

Tickets going on sale for Harford County Library's 20th annual gala

By Matt Hubbard

Tickets for the Harford County Public Library's annual gala — the system's largest fundraiser — will go on sale Tuesday.

The 20th annual gala will be held Oct. 26 at the Abingdon Library. Early bird tickets will be available Tuesday for \$175 per person. General tickets will go on sale Wednesday for \$200 per person.

This year's theme will be "Cirque de Magie," which replicates the setting of the fantasy novel, "The Night Circus," by Erin Morgenstern. The novel tells a story of love, destiny and a clash between two magical worlds set against the backdrop of an ever-changing circus.

Magicians and fortune

Turn to Gala, Page 9



Children's librarian Colleen Kessler reads a story to families during Harford County Public Library's Fandom Fest at the Abingdon branch Sept. 23, 2023. **BRIAN KRISTA/STAFF**

Gala

from Page 1

tellers will perform at the event and live and silent auctions will be held. Food will be provided by Evolved Catering and Events and Saxon's Diamond Center will have a jewelry raffle.

"This year's 20th annual gala will be an unforgettable evening, meticulously crafted to astound and enchant our honored guests," Mary Hastler, library CEO, said. "The real magic of the night is the community's spirit and support for library initiatives that transform lives."

Fundraising from the annual gala is critical to the system's 11 branches that provide resources, services and programs including early literacy, STEM resources, internet, information access and more to county residents.

The system's operating budget last year was just over \$25 million, with 83.39% of its funding coming from the county, 12.48% coming from the state, 3.13% from the library system and the rest from grants.

In 2023, the library system had 726,558 visitors, with circulation of 3,042,749 materials — 1,764,455 for adults and 1,278,294 for children. The library offered 9,385 programs which were attended by 401,626 people and its Wi-Fi was used by 330,479 people in 2023.

"Our libraries are the cornerstones of our community, empowering individuals, businesses and families across Harford County," Hastler said. "The community's support and sponsorship are deeply appreciated and ensure the library will continue to illuminate minds and ignite imagination for generations to come."

Tickets can be purchased at <https://hcplonline.org/gala.php>.