

Published in the Penn-Franklin News on January 30, 2023.

STEM/Digital Literacy & Workforce Development

If you follow the weekly announcement by email of WLN "Library Programs," then you have been seeing some brand new program offerings based on STEM/Digital Literacy and Workforce Development. They are being offered this year by Delmont Public Library (DPL) and Greensburg Hempfield Area Library (GHAL). Youth and adult programs are included (never too soon for the youngest children to learn digital skills). Some brief program announcements are as follows.

Sphero Squadron! Kids: Come and learn with Miss Sue, Miss Diane, and Miss Michelle about the amazing world of Sphero robots; these robots are actually a 'sphere shaped' bot that can be controlled by a tablet. We will teach our Spheros to accomplish many different types of tasks and engage them in some friendly competition. Registration required, ages 9-14, limit 20.

Tech Class, Computer Basics: Gina McGrath will teach you how to navigate the Windows 10 or 11 operating system, manage applications (apps), find and manage files and folders, save and delete files and more. If you have a laptop, please bring it and the power supply to the class. Limit 20, no cost, please register (sequence of three technology classes for adults)

Bee Bots Bunch Program: Join Miss Sue, Miss Diane, and Miss Michelle as we explore the world of Bee Bots--an exciting robot that looks like a bee designed specifically for use by children. Children ages 4-9 will learn about basic programming and problem solving and just have fun! No cost, limit 20, registration required.

These programs are part of a planned and coordinated effort, and they are funded by grants awarded to the two collaborating Libraries in 2022. The three grants that are supporting these programs were awarded by the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry, the United Way of Southwestern PA, and the PA Library Association Digital Literacy Workshop Incentive. We indeed appreciate the support and trust given, and thank the grantors for their wisdom in promoting the initiative.

The grants reflect an overarching interest across Pennsylvania, beginning in Harrisburg, to provide resources for workforce development that is relevant to modern times and the needs of the underserved. These are not the first such awards benefiting the WLN. Within the last few years, WLN members benefited from Digital Literacy staff instruction and free Bee Bot robot distribution, while collaborating with the Allegheny Intermediate Unit Math & Science Collaborative under a PAsmart grant.

It is important that patrons of WLN member Libraries are aware of these not-to-be-taken-for-granted programming opportunities. It is why I have culled the above three announcements out from among the more traditional announcements of the WLN's "Library Programs." Even if you are not a patron of DPL or GHAL, but especially if you are, do not miss out on what is being offered at these two Libraries. And there is more to come.

Published in the Penn-Franklin News on January 30, 2023.

Charles B. Greenberg,
Board Director, Murrysville Community Library Foundation