY ABBY WOJCIK

Cabanne Library, 1106 Union Blvd., has reopened to the public after being closed for a year with damages suffered from the May 16 tornado.

The disaster that struck North St. Louis also serendipitously revealed the building’s original high ceiling, forgotten windows and elegant, century-old crown molding.

A fake ceiling was likely installed to cover up damage predating the tornado, including peeling lead-based paint, which was an easier and more cost-saving method at the time.

The original ceiling has now been fully restored, bringing back

more natural light and historic features from when it was constructed in 1907. Two chandeliers were donated by Matt Villa of Villa Lighting Supply.

It is one of five branches in St. Louis funded by Andrew Carnegie more than a century ago that remains in operation today.

Kaylee Cubalo, Youth Specialist at the Cabanne Library was transferred to a few different branches while Cabanne underwent construction of scraping paint, restoring damaged plaster, and repairing the walls leading to the newly revealed ceiling.

“It’s been great seeing everybody come back,” Cubalo said. “I’ve worked at three different Carnegie



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The newly renovated ceiling features original windows and details from 1907.

libraries and now, and I can tell the features are all similar and very telling of that time.”

Local resident and frequent library visitor Aaliyah Williams says, “My favorite part of the library is that there are a bunch of books and you can chillax and play with other kids. Plus, they have bingo and slime days!” Williams shared that she enjoys reading graphic novels such as *Unico* by Samuel Sattin and *Adorable Empire* by Laura Terry.

Cubalo recently ran the Slime Bingo Night that Williams attended, bringing children together for an event at the Cabanne Library for the first time in over a year.

Cubalo expressed being grateful to be back serving familiar faces in her original space with the library’s outreach and programs.

Visitors can now return to Cabanne Library to see a familiar community space from a new perspective, rediscovering pieces of its past that were there all along.

ABBY WOJCIK PHOTOS



Details outside the front doors of Cabanne Library.



Aaliyah Williams explores the graphic novel section at the Cabanne Library.



Cabanne Library has new, historic interior design details upon reopening in May.