# Beyond the Shelves



Learning doesn't stop when school ends. In fact, it never has to stop at all! Every day is a chance to grow, try something new, and discover more about the world around us. That's the power of lifelong learning—and it starts with something simple: reading.

Reading helps us in so many ways. It teaches us new words, opens our minds, and lets us explore places we've never been. Whether it's a book, a recipe, a sign, or a text message, reading helps us connect with others and understand the world better.

But learning isn't just about books. It's about asking questions, trying new things, and staying curious. You can learn by talking to a neighbor, watching a how-to video, or joining a class at your local library or community center. Every step counts!

No matter your age, it's never too late to learn something new. Maybe you want to write your own story, help a child with homework, or finally figure out how to use that new phone. You can do it—and we're here to cheer you on.

So let's celebrate reading and learning together. Because when we keep learning, we keep growing—and that's something to be proud of.

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# From the President's Desk Can You Read This?

Billie Humphrey, President

Of course, you can read this. About 130,000 adult Delawareans currently face challenges with literacy, which translates to reading below third grade level. Shocking, right? This statistic isn't a cause for despair—it's a call to action and a chance to uplift one another. Literacy isn't just about reading words—it's about unlocking potential. The National Literacy Institute defines it as "the ability to use printed and written information to function in society, to achieve one's goals, and to develop one's knowledge and potential." That's a beautiful vision, and one we can all help bring to life.

Think of all the ways literacy proficiency empowers us:

- ·Studying instructions for assembling a DIY project with confidence
- · Following a recipe for cooking
- · Understanding health information
- · Paying your bills or balancing your checkbook
- · Navigating safety regulations and obeying state laws

I'm sure you can think of many other examples. These everyday tasks become steppingstones to independence, dignity, and joy.

Improving literacy isn't just good for individuals—it strengthens our entire community. Studies show that higher literacy rates correlate with lower poverty and incarceration rates, and greater economic productivity. But beyond the numbers, literacy builds resilience, empathy, and imagination. And the personal benefits? They're extraordinary. Lifehack.org lists 10 personal benefits of reading, all which include:

- · Mental stimulation and stress reduction
- · Knowledge enhancement
- · Enhanced vocabulary and sharper memory
- · Improved focus, writing, and analytical thinking
- · A sense of tranquility—and a free source of entertainment!

Yet, sadly, an estimated 46% of adults read fewer than one book a year. That's not a judgment—it's an opportunity. Every book opened is a step toward growth, and every library card is a key to possibility.

At the heart of everything we do is a simple, powerful goal: to support and strengthen the Harrington Public Library's mission to the Lake Forest community, which includes literacy improvement. Supporting literacy is one of the most joyful and transformative ways we can do together.



Sources: Delaware Literacy Alliance, National Center for Education Statistics/NAAL, National Literacy Institute, National Center for Education Statistics, lifehack.org



# Call to Action: Let's Champion Literacy in 2026

As we begin planning for the 2026 Friends of the Library program, it's time to reflect on one of our community's most pressing needs: literacy.

Delaware's average adult literacy score is 210, slightly below the national average of 214.16. That means thousands of our neighbors—including many right here in Kent County—may struggle with everyday reading tasks. With 27% of public-school students statewide identified as low-income and 13% as multilingual learners, the barriers to literacy are real and urgent.

The Delaware Literacy Alliance's 2024–2027 report calls for bold, inclusive action—and the Friends of the Harrington Public Library are uniquely positioned to lead the way.

Let's begin thinking now about how our 2026 program can respond—by uplifting literacy, celebrating community voices, and continuing to help the Harrington Public Library thrive as a hub of imagination, access, and connection.

- **Begin creating literacy kits** tailored to families, multilingual learners, and underserved readers—filled with books, activities, and culturally inclusive materials.
- Launch author visits and community reading events that bring stories to life and foster connection across generations.
- **Explore new partnerships** with schools, local organizations, and cultural groups to expand our reach and impact.
- **Design programming that reflects Lake Forest's diversity**—celebrating stories in all forms, from oral traditions to digital media.
- Begin shaping Book Fest and outreach efforts to reflect Kent County's diversity and needs. Consider programming, partnerships, and materials that honor the cultural richness of our community and respond to local literacy challenges.

Every idea sparked, every hour given, every story shared helps write a stronger, more connected community.

