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Berks County Public Libraries purchase \$50,000 of digital books with remaining American Rescue Plan Act Funds

For immediate release—The Berks County Public Library (BCPL) System finalized the last of two significant purchases to its countywide digital collection, spending the remaining \$50,000 of federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to increase the number of electronic materials available to Berks County residents. Nearly 1,600 digital titles were added to the online collection, bringing the total number of eBooks and eAudiobooks to over 30,000.

The library system received approximately \$100,000 of ARPA funds from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) which were made available through the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) Office of Commonwealth Libraries (OCL) to support long-term work and library recovery in Pennsylvania.

Patron interest in digital materials surged during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, but electronic borrowing remained at an all-time high, prompting Berks County library directors to spend the ARPA funds to increase and diversify reading material within the shared online collection.

New eBook and eAudiobook additions include:

- *Rubyfruit Jungle* by Rita Mae Brown
- *Train to Pakistan* by Khushwant Singh
- *Ian's Walk: A Story about Autism* by Laurie Lears, Karen Ritz
- *History Is All You Left Me* by Adam Silvera
- *We Sang You Home* by Richard Van Camp, Julie Flett

Berks County Public Library cardholders can borrow these and other books on desktop or through the Libby app for mobile devices and tablets. Instructions on getting started with your library's digital collection are available online at www.berkslibraries.org/ebooks-more.

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This project is made possible by American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds from the U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services administered by the Pennsylvania Department of Education, Office of Commonwealth Libraries.

If you would like more information about this topic, please contact Stephanie Williams at stephanie.williams@berks.lib.pa.us or by calling 610-378-5260 ext. 2502. Additional information about digital library services is available at all Berks County Public Library locations and online at www.berkslibraries.org/ebooks-more.

About the Berks County Library Systems: The Berks County Public Library (BCPL) System is a department of the County of Berks, serving 411,442 county residents across 866 square miles and 72 municipalities since 1986. Through the support of the Berks County commissioners, BCPL staff aids in strengthening the Berks County community by providing centralized support for the 19 full-service member libraries and four branches. For more information, please visit www.berkslibraries.org.