

July 15, 2025; Online

## Briefs: Registration for Wheelchair Costume Workshop is open until Sept. 5



*Four-year-old Joseph Hughes of Bel Air smiles as he's fitted for his Buzz Lightyear costume around his wheelchair during the Harford County Public Library Foundation's Wheelchair Costume Workshop before the Inclusive Trunk or Treat at the Epicenter in Edgewood on Saturday. (Brian Krista/staff photo)*

By [Shaela Foster](#)

July 15, 2025

As part of the annual Wheelchair Costume Workshop and Inclusive Trunk or Treat, the Harford County Public Library Foundation invites children who use a wheelchair to sign up for a custom-designed costume that fits around their chair.

Each costume is free and will be part of the annual event on October 3 and 4. Workshop volunteers create unique, wheel-chair adapted costumes to make Halloween inclusive for children within the community.

“The joy on the children’s faces as they receive their custom costumes is priceless,” said CEO of HCPL, Mary Hastler, in a news release.

The foundation advises families to register early to ensure every child that would like to participate has the chance to.

Last year there were over 100 volunteers who helped transform wheelchairs into costumes like a Wheel of Fortune with a working wheel and letter board, a Buzz Lightyear spaceship, Finding Nemo with a coral reef and Princess Peach from the Mario Games.

The HCPL Foundation will provide materials such as paint, fabric, cardboard, wood, and glitter. Artists, carpenters, engineers and a seamstress will also be on site to provide support.

Registration for a costume begins now and will close on September 5. Families and volunteers can register at [hcplonline.org/wcw.php](http://hcplonline.org/wcw.php).

### **Harford County Public Library Foundation Receives \$20,000 donation**

Harford County Public Library Foundation received a \$20,000 donation from the Morris A. and Clarisse B. Mechanic Foundation to support the library’s early literacy program.

The money will be used to improve early literacy programming across the library system. The programs include story times, author visits, sensory play, parent-child workshops and access to early learning resources.

The donation continues a long partnership with the Mechanic Foundation and the Library. Since 2016, the foundation has contributed \$20,000 annually to promote early literacy initiatives. Before that in 2015, the foundation gave a \$25,000 gift to establish the Early Literacy Center at the Bel Air Library.

Overall since 2010, the Mechanic Foundation has contributed \$260,000 to the Harford County Public Library Foundation.

“Their generosity has helped thousands of children begin their lifelong journey of learning and literacy,” said CEO of HCPL, Mary Hastler, in a news release.

The Morris A. and Clarisse B. Mechanic Foundation supplies grants to nonprofit organizations that improve community life in the state of Maryland. They believe a strong library is a key foundational piece of a successful community, according to president of the foundation, Carolyn Lambdin in a news release.

Harford County Education Foundation announces Jillian Lader as new board chair

The Harford County Education Foundation announced the election of Jillian Lader as the new chair of its Board of Directors, according to a press release.

Lader will serve a one-year term guiding the foundation's mission to remove barriers to learning and ensuring every Harford County student has the tools they need to be successful.

During her time, Lader said in the press release that she plans to sharpen the foundation's focus on supporting children from birth to age five, highlighting the importance of early learning and school readiness.

"If we want to create lasting change in our community, we need to begin before the first school bell rings," she said in the release. "It's about giving every child a foundation to enter school ready to learn, grow and thrive."

She also aims to expand an early childhood focus across the foundation's partnerships and programs, citing her previous work leading Littles University, a literacy initiative that connects families with books and early learning resources.

"This organization plays a vital role in making sure our students — and their teachers — have the resources they need to succeed," she said. "I look forward to working with our Board, staff and supporters to deepen our impact, especially in the earliest years of a child's life."