Let's turn the page together in 2026—join us at the next Friends meeting!





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# The Many Types of Literacy

By Janel "Jaycee" Miller

There are many different types of literacy. It also appears that there are varying opinions on exactly how many types of literacy there are, and which ones are most important.

To increase your literacy on, well, literacy, I've put together a list of some types of literacy, along with their definitions, that I found online.

- civic literacy, which is knowing how to be part of and bring about change
- content literacy, which is becoming an expert in assorted subject areas
- digital literacy, which is the ability to understand information found on the internet
- disciplinary literacy, which is "the treatment by experts in various disciplines of students' reading, writing and critical thinking abilities specific" to different areas of study
- early literacy, which is what a person knows about communicating, reading and writing before they know the last two of those skills
- functional literacy, which is having the ability to make one's way in life without difficulty
- media literacy, which is a broad term that covers comprehension in wide-ranging areas such as emojis, advertising and producing content
- multicultural literacy, which is comprehending and respecting what makes you the same as (and different than) others
- recreational literacy, which is activities that develop constructive attitudes, interests and literacy habits

These were listed in no order of importance, since some would likely say they are all important.

References: theedvocate.org, examplesweb.net, lernerknowsliteracy.com, gaspelit.ca



# Why Literacy Matters - Especially Now

Michelle Baltrusch

As we gather in gratitude this season, I've been reflecting on what literacy truly means to me. It's more than the ability to read words on a page—it's the gateway to imagination, empathy, and connection. It's how stories come alive, whether whispered in a child's ear, painted across a mural, or shared aloud at a fest booth, craft fair, book sales, or baubles and bling sale.

In my life, literacy is the thread that weaves together community and creativity. It's the spark behind every scavenger hunt clue, every author table and every story circle. It's how we honor voices from around the world and invite families to see themselves in the stories we share.

Literacy matters because it empowers. It gives children the tools to dream, adults the confidence to grow, and communities the language to celebrate who they are. In Kent County, where many face barriers to access, literacy is a lifeline—and a joy.

As we plan for 2026, I hold this truth close: every book opened, every story told, every word understood is a step toward belonging. And that's the kind of magic worth building.

This Thanksgiving, I'm especially thankful for the power of stories to bring us together. In every story passed around the table, every poem tucked into a gift, and every child who finds their voice in a book—we see the heart of literacy: connection, hope, and shared joy.

Wishing you and yours the happiest of Thanksgivings—may your season be filled with stories that inspire, voices that uplift, and moments that remind us why literacy matters.

Michelle Baltrusch



Photo by <u>NHN</u> on <u>Unsplash</u>





# Literacy Rates Around the World

By Janel "Jaycee" Miller

More than 30 countries around the world have a higher literacy rate than the 99% reported in the United States and more than 12 such countries have the same rate as that country, according to a worldpopulationreview.com report.

The report's authors defined literacy as individuals aged 15 years and older "who can both read and write with understanding a short and simple statement about their everyday life." The authors also pointed out that the definition of literacy varies around the world.

Below are some of the countries with a better literacy rate than the United States (the country's specific rate follows its name):

Ukraine: 100%Norway: 100%Poland: 99.8%Russia 99.7%Italy: 99.2%

Now, here are some of the countries with the same literacy rate as the United States:

- Japan
- Argentina
- New Zealand
- United Kingdom

And now, here are some countries with a worse literacy rate than the United States (the country's specific rate follows its name):

Brazil: 94.7%Kenya: 83%India: 76%Haiti: 61.7%Pakistan: 58%

Generally speaking, outside the United States – although not always – the countries with high literacy rates were located across most of Europe and smaller parts of Asia and South America, while larger parts of South America and Asia had lower literacy rates.

What does all this mean? In my opinion (and not just on literacy rates), there is always room for improvement, especially when others are catching up to you. This National Family Literacy Month, take time to follow one of the great suggestions in this newsletter to increase our country's literacy power.

Photo courtesy Tima Miroshnichenko vía Pexels.com

# From the Heart: November's Table of Thanks

November arrives with golden leaves underfoot and the scent of something warm on the stove. It's the season of gathering—around tables, around memories, around shared purpose. And as we look back on this year, we find ourselves deeply thankful for the table we've built together.

