

# Cecil County Library's new Story Trails entice young minds at Local Parks

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CECIL COUNTY — Two parks in Cecil County have introduced a new way for kids to read and interact with the park at the same time through the Story Trails at Brantwood Park and Calvert Regional Park.

According to Katelyn McLimans, Youth Services and Outreach Manager at the Cecil County Public Library, starting in 2020 the Cecil County Public Library and Cecil County Parks & Recreation teamed up to start an initiative to help kids read more while engaging with nature. The first Story Trail was installed at Calvert Regional Park in the spring of 2020, with Brantwood Park following that fall.

These particular parks were chosen due to their popularity among families and because their walking paths are accessible to all ages and abilities.

According to McLimans, the launch of this project was made possible through support from the Maryland State Library Agency and the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

Story Trails are a set of panels set up along a park's walking path. On these panels are a page from a select children's book. Also, according to McLimans, there is an interactive learning activity called "Try This".

"Each panel features a page from a children's book and a fun learning activity, called 'Try this', that helps families engage with the story in more detail," McLimans said. "Whether they are finding hidden

images on a page, acting out the movements of the characters, learning fun facts, or discussing what will happen next, the 'Try this' activities provide a fun way for families to further enjoy the story and expand their learning."

The featured books and activities at each park change seasonally, so families are encouraged to visit often to experience a whole new Story Trail.

According to McLimans, the mission of the Story Trail project is to promote reading and being outdoors for the whole family to enjoy but, in particular for young children.

"Research shows that regular time spent outdoors can have a long-term positive impact on children's learning and well-being," McLimans said. "By providing access to books and learning activities in the parks families regularly visit and enjoy, CCPL's Story Trails help inspire a love of reading in the community and promote the benefits of outdoor play."

According to McLimans, CCPL and Cecil County Parks and Recreation hope to expand to more parks in the near future.