

# New Service Helps Children Choose Books

BY ASHLEY MENSAH

**H**ERE AT THE LIBRARY, we enjoy connecting young people to books so they can learn, grow and reach many great places in life. Reading is vital because as Dr. Seuss once told us, “The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you’ll go.”

Seeing kids walk up to the shelves with the freedom to grab a book based on their interests is rewarding. But what if you browse the shelves and none of the books speak to you? No problem. Librarians are here to help.

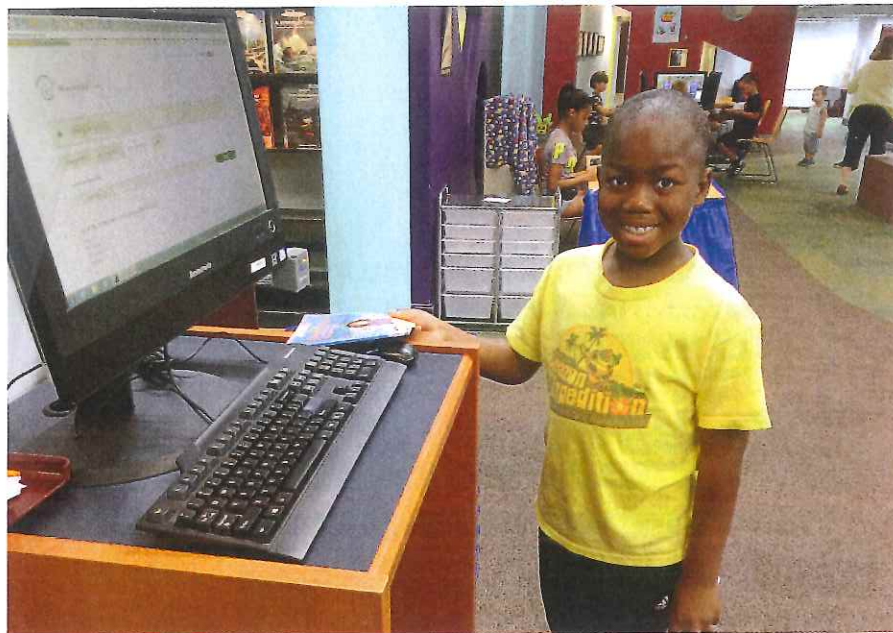
We enjoy recommending books such as intriguing graphic novels (like *Nathan Hale’s Hazardous Tales* series), suspenseful historical fiction that keeps kids guessing (as in *Wolf Hollow*) or a nonfiction book that makes you think to yourself, “Wow, I can’t believe that!” (like *Glow: Animals with Their Own Night Lights*).

At the same time, we understand that sometimes children need to read books within a certain Accelerated Reader level for school purposes. We can help in those situations, too.

AR is a program many Westerville elementary schools use in language arts classes. Students may be encouraged to read books within their AR range, such as 3.0 to 3.5, and can take a test on the book in order to earn a certain number of points. Therefore, it’s helpful for many kids to know the AR level of a book.

To help students find the AR level of books quickly, without searching the catalog or going to a website, library staffers have created a new service that allows kids, teachers, parents—anyone—to find the AR level of a book with a quick scan of the barcode.

How does it work? Meet David Torkornoo. He’s in third grade and has come to the library in search of a good



COURTESY WESTERVILLE PUBLIC LIBRARY

**Third-grader David Torkornoo is ready to scan a book at the library’s new Book Reading Level station.**

book suitable for his reading level. David strolls through the aisles and picks out a few books that seem appealing. Then, he walks up to our Book Reading Level station, which is located under the hanging 3-D red arrow, and scans a barcode. Instantly, on the screen David sees the AR level as well as the book’s point value, in case he wants to take an AR test on it at school.

Librarians see many students at the library who, like David, need to know this AR information. Before we launched this new service, customers could find AR information in the catalog, but it required a few steps. To better serve our community, we decided to simplify the process. Thanks to our computer services department, all patrons can find the AR information right away. Now, it takes just one simple step.

We are constantly improving and

growing at the library. Our goal is to provide services and resources that are efficient, useful and time-saving for our customers.

At the Westerville Public Library, delivering the future is our mission. To paraphrase Seuss, the more that we learn, the more places we’ll go—together.



**ASHLEY MENSAH** is the youth services librarian at the Westerville Public Library. For more information about library services and programs, go to [westervillelibrary.org](http://westervillelibrary.org).