

The Central Arkansas Library System serves the educational and entertainment needs of Pulaski and Perry County residents, with 13 unique library branches and our flagship campus, Library Square in downtown Little Rock. Card holders enjoy access to more than one million items, including books, audiobooks, ebooks, DVDs, periodicals, databases, telescopes, bird-watching kits, and even fishing poles. Our virtual branch, [cals.org](http://cals.org), is open 24/7, allowing patrons to download ebooks, audiobooks, music, magazines, movies, and TV shows.

An old piece of folk wisdom reminds us that a single-strand rope is much more easily broken than one braided of many strands. The whole of such a braided cord has strength far greater than even the sum of its threads.

At CALS, we try to approach meeting the community's needs with this truth in mind. We actively cultivate collaboration with a host of partners from all around the community in order to keep braiding those invisible ties that collectively support our culture, our neighborhoods, and our families better than any of us can do acting alone.

This is an even more powerful truth in a digital era when it seems that so many forces are intent on fraying the community's bonds by sowing conflict, division, and fear. The public library has always stood in the center of the community, encouraging collaboration—braiding and rebraiding the cords of connection — inviting partners and our community members to discover the strength of dialogue and teamwork.



As you read the news in this quarterly, we hope you will be encouraged by our many dynamic, library-based partnerships that are striving to make our neighborhoods stronger, richer, and happier places to live. And if you can point us in the direction of new partnerships to forge, please contact me at [ncoulter@cals.org](mailto:ncoulter@cals.org).

Here are a couple of examples I'm proud of Little Rock for accomplishing recently. Be Mighty Little Rock, coordinated by our CALS library staff, brought together an unprecedented number of major community partners to combat youth hunger this summer, including the City of Little Rock, the Little Rock School District, the city Parks and Recreation Department, the Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance, and Rock Region METRO. Those partnerships are continuing in exciting ways with more nutrition and health programs. This fall, another partnership will allow the Arkansas Arts Center to teach many classes in CALS branches, as the center begins a massive two-year remodeling process that will close down its usual space. By hosting the AAC in our well-equipped public meeting spaces, we can assist this vital cultural institution to keep its connection with the people of our city.

These major collaborative efforts produce clear benefits for our community, but there are also scores of other partnerships happening every day at CALS that enrich our neighborhoods and our people's lives. Whether we are jumping in to enhance the fun of Goat Fest in Perryville, teaming up with Arkansas Women's Outreach to support women's health needs, or hosting classes in crucial business skills from the Arkansas Small Business and Technology Development Center, we see every day the benefits that people realize from our collaborations.

We hope you will join your own strand to the many threads that run through this publication, telling the story of how our people come together for progress and for hope. You are a vital part of the braided strength that we support, and we welcome you to our CALS community.