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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Messiah University unveils The Bridge to Freedom Collection, a new reading space and children's collection at Murray Library

MECHANICSBURG, Pennsylvania (Jan. 31, 2022) – A dedication ceremony was recently held to unveil a new reading space and children's collection at Messiah University's [Murray Library](#). The Bridge to Freedom Collection provides educational resources for children centered on the Civil Rights Movement and other historical experiences with themes of equality, freedom, justice and reconciliation.

“Freedom is not a state; it is an act. It is not some enchanted garden perched high on a distant plateau where we can finally sit down and rest. Freedom is the continuous action we all must take and each generation must do its part to create an even more fair, more just society.” These words from the late Senator John Lewis grace the entrance to the redesigned space.

The dedication event, held on Jan. 18, 2022, featured a ribbon cutting ceremony and remarks from campus leaders. About 75 attendees from the campus and local community heard from University President Dr. Kim S. Phipps, Library Director Linda Poston, Vice President for Diversity Affairs Dr. Todd Allen, and Teaching Ministries Pastor Emily Bingham.

This collection was generously established through the donation of 133 children's books from Dr. Todd, Lonette and Bryce Allen. Dr. Allen is founder of the Common Ground Project, a nonprofit dedicated to teaching the history of the Civil Rights Movement. He initiated the creation of the Bridge to Freedom collection after he, Library Director Linda Poston, and other Messiah colleagues returned from a summer 2021 tour of Civil Rights historic sites throughout the southern states.

“One of my favorite photos from the dedication ceremony and reception is of a little girl absorbed in reading one of the books,” said Poston. “That’s what it’s all about and that is what makes it worthwhile!”

The resources will be primarily used by students in the university’s education department for coursework and field experiences, yet the reading space and books are open to the public. From brightly colored furniture to framed prints of book illustrations, the welcoming collection and space is meant for readers to enter into stories that illustrate the human experience. The public may visit the Bridge to Freedom Room within Murray Library during regular open hours. The collection will continue to grow with new additions each year. More information about the collection [can be found here](#).

About Messiah University

Founded in 1909 and located near Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, Messiah University is a [nationally ranked, private Christian university of the liberal and applied arts and sciences](#) that enrolls nearly 3,400 undergraduate, adult degree program and graduate students.