

Library debuts online veteran support platform VetNow

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ELKTON — Cecil County Public Library (CCPL) debuted online veteran support platform VetNow to connect local veterans with benefits, assistance sharpening career skills and finding jobs. The platform rolled out alongside JobNow, a general job support platform, and HelpNow, an online tutoring platform for children and adult learners.

VetNow offers live support, connecting users with experts for job coaching, resume work, interview preparation and other assistance.

CCPL Community Relations Manager Frazier Walker explained that getting dedicated support for veterans is particularly important because they can help translate military experience into the skills and background employers in other industries look for. Plus, she added, the scope of job preparation can be intimidating.

“This tool should help vets and families navigate these complex systems,” Walker said. “This is particularly valuable because a family member could access the platform to help a parent, brother or community

member.”

All three platforms — VetNow, JobNow and HelpNow — are freely accessible with a library login.

The library purchased this service from Brainfuse, an online tutoring company based in New York City, to bring these resources to Cecil County. Across all three platforms, Brainfuse connects users with experts who are on standby to answer questions and provide support with their specialized knowledge.

For example, Walker explained, an elementary student could log in to HelpNow with their parents and answer a preliminary question indicating that they have a question about third grade math. In the meantime, a Cecil College student could log in and request help with college level chemistry. The platform will then connect those students via chat with vetted tutors who specialize in those levels and subjects.

Walker said the library has a proven record of offering support services for veterans.

In 2015, CCPL won the National Medal for

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PHOTO COURTESY OF FRAZIER WALKER

Teenagers creating duct tape wallets, wheelchair bags and pillows for veterans at Perry Point VA Medical Center through Cecil County Public Library's 'Teens Give Back' program before the COVID-19 pandemic.

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Museum and Library Service, recognizing their work connecting veterans and small business owners with key development resources. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the library also partnered with the Perry Point VA Medical Center in Perryville for a 'Teens Give Back' service project, through which teenagers made duct tape wallets, wheelchair bags and pillows for the veterans.

However, with the pandemic uprooting life as we know it, the library eyed expanding its online resources as an important step to supporting veterans, as well as students

and job seekers more broadly across the county.

“We know learning from home has been hard for students and teachers,” she said. “As everybody adapted to online learning and working from home this spring, we looked to expand access throughout the community.”

CCPL rolled out HelpNow back in September as the new school year got underway. HelpNow includes a number of additional resources for students, including subject-specific homework help, a writing lab to workshop essays, skills building workshops, e-learning tools like flashcards, a foreign language lab and an adult learning center.

JobNow, which centers on resume building and pro-

fessional development, also includes resources to enter skilled professions, including test prep for nursing, teaching and graduate school, as well as an 'eParachute' tool that users can use to match their skills and interests with career and industry opportunities.

Walker encouraged residents to get in touch with their local librarians, whether virtually or in-person, to learn more about the resources the library can offer them. She emphasized that meeting the needs of community members, and particularly veterans, is a top priority for CCPL.

“The library is a place for vets to feel safe, respected and part of the community,” she said.