It's not a table of fine linens or perfect place settings. It's a table made of folding chairs and tents, of storybooks and signposts, of laughter echoing through library halls and quiet acts of kindness that no one else sees. It's a table where everyone has a seat—volunteers, authors, vendors, crafters, staff, families, and friends.

This year, we've passed around more than just programs and pastries. We've passed around joy. We've passed around courage. We've passed around the belief that stories matter, that community matters, that showing up with heart—again and again—can change lives.

So this November, we want to say thank you:

- Thank you for the hours you gave, the ideas you shared, the hands you lifted.
- Thank you for believing in the magic of books and the power of belonging.
- Thank you for making our library more than a building—it's a living, breathing story of hope.

As we enter this season of gratitude, may you find rest for your spirit, warmth in your connections, and joy in knowing that your presence here matters more than you know.

# Friends of the Harrington Library



# FaceTime Story Time: Tips for Reading Across the Miles

Distance doesn't have to dim the joy of reading together. Whether you're a grandparent in another state or a parent traveling for work, FaceTime story time is a heartwarming way to stay connected—and build literacy along the way!

Here are a few tips to make your virtual story sessions feel just as cozy and engaging as inperson snuggles:



Love knows no distance: Grandma Judy and granddaughter share story across the screen.

### 1. Pick the Right Book

Choose stories with bold illustrations, rhythmic language, or silly voices. Picture books, singalongs, and short chapter books work beautifully on screen.

#### 2. Use Your Voice and Face

Exaggerate expressions, change your tone, and lean into the drama! Kids love seeing your reactions—and it helps bring the story to life.

### 3. Hold the Book Steady

Tilt the camera so little ones can see the pages clearly. You can also send them a copy in advance so they can follow along from home

#### 4. Add a Prop or Puppet

A stuffed animal, silly hat, or themed object adds a touch of whimsy and keeps young readers engaged.

# **5. Pause for Questions and Giggles**

Let kids interrupt! Ask what they think will happen next or invite them to make sound effects. It's about connection, not perfection.



#### 6. Make It a Ritual

Whether it's every Sunday night or a surprise midweek call, regular story time builds anticipation and strengthens bonds.

"Reading together—even virtually—is a way to say, 'I love you' across the miles."

So, grab a book, open FaceTime, and let the stories begin. The Friends of the Harrington Public Library celebrate every way families connect through literacy—whether it's on a porch, in a library, or through a glowing screen.

# The Mother of All Speed Readers

By Janel "Jaycee" Miller

Photo courtesy: Leah Newhouse via Pexels.com

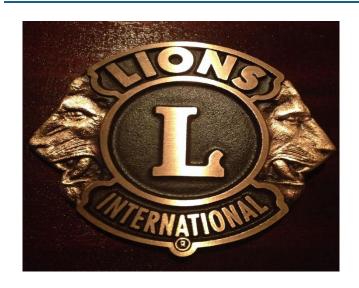
Former U.S. President John F. Kennedy, at his peak, could read about 1,200 words – and former U.S. President Jimmy Carter at his peak could read up to 2,000 words – a minute.

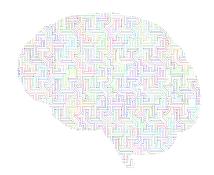
Evelyn Wood's reading rate of 2,500 words a minute is equally remarkable. Don't recognize the name?

Wood taught Kennedy, Carter and hundreds of others how to read and comprehend quickly. She is also – by most accounts – credited for coining the term "speed reading" to define the skill she had and shared with others. She also believed anyone could learn how to speed read (with practice) and make their reading rate 10 times faster than before.

Her method was based on several key points: ensuring readers saw more than one word at a time, did not say words in their heads, and did not stop or backtrack while on the page. The internet has a number of courses – both online and printed – to help you perfect Wood's craft. Simply search "Evelyn Wood speed reading" in any online search tool.

References: irisreading.com, brittanica.com. sfgate.com, lastminread.com





# **Brain Teasers**

### Match the Book to the Autumn Setting

Draw a line or match the letter of the book to the correct autumn-themed story description!

