

# Hayner Library to Sponsor Puzzle Competition with Puzzle Designed by High School Students

by Sydney Sinks, News Reporter  
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ALTON - The Hayner Public Library District has partnered with Alton High School to create a new puzzle, and puzzlers can test it out at a [Puzzle Me This](#) competition this weekend.

From 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday, April 20, 2024, teams of four will compete to see who can finish the puzzle the fastest at the Hayner Genealogy and Local History Library. Located at 401 State Street in Alton, the Genealogy and Local History Library has worked with the high school's Graphics Communications Club to design and print the puzzles that will be used at Puzzle Me This.

“The students took pictures, and they used the magic of the technology to create this image,” said Renne Johnson, who works with Hayner.

Johnson explained that she has collaborated before with Lexa Browning-Needham, the teacher who oversees the Graphics Communications Club, to create projects with students. In the past, students wrote and illustrated a children's book called "Alton ABC," followed by a "Color Me Alton" coloring book.

"Alton ABC" shares information about local landmarks and history. The "Color Me Alton" book has both complex and simpler illustrations so that adults and children can color together. Both books center around Alton, Godfrey and Foster Township, which is Hayner's service area.

Johnson enjoys working with the graphics communications students to complete these projects. She is especially proud of the finished products, which she considers "portfolio pieces" that the students can tout in college applications and job interviews.

"One of the things that I am perhaps most pleased about in all of these projects is taking that full arc," she said. "At the end, these students are able to actually talk about something they've done in a professional manner completely, all the decisions they've been part of, and they all end up with a copyright registration in their name as an illustrator."

The puzzle was a unique twist on the students' regular projects. Each student took photos around Alton, Godfrey and Foster Township, and they compiled 250 images to create the final piece. Though Johnson doesn't want to give away the image, she promises that it's a "unique" and moderately difficult puzzle, and the students did a "phenomenal job."

She added that it was especially fun working with the students to test out the puzzle after it was printed. Some of the students had never completed a jigsaw puzzle before, and they gained a better understanding of the project after seeing the finished product.

"There are a couple of the students who have never done a jigsaw puzzle, so for them, it was like, 'Oh, this is how this goes together. Oh, that's why we did this technique or that technique,'" Johnson remembered. "It was really interesting as they worked with the actual puzzle in hand and they were able to then see what they'd done and why."

Johnson hopes that community members find the puzzle as fun and exciting as she does, and she is eager to share the experience with more people during the Puzzle Me This event on April 20. To register your four-person team, call 1-800-613-3163. There are only six slots available, so Johnson encourages people to call early. Attendees are also welcome to come and watch the event.

For more information about the Hayner Public Library District or to purchase “Alton ABC” or “Color Me Alton,” visit their [official website at HaynerLibrary.org](http://HaynerLibrary.org) or call 618-462-0677.