

Thomas P. Gordon  
County Executive



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### Executive Office

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### **“Food for Fines Week” offers library fee amnesty, helps feed the needy**

New Castle County is offering amnesty from up to \$25 per person in its first-ever “Food for Fines Week,” running Dec. 14-20 at all county library branches.

As a holiday gift, the county will – for this one week only – forgive up to \$25 in fees or fines for any patron who brings his or her library card and asks for amnesty at a county library branch. At the same time, libraries will collect food donations to support of AFSCME Local Union 459 Needy Family Fund’s annual food drive. Donation bins are at all libraries entrance/exits.

“This concept demonstrates the county’s commitment to the community and the caring nature of our staff,” County Executive Thomas P. Gordon said.

“Food for Fines” was suggested by Youth Services Librarian Elisabeth Simmons of the Kirkwood Library after she read of such a program in Maryland. “I knew immediately this would be a positive initiative, especially going into the holiday season,” said Sophia Hanson, general manager of New Castle County’s Department of Community Services.

Amnesty is expected to restore library privileges including internet access for many who were blocked after accumulating fines or fees of \$5 or more, she said.

Donations of canned goods and other nonperishables – not past expiration dates -- will expand Local 459’s longtime effort, President John Spence said. “We have been able to help so many families who may have financial hardships,” he said, adding donations at libraries will help provide more holiday meals for more who cannot afford them.

Noting one in eight Delawareans struggles with hunger, County Councilman George Smiley praised “Food for Fines” as “a perfect opportunity to help others while lowering or eliminating library fines.”

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