Books	Answer	Autumn Story Description
A. The Legend of Sleepy		1. A Young witch-in-training navigates a new
Hollow by Washington Irving		town, a talking cat, and a Halloween delivery
		service.
B. Pumpkin Soup by Helen		2. A cozy trio of animal friends stir up trouble—
Cooper		and soup—in their woodland home.
C. Anne of Green Gables by		3. A headless horseman haunts a quiet village in
L.M. Montgomery		this eerie American classic.
D. The October Country by		4. A dreamy redhead finds beauty in every season,
Ray Bradbury		especially the crisp colors of Avonlea's fall.
E. Kiki's Delivery Service by		5. A haunting collection of short stories that
Eiko Kadono		capture the strange and shadowy side of autumn.
F. <i>The Simplicity of Cider</i> by		6. A cider-maker's quiet wife is upended by a
Amy E. Reichert		father and son who arrive just as the leaves begin
		to fall.
G. <i>In November</i> by Cynthia		7. A poetic picture book that captures the quiet,
Rylant		golden hush of late autumn.
		Server meet of the meeting.

# **Three Logic Puzzles:**

- 1. There are two ducks in front of a duck, two ducks behind a duck, and a duck in the middle. How many ducks are there?
- 2. A doctor and a bus driver are both in love with the same woman, an attractive girl named Sarah. The bus driver had to go on a long bus trip that would last a week. Before he left, he gave Sarah seven apples. Why?
- 3. You walk up to a mountain that has two paths. One leads to the other side of the mountain, and the other will get you lost forever. Two twins know the path that leads to the other side. You can ask them only one question. One lies and one tells the truth. What do you ask?

**ANSWERS ON PAGE 17** 

# November Happenings at the HPL



# **Director's Corner**

#### Happy November Everyone!

This month the Friends of the H.P.L. are focusing on literacy, and I cannot think of a better topic to really consider during a month when we dwell upon things that we are thankful. When I was younger, I was in special education and reading was really a struggle for me, in fact my mother still has a drawing I did in first grade proclaiming, "I hate reading," which she gets a good laugh at since I became a librarian. First grade Marleena may have given up on reading and developing that skill if a teacher had not gotten me hooked with the Baily school kids in the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, but the unhappy truth is not everyone has a story about how they "got hooked" and reading continues to be a struggle in their life.

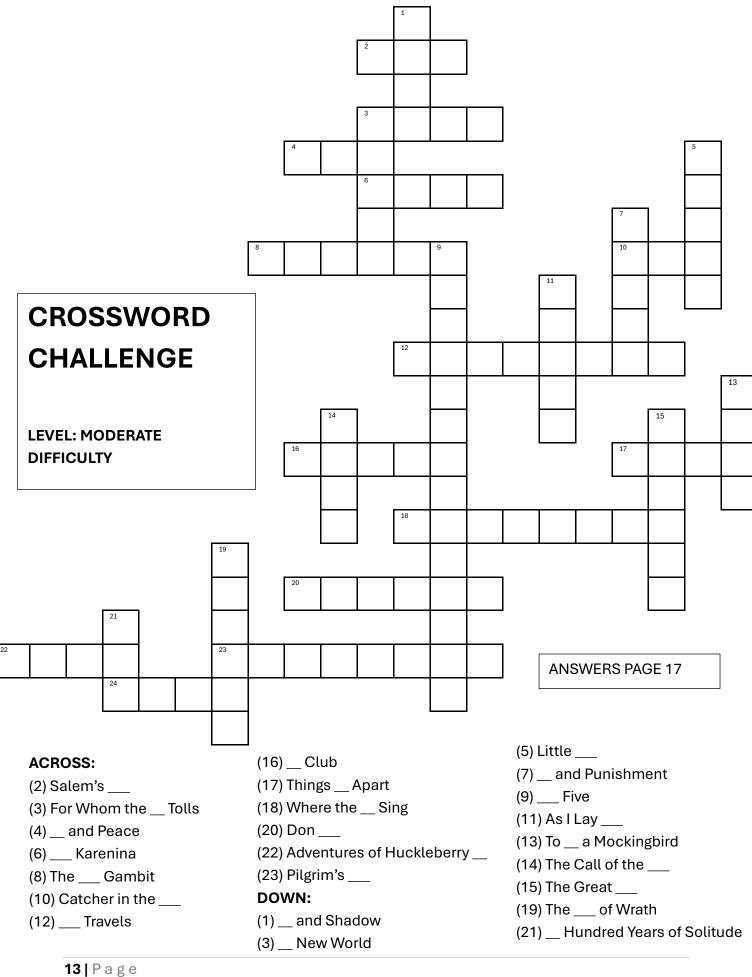
Did you know the according to the Barbarabush.org that over 36 million adults in the U.S. lack basic literacy skills? The site also states that 54% of U.S. adults read below a sixth-grade level. While you may think this is just a problem that other states have and it does not affect us in Delaware, Delawarepublicmedia.org says that last year our eighth graders statewide hit a 27- year low in literacy and Delaware only ranked higher than Alaska and New Mexico in fourth grade reading proficiency. Also close to home, here in Kent County the Barbara Bush Foundation reports that 22% of Delaware Adults lack basic literacy skills. Lack of literacy is a problem for everyone, and it impacts our community, but there are certain things we can do to help our fellow Delawareans with literacy.

