

[Library Receives Grant for Future Southwest Branch Teaching Kitchen](#)



The Community Foundation of Bloomington and Monroe County (CFBMC) awarded the Library a grant for equipment, appliances, and supplies to establish a 600-square foot teaching kitchen as part of the construction of the forthcoming [Southwest Branch Library](#). Scheduled to open in 2022, the kitchen will provide free, hands-on cooking and nutrition programs for all ages, increasing food security and advancing literacy, math, and science. The Library has hired an architect for the new branch and is currently investigating site options.

CFBMC [recognized 11 nonprofit organizations](#) on Thursday, December 12, at its annual Community Impact Grant Awards reception. This competitive grant program, co-funded by Smithville Charitable Foundation, is designed to fuel innovative ideas and lasting impact in Monroe County through funding opportunities to meet our community's most pressing needs and seize its most compelling opportunities.

"Both the response to our request for grant proposals and the projects proposed inspired and impressed our evaluation team," said CFBMC President and CEO Tina Peterson. "We're proud that each of the grants awarded this year has the potential to enhance our community for the benefit of all and make Monroe County and even better place to live, work, and play."

In the summer of 2018, community members of all ages participated in scheduled community conversations throughout southwest Monroe County and took an online survey. Less traditional to a library, a teaching kitchen and cooking classes were regularly requested. This was a desire not only from adults, but from teens, as the 371 teens surveyed at Batchelor Middle School selected cooking classes as their second most desired new library feature, just behind gaming options.

The Library plans to partner with [Purdue Extension Health and Human Sciences](#) on programming. The Extension considers the community their classroom, where they bring information to the local level and help people strengthen families, spend smart, eat right, and live well.

"Having provided various educational programs in the past for the Library and residents of the county in general, there is a real need for cooking classes not only to demonstrate how to cook and prepare healthy foods but also for people who need basic cooking skills," said Annie Eakin, Community Wellness Coordinator. "Purdue Extension offers evidence-based educational programs focused on both heart health and diabetes in addition to

creating programs based on unique needs."

Additionally, [Mother Hubbard's Cupboard](#) has offered to provide consultation on the design and needs of the teaching kitchen, and envisions partnering on projects, targeting populations that don't regularly visit their own location, such as teens.

"For several years we have had the opportunity to partner with the Library on a variety of nutrition and gardening-related projects, from teaching simple pickle canning to [A Readable Feast](#), which combines cooking with a book club (shown above)," said Amanda Nickey, President and Chief Executive Officer of Mother Hubbard's Cupboard. "Community building is at the heart of the Hub's work and we're grateful to have partners who share our values, work alongside us, and increase our impact."

Other ideas for classes include essential skills in cooking, nutrition, food budgeting, recipe building, meal planning, preserving, pickling, gardening, and more. The Library plans to continue its cooking-based book club, to explore different food cultures, and to potentially invite cookbook and food-related authors in for author events. Additionally, programs specific to learners in the Volunteers in Tutoring Adult Learners (VITAL) English as a second language conversation groups could expand on their English-language skills in the teaching kitchen.

Posted by Mandy H. on December 16, 2019 [Reviews](#)

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