



## “Fairless” Summer Reader Steals Our Hearts



Lincoln, Ashley, Lylah and Ian Fairless at the St. Charles City-County Library Kisker Road Branch.

This summer the St. Charles City-County Library District staff was introduced to a very special little girl named Lylah Fairless. Out of nearly 20,000 participants, Lylah was chosen as a Summer Reading Grand Prize winner. A very excited young girl with \$25 to spend on whatever she wanted, Library staff learned, was just the beginning of the story.

On March 5, 2012 Lylah Fairless was born with a Large Congenital Nevus which covered 2/3 of her scalp. On the 5<sup>th</sup> day of their newborn's life Ashley and Ian Fairless learned from the doctors at St. Louis Children's Hospital that if the Nevus was not completely removed, Lylah would have a 40% chance of developing fatal Melanoma by the time she was 6.

[\(Watch Lylah's story here.\)](#)

Early in June of this year, Ian arrived home after work and told Ashley that they needed to get out and do something as a family. They headed to the St. Charles City-County Library Kisker Road Branch where they signed both Lylah and her brother Lincoln up for Summer Reading. “I knew that the Library was the perfect place to take my family,” said Ian. “I grew up in St. Charles County using these great libraries. I wanted my children to learn to love the Library as much as I did.”

Both Lylah and Lincoln completed the Summer Reading program, each “reading” a total of 30 books that the family checked out from the Library. But, according to Ian, the Kisker Road Library is much more than just a place for Lylah to check out books. “Because of her many surgeries, Lylah has missed out on the social interaction that other children her age have,” said Ian. “She basically has no group activities in her life. Coming to the Library has given Lylah the chance to interact with other children her age, as she enjoys Library toys, puzzles and of course books!”

“From the time Lylah was 6 months old, she has been going in for surgery at Mercy Hospital every 12 weeks,” said Ashley. Each time a portion of the Nevus was removed, Lylah's surgeon, did what is called a tissue expansion, where he implanted a temporary expander under Lylah's scalp. “Every other day,” said Ashley, “we would inject saline into the area to stretch the skin. At the next surgery the doctor would remove another portion of the Nevus, and use the healthy stretched skin to cover Lylah's head.” In the past 2 ½ years Lylah has had 13 surgeries and was hospitalized for staph infections several times.

“The most important thing in my life is my family, and it has been a challenge trying to balance work and family life,” said Ian. As a result, over the last two years, Ian has lost several jobs, and the family has lost their home. “I'm afraid it will be a long time before we will be able to purchase another home,” said Ashley.

Lylah's journey is not quite finished. After a year break to heal, there will be another round of expanders and two more surgeries. “Once everything is complete,” said Ashley, “Lylah's only task will be to live a long, happy life.” And moving forward, the Fairless family is looking forward to Lylah and Lincoln spending many more happy hours at the Library.

The St. Charles City-County Library District is “Your Space to Dream, Discover, Connect and Grow.” Over 2 million St. Charles County residents visit our [12 branch locations](#) each year. Every day the Library District is changing and evolving, offering new services and exciting programming for all ages, expanding the [eLibrary](#) collection, and enhancing our customers' Library experience. For the latest on what's happening at the Library, visit our website [youranswerplace.org](http://youranswerplace.org).