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**BARBARA BUSH HOUSTON LITERACY FOUNDATION AND HARRIS COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY
CELEBRATE THE OPENING OF A FIFTH FAMILY PLACE LIBRARY™**

SUPPORTED BY PNC FOUNDATION GRANT

Family Place Library™ Now Open at South Houston Branch Library

Houston, TX (June 27, 2023) – The Barbara Bush Houston Literacy Foundation (Foundation), Harris County Public Library and PNC Foundation celebrated the grand opening of a Family Place Library™ at South Houston Branch Library during a ceremonial ribbon cutting June 27. The Family Place Library™ was made possible through generous support from the Barbara Bush Houston Literacy Foundation and a grant from PNC Foundation.

“I have fond memories and enjoyed my local library as a child in South Houston,” said Joe Soto, South Houston Mayor. “This library is a great space for the community to come enjoy together.”

The opening of the South Houston Branch Family Place Library™ marks the fifth library branch made possible by PNC Foundation in collaboration with the Foundation. In September 2021, PNC Foundation donated funds for two Family Place Libraries™ that were established at the McGovern-Stella Link Neighborhood Library and Alice McKean Young Neighborhood Library, then made an additional donation to create the Collier and Park Place Family Place Libraries™, which opened in the fall of 2022.

“In 2018, the Foundation set a goal of creating Family Place Libraries™ in every viable branch of the Harris County and Houston Public Library System by the end of 2025 because we believe that parents are a child’s first and most important teachers and every child, regardless of their zip code and family status, deserves to get a quality early start before entering kindergarten,” said Dr. Julie Baker Finck, President & CEO, Barbara Bush Houston Literacy Foundation. “Thanks to the incredible support of the PNC Foundation, we are on track to meet our goal.”

This effort supports the shared vision of both the PNC Grow Up Great® initiative and the Foundation to ensure that libraries remain focal points for supporting early learning and school readiness. PNC Grow Up Great is a \$500 million, multi-year, bilingual, early childhood education initiative to help prepare children from birth through age five, particularly underserved children, for success in school and life.

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“The PNC Foundation has made it a priority to support healthy early childhood learning and development through the PNC Grow Up Great initiative,” said Julie Sudduth, PNC regional president for Houston. “Equipping local library branches with a rich set of resources and training staff to assist caregivers in supporting their child’s early success is a key strategy to helping more children start their educational journey on track for success.”

Thanks to grants from PNC Foundation and through PNC Grow Up Great, the new Family Place Library™ includes specifically designed spaces featuring welcoming areas with interactive early literacy materials, games, toys and books. The grant also has enabled the staff at each library to receive specialized training and expand programs explicitly focused on toddlers and their caregivers. These spaces expand the total count of Family Place Libraries™ in Houston to five.

The featured libraries are a model for both physical space and family engagement programming with a focus on early learning, early literacy, and caregiver education. The goal of these programs is to build a foundation for children learning in the critical first years of life incorporating the caregiver as the child’s first teacher. During the programs, parents become equipped with the tools to develop their child’s social- emotional and cognitive skills, and this year, Family Place program participants will receive a selection of free books chosen by the Houston community.

“The South Houston Branch Library serves a diverse community of low-income families. For many of them, English is not their first language. These two factors, combined with a scarcity of other affordable resources, create a significant disadvantage for children in the area, affecting their school readiness,” said Edward Melton, Director of the Harris County Public Library. “We are incredibly grateful to the PNC Foundation and the Barbara Bush Houston Literacy Foundation for recognizing the vital role that libraries play in our communities. The Family Place Libraries™ initiative enables us to expand our resources and programming, empowering families with young children and fostering a culture of reading success.”

About PNC Foundation

The PNC Foundation, which receives its principal funding from The PNC Financial Services Group (www.pnc.com), actively supports organizations that provide services for the benefit of communities in which it has a significant presence. The foundation focuses its philanthropic mission on early childhood education and community and economic development, which includes the arts and culture. Through PNC Grow Up Great®, its signature cause, that began in 2004, PNC has created a bilingual \$500 million, multi-year initiative to help prepare children from birth to age 5 for success in school and life. For more information, visit www.pncgrowupgreat.com.

About the Barbara Bush Houston Literacy Foundation

The Barbara Bush Houston Literacy Foundation is a charitable organization formed by Neil and Maria Bush to carry forth First Lady Barbara Bush’s legacy in the literacy cause and to focus deeply on breaking the intergenerational cycle of low literacy in the Bush family’s hometown. Founded on Mrs. Bush’s belief, “If you help a person to read, then their opportunities in life will be endless,” the Barbara Bush Foundation’s mission is to improve lives through the power of literacy – the ability to read, write, speak clearly and think critically. The Foundation serves as the champion across the Greater Houston area for the literacy cause, raising awareness for the value and importance of literacy, mobilizing volunteers and resources to build critical capacity of community-based literacy providers, and investing in local literacy programs and services that support children and families to develop strong literacy skills for success. For more information, visit www.bushhoustonliteracy.org or follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/bushhoustonliteracy on Twitter [@bushhoustonlit](https://twitter.com/bushhoustonlit) and on Instagram [@bushhoustonlit](https://www.instagram.com/bushhoustonlit).

About Harris County Public Library

The Harris County Public Library (HCPL) mission is to provide information and resources to enrich lives and strengthen communities through innovative services within and beyond our walls. The Library has an annual circulation

of over 10 million items and is a network of 26 community-focused branch libraries committed to providing excellent customer service, strong collections, and cutting-edge information technology. Reference assistance is available in person, by phone, email, and website. HCPL is your pathway to knowledge and keeps our patrons in the know. Visit www.hcpl.net for branch hour information or follow us on social media Instagram [@HarrisCountyPL](https://www.instagram.com/HarrisCountyPL) Facebook [@HarrisCountyPL](https://www.facebook.com/HarrisCountyPL)