

Library and VITA: 30 years helping others

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Charlotte Mecklenburg Library and Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) are celebrating 30 years as partners at Main Library.

The organizations are hosting a recognition reception on Thursday, November 17 from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. at Main Library.

From 1986 to 1991, the Junior League of Charlotte recruited volunteers and staffed the assistance sessions. Then, the Family Financial Literacy Coalition was created to take over this worthwhile community service. Now, Community Link provides the guidance, volunteer recruitment, and training for the VITA program.

During these years, The Library has been an integral partner by providing community rooms; free copying and printing; marketing with flyers, signs and website links; staff help with set-up, computers and WIFI access. VITA and AARP volunteers have helped many people file their taxes at library branches throughout the community. Each volunteer receives training to become certified.

At Main Library alone, for the 2016 tax season, the VITA volunteers processed 515 federal tax forms, 548 state tax forms, and 231 Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) forms. The people aided by these volunteers received \$618,894 in refunds. This is for one location in a county-wide VITA effort. Multiply that by 30 years and this partnership has positively impacted thousands of Mecklenburg County residents.

In the 2016 tax season, all Mecklenburg County VITA/TCE sites prepared over 3100 tax returns with a savings of \$775,000 in tax preparation fees. In addition customers received over \$995,000 in EITC and refunds in excess of \$3.76 million. This means more money in people's pockets for food, medicine, housing and other essential purchases.

Librarian, Mimi Curlee who helps organize the VITA/Main Library partnership said, "We're proud to have been a partner for so many years in this effort to help the elderly, disabled, and those with low to moderate incomes. Making it possible for wonderful volunteers to give their time and talents in this way is so important to many in our community."

The VITA and AARP programs are in need of volunteers. Each year, neighbors, friends, and co-workers agree to train and then participate in this important service. There are also businesses in the community who encourage their employees to volunteer.

Want to volunteer? Please contact Community Link at (704) 943-9490 or on online to sign up at www.irs.gov/Individuals/Volunteer-in-Your-Community .

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