



**LEADING THE ADVANCEMENT OF ALL  
MICHIGAN LIBRARIES THROUGH ADVOCACY,  
EDUCATION AND ENGAGEMENT**

July 7, 2022

The first bookmobile in the United States was introduced in 1905 by librarian Mary Titcomb in Washington County, Maryland who stated, “No better method has ever been devised for reaching the dweller in the country. The book goes to the man, not waiting for the man to come to the book.”

Then and now...what’s not to love about a bookmobile roaming the neighborhood or being parked at a festival/school/retirement home/preschool/etc. and people gathering informally and spontaneously to connect and share stories? While the 650 physical library buildings across Michigan serve hundreds of thousands of patrons each year, over a dozen bookmobiles do so much more as they take to the streets to reach even more citizens.

Bookmobiles create community and connections, bridge technology gaps, reinforce literacy, use the public library’s collection to enhance education, spread the joy of reading, and instill the love of life-long learning. Perhaps the most important and most fulfilling role of a bookmobile is knowing that these vehicles are bringing library services to people who would not have had access to them otherwise.

Bookmobiles are utilized as mobile classrooms, provide computer literacy classes, and are places for making arts and crafts, checking out a book, or just signing up for a library card. In many rural and/or remote communities, technology may be spotty, outdated, or even nonexistent. Bookmobiles and mobile outreach services provide access to technology in the form of hardware, software, hotspots, Wi-Fi, iPads, and laptops.

Patrons who are unable to access their physical library for whatever reason (mobility constraints, lack of transportation, etc.) can sometimes feel as if they are excluded from library services. Bookmobiles strive for inclusivity and serve as a vital extension of our libraries, keeping us connected, and providing a space for people of all ages, classes and races to come together, all while keeping us connected to events and people around the world.

Today, the legacy of bookmobiles carries on across Michigan as cities and counties invest in these vital mobile units – in Bay County, Boyne City, Kent County, Lenawee, Menominee, Traverse City, East Lansing, Ypsilanti, Rochester Hills, Monroe County, Lansing, and Muskegon. When a bookmobile is in your neighborhood, stop by or flag them down for a quick visit.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Deborah E. Mikula'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Deborah E. Mikula, Executive Director