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Mary Hastler



Mary Hastler: Leading with Purpose, Passion, and Power

Mary Hastler, Chief Executive Officer of Harford County Public Library (HCPL), has spent her career championing access, innovation, and equity in public library service. A dynamic and inspiring leader, Mary's journey is one defined by purpose and an unshakable commitment to empowering others — particularly women — through education, advocacy, and opportunity.

Throughout her distinguished career, Mary has served in pivotal leadership roles including Past President of both the Maryland Association of Public Library Administrators and the Maryland Library Association. Her ability to blend strategic vision with compassion has garnered wide recognition. In 2018, she was honored with the Maryland Library Association "Outstanding Member" Award, not only for her influence on library development and funding, but also for her role as a mentor and role model to professionals across the state.



Under her guidance, Harford County Public Library has become a beacon of innovation. The library's multiple "Innovator of the Year" awards from *The Daily Record*—for groundbreaking initiatives such as Little Leapers STEM kits and the Bel Air Children's Department renovation—highlight her commitment to enriching early literacy and lifelong learning in meaningful ways.



Mary's accolades extend well beyond the library world. She was named an "Influential Marylander" and a "Top 100 Women in Maryland" by *The Daily Record*, earning the coveted Circle of Excellence distinction in recognition of her enduring impact. In 2023, her leadership helped HCPL earn *The Daily Record's* inaugural "Empowering Women" Award, a reflection of her belief in lifting others as an integral part of her journey.

She credits the "Circle of Excellence" as a continual source of inspiration. "To be surrounded by women who are changemakers, trailblazers, and fierce advocates—it fuels my own desire to keep pushing boundaries," she shares. "It reminds me that leadership isn't about standing in front, but about standing beside others and amplifying their voices."

Mary's service extends into the broader community through roles with Maryland Humanities, the United Way of Central Maryland, and the Harford County Economic Advisory Board, among many others. Her academic background includes advanced degrees in Library Science, Business Administration, and Health Care Administration, underscoring her multifaceted approach to leadership.

Guided by her favorite quote, "*I will fight for those who cannot fight for themselves*", Wonder Woman, Mary Hastler continues to lead with courage, grace, and the unwavering belief that libraries change lives. And through her work, she proves that one person can indeed make a difference.