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This January at Orange County Library System: Explore Learning Resources and Spend an Evening with Author Nicholas Sparks

ORLANDO, Fla. (Dec 18, 2025) Orange County Library System is kicking off 2026 with beloved author Nicholas Sparks at the 2nd annual Lillian Louise Pharr Author Series event January 17 at Dr. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts. The iconic storyteller will discuss his inspiration and stories and answer questions submitted in advance. Ticket sales and question submissions are at ocls.org/NicholasSparks.

January is the right time to plan for a successful year and try something new, and your OCLS library card can help you do just that. Whether you're looking to learn new skills or land a new job; help your child excel at school or prepare for tests; or boost your budget and reduce spending, OCLS has the tools you need.

Unlock learning resources like free access to [LinkedIn Learning](#) and OCLS' [Search and Apply for Jobs](#), where you can get hands-on help navigating job search websites and applications. When homework questions have you stumped, use [Brainfuse](#) for one-on-one tutoring and test prep. Plus, you can access e-books and stream movies, TV and music ad-free and without paying for subscriptions.

Your library also offers lots of fun, hands-on, free entertainment and experiences. You and your family can enjoy STEM and art classes, [LEGO programs for all ages](#), and [technology classes](#) to learn new skills. Central Florida Fair will visit library locations January 13-27 with [Tales from the Farm](#), a farm-themed storytime with an animal meet-and-greet.

Looking for ways to help your kids build smart, safe Internet habits? Learn tips and good practices with [Be Safe Online](#), offered for kids ages 6-12 at branches throughout Orange County. Adults can also learn how to spot misinformation, detect bias and understand AI with [Using Media & AI Literacy Tools](#).

Please note, all OCLS locations will be closed December 31 and January 1 in observance of the New Year.

Orange County Library System (OCLS) is a public library system serving Orange County, Fla. With 15 public locations and a vast network of online and outreach resources, OCLS enriches lives through experiences and opportunities to learn, grow and connect. From cutting edge technology and inventive fiber arts to enriching storytimes and bestselling author events, OCLS employees bring innovation and education to more than 4 million visitors in our branches and beyond. For more information visit ocls.org, follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#), or download our app available now in your app store.

GENERAL EVENTS

Y Read: Book Read Aloud

Dr. P. Phillips YMCA, 7000 Dr. Phillips Blvd., Orlando, FL 32819 • Sat., Jan. 3–31 • 1:30 p.m.

Experience the joy and camaraderie of reading aloud great literature. Ages 18 and up.

Music in the Library: West African Kora

Winter Garden • Thu., Jan. 8 • 5 p.m.

Chickasaw • Fri., Jan. 9 • 11 a.m.

Sean Gaskell will give a performance on the kora, an ancient 21-stringed harp from West Africa. Gaskell's performance will feature traditional songs and some of his own personal compositions.

Genealogy: Beyond Ancestry & Family Search

West Oaks • Sat., Jan. 10 • 1 p.m.

Feeling stuck in your genealogy research? Sometimes you have to broaden that lens. Think beyond the "Big 2" and see all the wonderful tools available. Registration required.

Health and Wellness Resource Fair

Alafaya • Sat., Jan. 10 • 11 a.m.

Connect with local community services and hear from various organizations about the services they provide. Participating organizations include Harmony Healthcare, Library Social Worker, NAMI Greater Orlando, Orange County Medical Clinic, Orange County Parks and Recreation, Orlando Health, Pineapple Healthcare, UF/IFAS Extension Orange County and Victim Service Center of Central Florida.

Sunshine State Planners

Orlando Public Library • Sun., Jan. 11 • 1:30 p.m.

Bring your own supplies and connect and share ideas with other planners.

Wreck This Art!

Hiawassee • Tue., Jan. 13 • 11 a.m.

Are you an artist? No? Great! You don't need to be! Instead, have fun while creating a terrible piece of art. No perfection allowed, just creative chaos. Registration required.

Clear Conversations With Your Doctor for Better Care: LIFE Information for Elders

Orlando Public Library • Thu., Jan. 15 • 12:10 p.m.

Join Jessica Daly from AdventHealth University as she shares tips for talking with your doctor, asking questions, explaining symptoms and preparing for visits to feel confident and get better care. To register, email OfficeonAging@ocfl.net or call 407.836.7446.

