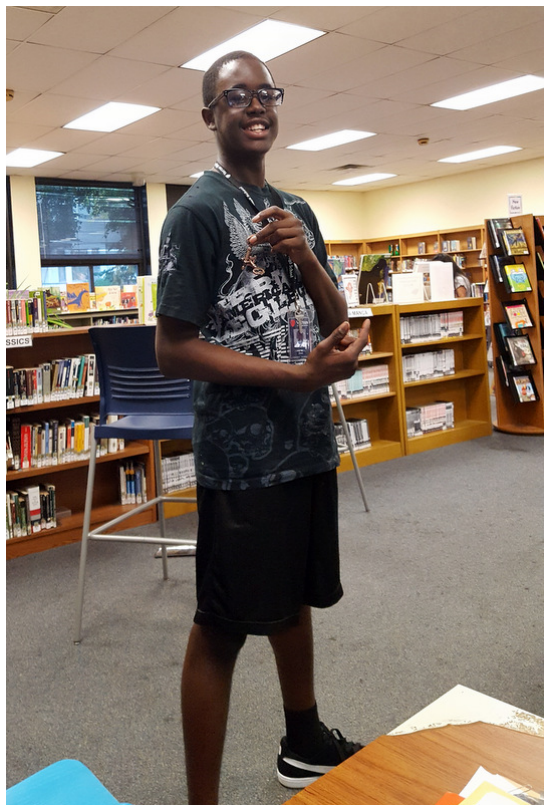


Safe to Be Smart Helps Teens Succeed At Central and Branch Libraries

For the Rochester Public Library, the ten branch libraries play a crucial role by delivering library services to neighborhoods throughout the city. They provide safe havens for children and youth and are often the only educational and cultural resource available beyond the schools.



But sometimes children and teens who fill the branch libraries after school, on the weekends and during vacations need more supervision, assistance and creative programs than dedicated library staff are able to provide. That's where the *Safe to be Smart* program comes in, offering educational, cultural and recreational activities and programs for children and teens at the Wheatley, Lincoln, Sully, Maplewood and Arnett Branch libraries as well as the downtown Central Library of Rochester and Monroe County.

An endowed fund named in memory of George R. Parsons Jr. was established in 1999 by the Halcyon Hill Foundation to support branch library services for children and youth, including programs such as *Safe to be Smart*. **Your gifts to FFPRL help support activities above and beyond operational funding, including cultural and literacy-related field trips, life skills programming, community service activities and guest speakers.**

To see the impact of *Safe to Be Smart* on one teen, consider the story of K'Nai Campbell in his own words, about his relationship with *Safe to be Smart's* Mark Dixon:

"What's happening, family? My name K'Nai Campbell, I'm thirteen years old and today I'm going to tell you how Mr. Mark changed me into the young man I am today. You see, I am living with my poor single African American mom who's doing the best she can for me and my siblings, and I don't have a father to correct me when I'm doing wrong. But when you add Mr. Mark Dixon to the Maplewood branch library, things start to change.

"Mr. Mark says every day to me and whoever comes in the library: 'Good morning, family, how are you doing?' and it's like a cycle because some days I need a real man to talk to. Mr. Mark tells me when my personal hygiene is bad and I need to go make some changes. Actually **he probably doesn't realize his advice made me succeed to the 8th grade. He makes me read every day to get my stamina up and he tells me I need to read to succeed.** And that same semester, I went from a D in reading to a B+ (thanks, Mark).

"So now I'm in the 9th grade, looking to go to Wisconsin St. University and get married and go to the national basketball association. **Mr. Mark tells me to make smart choices and good things will happen. He keeps me and the whole library branch laughing and staying positive.** He says, once you get older I'll hook you up with a job – I got you, and much more."