If there are children in your family, read to them and let your children see you reading. Children develop a love of reading from their families and modeling behavior helps build a reading habit. If you are not a strong reader, seek help. There are great programs out there like Literacy Delaware for adults and for children there are tutors and speech language professionals at their schools.

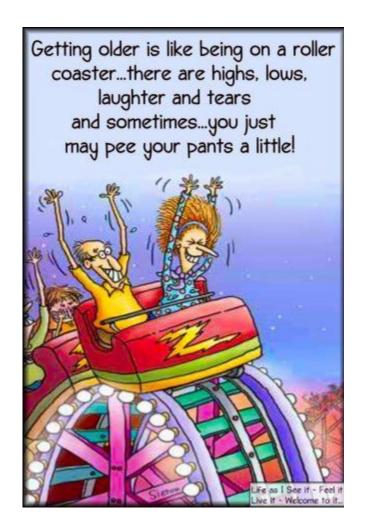
If you want to get involved in fighting the literacy crisis, consider volunteering at either your local library or for an organization like Literacy Delaware or the Delaware Literacy Alliance. You can also donate books to schools, libraries, and literacy organization and last, but not least, actively support funding for literacy, schools, and libraries.

These are all great ways to get involved in fighting the literacy crisis. We can all play a part in helping to improve literacy in our communities, and maybe this time next year your impact will be the reason that someone is thankful in November.

Marleena



### LAUGHTER IS THE BEST MEDICINE





"The idea of living a long life appeals to everyone, but the idea of getting old doesn't appeal to anyone."- Andy Rooney





"As you get older three things happen. The first is your memory goes, and I can't remember the other two." —**Sir Norman Wisdom** 

# HFL **2025-2026 Sponsor**

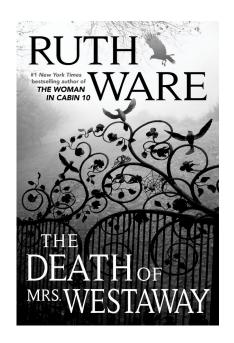






### **Book Club Read of the Month:**

# The Death of Mrs. Westaway



November book club will meet 11/20 at 5 pm.

#### Nominee for Readers' Favorite Mystery & Thriller (2018)

On a day that begins like any other, Hal receives a mysterious letter bequeathing her a substantial inheritance. She realizes very quickly that the letter was sent to the wrong person—but also that the cold-reading skills she's honed as a tarot card reader might help her claim the money.

Soon, Hal finds herself at the funeral of the deceased...where it dawns on her that there is something very, very wrong about this strange situation and the inheritance at the center of it.



Donations of gently used books accepted Fridays at the HPL from 9-5.

# And the Answer Is

#### ANSWERS TO THE LOGIC QUESTIONS:

- 1. Three. The arrangement is such that the first duck has two ducks behind it, and the last duck has two ducks in front of it, with one duck in the middle.
- 2. Because "an apple a day keeps the doctor away!"
- 3. You ask one twin, "Are you twins?" If he says "Yes," he is telling the truth, and you ask the other twin which way to go, going the opposite way. If he says "No," he is the liar, and you ask the other twin which way to go because he is telling the truth.