Spanish Book Club

Southeast • Jue., 15 de ene. • 3 p.m.

El murmullo de las abejas de Sofia Segovia. Mayores de 18 años.

Improve Your Job Interview Skills

Chickasaw • Thu., Jan. 22 • 11 a.m.

Washington Park • Thu., Jan. 22 • 4 p.m.

Orlando Public Library • Fri., Jan. 23 • 11:30 a.m.

Learn about the interview process and get tips that will help you prepare. Ages 18 and up. Registration required.

Writers Meetup

Winter Garden • Sat., Jan. 24 • 4:30 p.m.

Attend an hour-long workshop with local writers as we brainstorm ideas, discuss writing methods and give constructive feedback. Submissions must be sent ahead of time. Ages 18 and up. Registration required.

Meet the Author: Dhonielle Clayton

Eatonville • Fri., Jan. 30 • 10:30 a.m.

Dive into the art of storytelling with Dhonielle Clayton, New York Times bestselling author of The Belles series and co-author of Blackout at the ZORA! Festival Education Day in historic Eatonville. Ages 13–18. Registration required.

YOUTH EVENTS

READING Paws

Chickasaw • Sat., Jan. 3 • 10 a.m.

Windermere • Sat., Jan. 10 • 11 a.m.

Alafaya • Sat., Jan. 24 • 10 a.m.

Improves reading and communication skills by reading to a therapy dog.

Florida Children's Museum: Mobile Library Program

Alafaya • Mon., Jan. 5 • 10:15 a.m.

North Orange • Tue., Jan. 6 • noon

Winter Garden • Thu., Jan. 8 • 10:30 a.m.

Southwest • Fri., Jan. 9 • 10:30 a.m.

Hear stories, explore art, use your senses and play through hands-on fun. Sponsored by Orlando Health.

Teen Volunteering

South Trail • Sat., Jan. 10 • 11 a.m.

Hiawassea • Sat., Jan. 10 • 2 p.m.

Eatonville • Sat., Jan. 24 • 11 a.m.

West Oaks • Sat., Jan. 24 • 11 a.m.

Earn two hours of community service by completing volunteer tasks at the library. Registration required.

Little Bookworms: Alphabet Adventures

Southeast • Mon., Jan. 12 • 10:15 a.m. • Tue., Jan. 13 • 4:30 p.m.

West Oaks • Thu., Jan. 15 • 11 a.m.

Washington Park • Thu., Jan. 22 • 3 p.m.

Stories, songs and rhymes that inspire a love of reading and build early literacy skills. Registration required.

Family Fun: Chess

Fairview Shores • Tue., Jan. 6–27 • 3:30 p.m.

North Orange • Thu., Jan. 8, 22 • 5 p.m.

Orlando Public Library • Sat., Jan. 10, 24 • 2:30 p.m.

Winter Garden • Wed., Jan. 14, 28 • 4:30 p.m.

Join us for a game of chess. All experience levels are welcome.

Cuéntame un Cuento: My Community

Orlando Public Library • Wed., Jan. 7 • 10:30 a.m.

Explore stories, songs and rhymes in English and Spanish.

The Life of Zora Neale Hurston - Through the Eyes of Zora: Stories, Research and Reflections

Orlando Public Library • Thu., Jan. 8 • 4:30 p.m.

Celebrate the extraordinary life and legacy of Zora Neale Hurston. Explore Hurston's life through her own words, blending dramatic readings and her outstanding cultural research. Ages 14 and up. Registration required.

Fantastic Fossils: Washington Park Fossil Club

Washington Park • Sat., Jan. 24 • 4:30 p.m.

Learn about fossils and how to find and identify them.

Masterpiece Junior: Zora Neale Hurston Crafts

Eatonville • Mon., Jan. 26 • 4 p.m.

Discover the world of art! Together, we'll learn the history, get inspired, and create a masterpiece. Ages 6–12. Registration required.

College Admissions Essay Lab

Fairview Shores • Fri., Jan. 30 • 4:30 p.m.

Learn how to brainstorm, outline and draft a compelling college admissions essay. Review common prompts, structure and revision tips. Registration required.

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