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## **Orange County Library System issues library card to Orange County group home Great Oaks Village**

Orlando, FL (June 2022) – On June 2, a group of kids from the Great Oaks Village group foster home visited the Orlando Public Library. They received welcome bags, toured the building and (most importantly) they received their new Group Home Card, which allows them to check out materials.

Group foster homes offer kids in need a place of safety and protection when, for reasons beyond their control, the family home is not the best place for them to be. Kids who live in group homes are in the care of the state and usually do not have a legal parent or guardian on site who can help them sign up for a library card.

Orange County Library System recognized that this creates a gap in our ability to service some children and teens in the community. In response, the library has launched a pilot program that issues a library card to group homes that allows kids to check out books and access other programs the library offers. The first group home to receive a library card under this program is Great Oaks Village, which is operated by Orange County Youth and Family Services. The new Group Home Card will have no fines associated with its use, which ensures that kids living at Great Oaks Village will not encounter barriers that would prevent them from using the library.

OCLS plans to expand this card to be available to other local group homes and shelters in the community to ensure that every child can use the library, regardless of their home life circumstances.

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