Parade.com

## **Crossword Answer Key**

### **ACROSS:** (2) Salem's : Lot (3) For Whom the \_\_ Tolls: Bell (4) \_\_\_ and Peace: *War* (6) \_\_\_\_ Karenina: *Anna* (8) The \_\_ Gambit: Queens (10) Catcher in the \_\_\_: Rye (12) Travels: Gulliver (16) \_\_\_ Club: Fight (17) Things \_\_ Apart: Fall (18) Where the \_\_\_ Sing: Crawdads (20) Don \_\_\_\_: Quixote (22) Adventures of Huckleberry \_\_\_: Finn (23) Pilgrim's \_\_\_\_: Progress

```
DOWN:

(1) __ and Shadow: Bone

(3) __ New World: Brave

(5) Little __: Women

(7) __ and Punishment: Crime

(9) ___ Five: Slaughterhouse

(11) As I Lay ___: Dying

(13) To __ a Mockingbird: Kill

(14) The Call of the ___: Wild

(15) The Great ___: Gatsby

(19) The __ of Wrath: Grapes

(21) __ Hundred Years of Solitude: One
```

Match the Book Answer Key:

A3, B2, C4, D5, E1, F6, G7

#### **HFL**

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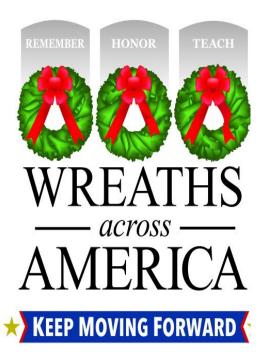






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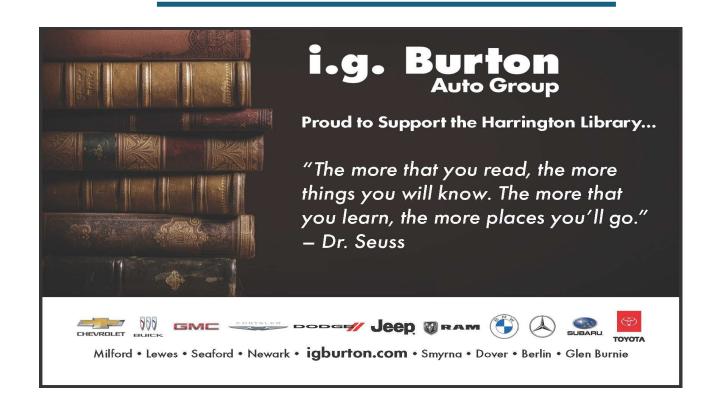




The Greater Harrington Historical Society once again will be organizing the Wreaths Across America program. This program is designed to Remember, Honor, and Teach.

Harrington Heritage Society (HHS) partners with over 5000 local organizations and cemeteries to honor our veterans during the December holiday season. Wreaths are sponsored through individuals, groups, or organizations at a cost of \$17.00 per wreath. You can sponsor one, 5, 10, or more or you can setup a monthly sponsorship. This year there are FIFTEEN cemeteries to cover! There is no better time to express our appreciation than during the hustle and bustle of the holiday season. Join HHS at the Hollywood Cemetery this year to show our veterans and their families that we will not forget. We will never forget.

For more information on sponsoring a wreath, volunteering for the event or both!, please visit Wreaths Across America web page. https://www.wreathsacrossamerica.org/



#### **RECIPE OF THE MONTH: Roasted Veggies with Maple Glaze**

#### Ingredients:

- 8oz pkg rainbow carrots (5-6) peeled and cut into 2" pieces
- 8oz parsnips (2 lg) peeled and cut into 2" wedges
- 2 med red onions cut into wedges
- 1 lg. golden beet, peeled and cut into 2" pieces
- 1 lg red beet, peeled and cut into 2" pieces
- ½ c olive oil
- 2 tbs maple syrup
- 2 tsp kosher salt
- 1 tsp whole grain mustard

- 1 tsp freshly ground black pepper
- 3 lg sprigs fresh thyme, plus more for garnish
- chopped parsley, for garnish

#### **Directions:**

- 1. Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Coat a lg rimmed baking sheet with nonstick spray.
- 2. Combine carrots, parsnips, onions, beets on the prepared baking sheet. Stir together the oil, maple syrup, salt, mustard, pepper, and thyme in a small bowl. Pour over vegetables and toss to coat.
- 3. Bake until evenly browned, about 45 minutes. Remove from over and transfer to serving platter. Garnish with parsley and more thyme, if desired.

Friends of the Harrington Public Library 101 Little Mastens Corner Road Harrington, DE 19952