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**February 9, 2016**

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### **Lease agreement approved for third library branch, second in public housing**

Commissioners Court on Tuesday approved a lease agreement for BiblioTech to operate its third full branch. The new branch will be in the Wheatley Choice Phase II development, a mixed-income and mixed-use project currently being constructed on the East Side. The new branch is expected to open in late fall 2016.

The new branch will be 4,200 square feet and offer library and technology resources to the community in and around the Wheatley Choice Neighborhood. It is the second BiblioTech branch to co-locate within a San Antonio Housing Authority development. The Dr. Ricardo Romo BiblioTech opened in July 2015 in the Gardens at San Juan Square on the city's West Side.

"The newest BiblioTech will further our goal of having a physical presence in each quadrant of the county," County Judge Nelson Wolff said. "By pairing up with the San Antonio Housing Authority we also are committing to the mission of BiblioTech to enhance education and digital literacy by providing all residents the opportunity to access technology and its applications."

In another partnership with SAHA, Commissioners Court also on Tuesday accepted a donation of \$25,000 from Google Fiber given through the Hidalgo Foundation of Bexar County. The grant will pay for a digital educator to support the federal ConnectHome initiative. Through this program, a series of 10 digital education sessions will be conducted at each of five designated SAHA locations — Alazan Apache, Cassiano, Spring View, Villa Tranchese and Fair Avenue — and three residents will be trained as digital ambassadors to act as onsite trainers to sustain the program.

And in other BiblioTech business, Commissioners Court received research findings from the University of Texas at San Antonio's College of Education and Human Development on BiblioTech's effect on student life and student achievement in the local community. Over the course of 4 months, doctoral students researched whether there is a relationship between the use of BiblioTech services and reading achievement among middle and high school students near the library, and what students value about the all-digital library.

The researchers found there is a positive relationship between the use of BiblioTech and reading achievement among its middle and high school patrons. Dr. Misty Sailors, a professor in

the Department of Interdisciplinary Learning and Teaching, would like to expand the scope of future research to include all BiblioTech sites, as well as look at the role of gaming activities and literary achievement.

“There is a positive association between use and reading achievement — the more the students used BiblioTech services, the higher their reading achievement,” Dr. Sailors said. “It is not a causal relationship, but we can say with a lot of certainty that there is a positive relationship.”

The second portion of the research, conducted through a focus group and student surveys, found that computer gaming, computer use for homework, e-book reading for fun and homework, programming and studying or hanging out were the most popular services and uses of BiblioTech among the young students.

“They attribute BiblioTech to their success; they appreciate the fact they live in a world that is technology based and that they have access to the resources at BiblioTech that they might otherwise not have,” Dr. Sailors said. “BiblioTech also provides autonomy, they feel like they are becoming more responsible and the library has allowed them to communicate more effectively with people.”

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