



ON THE AGENDA

MEETINGS



The **Atlanta City Council** meets Dec. 4 (its only meeting in December) and Jan. 2 at 1 p.m. at City Hall, 55 Trinity Ave. Information: citycouncil.atlantaga.gov.

The **Atlanta School Board** meets Dec. 4 at 2:30 p.m. for presentations and for a community meeting at 6:30 p.m. at 130 Trinity Ave. Information: atlantapublicschools.us.

The **Decatur City Commission** meets in open session on the first and third Mondays of each month at City Hall, 509 North McDonough Street, at 7:30 p.m.

NEWS

The City of Atlanta has effectively **ended veteran homelessness**, confirmed recently by the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH), US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and the US Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). According to the report from the mayor, 1,859 veterans experiencing homelessness have been placed in permanent housing.

The Atlanta City Council approved legislation that requires developers building new residential rental units near the BeltLine or Westside District to set aside 10 percent of those units as **affordable housing**.



The city will now require all new residential homes and public parking facilities to accommodate **electric vehicles**.

The U.S. Department of Justice awarded the a \$1.9 million grant, which will fund **15 additional Path Force officers** to patrol the Atlanta BeltLine.

An ordinance to **waive fees for small businesses** that open in or relocate to underserved areas has been approved by the Atlanta City Council.

Literacy Project

KPMG donates books to support Refugee Family Literacy

By Clare S. Richie

Parents are their children's first teachers, so their access to books is critical for building strong reading skills. And for a parent who is studying English as a new language, reading to their child can also help their literacy skills flourish.

That's why KPMG Family for Literacy (KFFL) teamed up with the DeKalb Library Foundation (DLF) to give the gift of literacy this holiday season to refugee and immigrant families who participate in the Refugee Family Literacy Program (RFLP) in Clarkson. KPMG is the Downtown Atlanta-based business management and consulting firm.

"They donated more than 440 books and 20 winter coats for the children," Jill Joplin, DLF Executive Director, shared. Familiar titles, like "500 Words to Grow On" and "Richard Scary's Best Word Book Ever," were carefully selected to benefit English language learners.

Since 2008, KFFL has distributed over 3.5 million new books to low-income children in 100-plus communities across the United States. This family effort of partners, employees, spouses, alumni, interns and more seeks to develop the next generation of young leaders through reading.

"KPMG is passionate about corporate citizenship, and dedicated to supporting the communities in which we live and work. KPMG's Family for Literacy provides children from low-income families with their own new books – and in many cases, their very first book," Paul Benedict, KPMG Senior Manager and DLF Board Member, said.

It's a perfect gift for the participants at RFLP refugee and immigrant parents who



Volunteers at the Clarkston Family Read/Along event.

lack access to childcare but are intent on learning English. RFLP's first location is walking distance to the Clarkston Library and serves 90 moms, ranging from pre-literate to educated and multi-lingual, and 110 children less than five years old.

"While moms learn English upstairs, their children are also engaged in early education – language, fine motor skills, social emotional learning – so they can hit the ground running with teachers and students in kindergarten," RFLP Director Jennifer Green said.

At the end of the morning, moms and their children "come together for songs and activities to reinforce what they learned in class, and end with a parent reading to their child or engaging their child with a book," Green added.

The foundation's long relationship with RFLP made them the obvious recipient choice for the KFFL book donation.

Once a month, RFLP accompanies parents to the Clarkston Library to make sure parents have a library card, introduce them to staff, show them ELL resources and

children's books, and promote story time. DeKalb County Library employees visit RFLP's location to help with activities during parent/child time.

Last year, library employees volunteered for a service project to transform an RFLP classroom into a library. They're eager to do a similar project at RFLP's recently opened second location.

"They're great partners – we're so fortunate to have them," Green said.

That was evident at the Clarkston Family Read Along on Nov. 17, as refugee families received books from KFFL at the Clarkston Library. Families were given a book bag to decorate with their children along with free books to take home. KFFL volunteers who attended pitched in with the crafts and read with the families.

"We have such gratitude for both KPMG and DLF. The library is a beautiful place where many different people from different backgrounds have access to resources. I love that our parents have access to that and now books to keep at home," Green said.

Boom! Georgia Dome disappears after 25 years



Nearly 5,000 pounds of explosives were used to bring down the Georgia Dome on Nov. 20 just after 7:30 a.m. The sound of the implosion could be heard all over Intown as the 25-year-old stadium collapsed.

Located just next door to the newly opened Mercedes-Benz Stadium, the Dome opened in 1992 as the new home of the Atlanta Falcons and also hosted events for the 1996 Summer Olympics, the Super Bowl and big concerts like U2 and Taylor Swift.

Once the remains of the Dome are cleared away, the site will be transformed into The Home Depot Backyard, a greenspace providing community programming, a new parking deck and a convention center hotel.

– Photos by Asep Mawardi