The Enoch Pratt Free Library in Baltimore is proud to be “owned” by its patrons. Across the city, the Central and branch libraries are claimed by residents as “my sanctuary,” “my office,” “my home away from home” or simply as “my library.”

WE TAKE SERIOUSLY OUR ROLE in providing essential information and opportunity to everyone—for free. Our stated mission—“To provide equal access to information and services that empower, enrich, and enhance the quality of life for all”—harks back to our earliest roots. In 1882 founder Enoch Pratt offered his gift of a library that would be “for all, rich and poor, without distinction of race or color.” Every day, the Library serves the residents of Baltimore and Maryland with that spirit.

Along the way, the people we serve have bonded with this vibrant civic institution, and we have responded nimbly to their evolving needs and interests. By now, to varying degrees, each branch library reflects the character of its neighborhood. The Pratt has become a Village Square, where diverse people of all races, ethnicities, ages, and socioeconomic circumstances gather to learn, celebrate, and communicate.

Present in each library are librarians who help the public navigate through virtual and traditional resources. As they provide technical expertise, read stories to children, and teach classes, they also become familiar, trusted, and often beloved members of their library’s communities.

The Pratt is supported financially by city and state funding, as well as private gifts from generous donors. But the sense of ownership that occurs when people dive into the immense resources within our walls—and use our computers to access even more treasures beyond those walls—is priceless.

In this challenging economy, the Pratt has become the “in place.” People come to use computers and enjoy free entertainment; save money on books and stretch their budgets with “recession buster tips” from the website; hear authors speak on their latest books; and participate in serious dialogues on race. The Pratt offers something for everyone!
“I’m a member of Pratt’s Community Youth Corps (CYC), which I joined in middle school. By now, I’ve earned the service learning credits I need to graduate from high school. As CYC interns, we’re trained to be good employees, and I’ve worked at three different Library branches. When I’m not working, I go back to the Pratt to read—mostly young adult fiction and history—do homework, use the computer, or socialize. Sometimes I meet friends there for arts and crafts classes and dances. There’s a lot of stuff you can do at the Library.”

AMBER DUNHAM / Student, Coppin Academy

“The Pratt is incredibly supportive of our students, providing opportunities for the kids to follow up and go deeper into whatever they are learning in school. It is also a great partner in our efforts to improve literacy, not just with the kids but with their parents. The Pratt is an invaluable community resource.”

DR. ANDRES ALONSO / CEO
Baltimore City Public Schools
Pratt’s family-centered programs promote literacy and lifelong learning.

**BRING YOUR CHILDREN TO THE PRATT,** and they’ll probably enjoy words forever. Positive early literacy experiences are predictors of success in school and in life, and we work to foster a lifelong love of learning. Our family-centered programs promote literacy from birth through high school and beyond. Young children build fluency in English and Spanish and strengthen their school readiness. Pre-teens can add basic Japanese greetings and learn haiku. Teens enjoy poetry slams, songwriting, and family book discussions. Summer learning and homework assistance keep academic skills strong. Families have a vibrant partner in the Pratt.

SUPPORTING CHILD AND TEEN LITERACY: RESULTS

**School Readiness Programs for Children from Birth to Six**—Children participate in Mother Goose Baby Steps and Buena Casa, Buena Brasa, along with Toddler Jumps, and Preschool Leaps

**The Fairy Tale Festival**—Over 9,000 children and their parents attend the April Fairy Tale Festival, a month-long celebration in all Pratt Branches

**Community Youth Corps**—Nearly 250 middle school and high school students participate in the program, collectively earning over 12,400 service learning hours required for high school graduation

**Family Reading Circles**—Over 120 middle school students and their parents participate in evening book discussions; books are given to participants for their home libraries

**Summer Learning**—Over 38,000 children and teens participate in summer programs. More than 16,000 of them participate in the theme-based summer reading program. These children and teens read nearly 222,000 books! Pratt’s outreach efforts reach more than 3,400 children in Department of Recreation and Parks camps, summer schools and day care centers

Pratt programs and services help people succeed in the workplace.

**FIND A JOB. START A BUSINESS. UPDATE YOUR COMPUTER SKILLS.** Whatever you need for greater success in the workplace, the Pratt can help—from computer training and résumé writing to interviewing, networking, and other job-search strategies. Patrons use Pratt’s public-access computers for fast Internet access, e-mail, research, and to submit online applications. They shore up their financial literacy and find assistance with income tax preparation. Businesses grow and researchers find answers through our databases and workshops. Even when times are tough, we help thousands of people find opportunities each year.

SELECTED PROGRAMS

**For Children Birth to 12**
- Bookopoly
- Its Book Talk Time
- Snack into Good Health
- Black History Jeopardy

**For Teens**
- Manga Mania (cartooning)
- Dine Like a King or Queen
- Salsa and Hip Hop Dancing
- Self Defense
- Teen Book Discussion
- Teen Creative Writing Workshop

- Chess Kings
- Clay Creations
- Live Lyrics—Interpretive Poetry
- Jewelry Making
- Teen Game Night
- How to Pay for College Seminar
“OUR DEPARTMENT IS ONE OF THE BUSIEST IN THE LIBRARY. We can help people with everything from medicine to gardening to cooking to sports. We have information on starting a business, repairing a car, remodeling a home, or fixing a computer. Helping people with their careers, though, is one of the most rewarding things we do. One customer came in looking for a GED book, and she came back after many years to thank me for my help and to tell me that she got her GED and went on to college and then to graduate school.”

