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Sent: Monday, December 4, 2023 10:52 AM

To: mayorbibb@clevelandohio.gov <mayorbibb@clevelandohio.gov>; Felton Thomas <Felton.Thomas@cpl.org>

Subject: A big thank you

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Dear Mayor Bibb and Mr. Thomas,

My family and I were at the Cleveland Reads Victory Bash this past Saturday and had such a wonderful time. From the very first, we enjoyed the program, and I can say that although my children already like reading, they were definitely motivated to read more, and more often, by the thought of going to the library to spin the prize wheel, when they reached certain accomplishment markers.

When the library notified us that there would be a downtown celebration for reaching our city-wide goal, I wanted to go for several reasons. Certainly, it seemed like a day filled with fun plans, but I also knew my kids had had a big part in reaching the goal, and it seemed like an awesome idea that they could be there in person to hear the total read.

Throughout the day, we were impressed several times by how we were treated. My husband Josh and I guessed that it might be a school bus that would take us downtown from a nearby library, and that would have been fine; it was a very nice thought not to have to find (and pay for) downtown parking. Boy were we surprised when Mr. Limo showed up! Everyone who rode the bus with us was equally taken aback and made to feel special. A second moment of surprise was when we walked through the doors into the main auditorium and were greeted by a man who handed us a bag and told us to take as many books as we wanted. ("Wait, what? Did I just hear him correctly?" I thought.) And I could mention even more little moments of surprise.

We've lived out of country for most of my kids' lives, so I looked at the event as a way to help them know a bit more about our city and our culture as Americans. They've never heard a marching band in person. They've never heard speeches by leaders in the community, and they've only been downtown once, I believe. We have plans to go down again soon, to let them explore Tower City and the downtown library, which to little bookworms seems like a castle for books. 😊

Our kids thoroughly enjoyed roller skating and taking a ride in the bumper cars, and I got such a kick out of watching my little guy, Ian, who I tease is a fruit fly, discover the table filled with bags of apples and oranges. He grabbed a bag of apples to put in his bag, started to walk away, then turned back around and decided to put a bag of oranges in too.

Josh commented to me how impressed he was by the kindness of everyone he talked with, and he didn't just mean the workers. Over and over again, we had small conversations with good-natured people near us, as we all passed on information (this is the line for chicken...you need to get a ticket from over there), and just friendly conversation as we all waited together in lines.

We had **such** a nice day. Thank you so much for initiating and organizing this event.

Sincerely,
Melanie Vickerman