JOHN DAMOND / Business, Science & Technology Department, Pratt Library

“When I was looking for a job, I frequented Pratt Central, going on the computer, using search engines, Craig’s List, and Monster.com. I researched jobs in my field and looked at company websites. For a good six months, I was at the library at least four times a week and I found a position that was suited to my experience.”

NICOLE JONES / Sales and Marketing
The Pratt offers opportunities for personal, academic, and cultural enrichment.

BOOK LOVERS FLOCK TO THE LIBRARY to hear award-winning authors. Amateur genealogists trace their family roots. Families view weekend movies and discuss books. If you'd like to tackle the topic of race in America, learn about gardening or biking in Baltimore, reduce your carbon footprint or find amiable company as you crochet, the Pratt is an ideal destination. There’s something here for everyone.

The Pratt strengthens neighborhoods and provides vital community resources.

LIBRARIES ARE COMMUNITY ANCHORS, places where residents meet their neighbors, make new friends, and discuss local issues. Young children engage in story times and fun learning. Students appreciate the after-school haven, where they find help with homework and can use the Wii, play board games, and learn anime and manga. Adults attend health seminars and flu clinics and learn about family finances, college savings plans, and home buying and renovation. With each branch, the Pratt builds stronger communities.

ADULT PROGRAM: RESULTS
- As part of the Writers LIVE! series and other adult programs, 75–100 author programs are enjoyed by over 8,000 people, with talks, readings and book signings
- Talking About Race Now is a series jointly sponsored by the Pratt Library and the Open Society Institute Baltimore
- Mencken Day
- Exhibits

JOB AND CAREER SEEKING
- Job Searching & Networking Strategies
- Resume 101
- Workplace Readiness
- Interviewing Basics

COMPUTER TRAINING
- Introduction to Windows
- Surfing the Internet
- Microsoft Word and Excel

FINANCIAL EDUCATION
- Mortgage Matters
- First-time Home Buyer’s Workshop
- Avoiding Foreclosure
- Money Management
- Understanding and Improving Your Credit
- Retirement Planning
- Women and Business Know-how

HEALTH INFORMATION
- Free Blood Screening
- Flu Clinic

ADULT PROGRAM: RESULTS
- Slice Your Food Bill
- Small Business Matters
- Recession Buster Tips
- Income Tax Assistance
- Personal Finances
- Are Your Affairs in Order?
- How to be a Savvy Retiree
- Funding Your Retirement

FINANCIAL EDUCATION
- ABC’s of Heart Disease Prevention
- Asthma Classes for Parents
When I was four or five, I had a boy’s fixation for trains—but children’s books didn’t satisfy me. A Pratt librarian produced catalogs of locomotive manufacturers, which taught me there was a much bigger world out there and that librarians are willing to help you. I am amazed at the speed with which the librarians can come up with answers to some of the most unusual questions. They really are not stumped. The Pratt collection is wide and deep, with marvelous and captivating ancillary materials, and the helpfulness and knowledge of the staff are incredible. It’s a charming, delightful place.”

Jacques Kelly / Columnist, The Baltimore Sun

“The Pratt has an amazing treasure trove of printed materials that we can draw upon for shows at the BMA. For our Edgar Allan Poe exhibition, we borrowed rare illustrated books from the Pratt and mixed them with our own prints and drawings. The combination brought Poe’s writing to life for the community.”

Doreen Bolger / Director
The Baltimore Museum of Art
“Through the Pratt Contemporaries, I connect with like-minded young professionals, and as a young mother, I use Pratt’s resources for families and children, like Mother Goose Baby Steps. The sense of connection with other young families has been critical in raising my children in the city.”

JUDY O’BRIEN / President
Downtown Baltimore Family Alliance

“THE PRATT LIBRARY HELPS ME STAY CONNECTED. I’ve been taking computer classes at the Orleans Street Branch, and by learning how to use e-mail, I’ve been able to keep in touch with friends in my hometown of Chicago and around the country—and, in fact, with friends in Nigeria. Through the courses, I’ve learned how to use the Internet to access newspapers and other current events. It’s been a lot of fun. I also value personal interaction, so I spend time attending library events, where I can meet artists and authors. The Pratt is a basic part of my retirement years.”

COLLEEN HAYDEN / Retiree
“MY CHILDREN LOVE READING AND THE LIBRARY. We’ve read to Rileah since she was in the womb. Now she memorizes books and ‘reads’ them to Charly. We go to the Washington Boulevard Branch for Mother Goose Baby Steps, and we pick out books to read at home. We also get movies or CDs, and our library has puppet shows. Anything we can do for free that’s going to entertain my children and educate at the same time is great.”

CANDICE WILLIAMS AND RILEAH

“I BEGAN GOING TO THE PRATT when I was a lad of eight or nine. I was always interested in reading. Later, reflecting on my experiences led me back to the Pratt, where I did research for my first book, a memoir of my military service. That led to other books and frequent visits to the Pratt, where I learned more about writing and developing characters. Now all of my books are in the Library, and I express my appreciation through financial support.”

WILBERT L. WALKER / Author of We Are Men and four other books