



Library System Report

EASTERN SHORE OF VIRGINIA • PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM • Cara Burton, System Director

Regional Library and Heritage Center • Cape Charles Memorial Library • Chincoteague Island Library • Northampton Free Library

Summer Reading Success

By Tiffany Flores

Eastern Shore Public Library's Summer Reading Program improved participation over last year. In our Ocean of Possibilities Reading Challenge, we had 30 participants with many who came in to retrieve their prizes throughout the summer. For onsite programming, ESPL and NFL libraries kicked off summer with Hoopoe the Mime which had 19 attendees at ESPL and 13 attendees at NFL.

Participation numbers continued to be good in the weekly storytimes Tiffany held at both locations. ESPL saw anywhere from 5 to 33 attendees per session while NFL had anywhere from 2 to 12 attendees per session. Storytimes provided children with a fun story and related activity. Our most successful storytimes included the slime and the sensory bottles activities.



DIRECTORS' UPDATE

Change

People are inclined to measure change with numbers. Of anything that has defined the change in public libraries, the value of numerical output measures can no longer effectively describe how libraries improve or decline. The face value of numbers is not an indicative measure, just as you cannot look at a house's exterior paint and the roof to determine if there has been termite damage, or conversely, generations of happy families living there. That is why I stopped including circulation and patron registration counts in monthly reports---and I have yet to get a complaint.

Fall is the time of year librarians across the country do compile output measures for their state annual reports. Around 1985, I took a landmark course in Output Measures for Public Libraries taught by Charles McClure, PhD. He wrote what was then an innovative book on library statistics being used for performance measures. For decades, librarians scrambled to show the worth of their services using his methods. A few years ago, I took a more useful course on using ratios for analyzing performance.

Today, I can find no statistical figures that can reflect the success of ESPL's services better than the feedback I receive from the

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community. I find no better performance measure than the customer service my staff provides that makes our patrons satisfied with their experience using library services, whether on-site or online. If I was to measure success, I would also use our partnerships and relationships. The relationships between the Trustees and staff are indicative. The counties' supervisors's trust and respect for the Library Director and the library's services are essential for identifying improved performance. Neither a dollar value nor a percentage point can be counted over the warm reception received from our partners and patrons.

In a practical sense, patron registration change cannot accurately be given as we changed to a new registration system and have "purged" many outdated registrations to make our patron database more accurate. The 29% increase in circulation can reflect (1) the increase in staff customer service training and (2) the increased ease-of-use of the online catalog and/or (2) the effect pandemic lockdown increased reading of the general public. There is no one thing to pinpoint the cause for the change nor does the change in the statistics definitively reflect an improvement or deficiency. Library operations are too dynamic to draw such a clear picture.

Change can be identified visually. Libraries tend to have much more "stuff" than they used to; whether this is a

Rebranding is a visual way to identify that changes have been made and more are to come. The visual logo change and new messaging can convey a dramatic newness in a positive way.



positive change is another discussion. Libraries needs more space to accommodate the technological changes of the world. We can see---and hear--- how people's use of the library has changed. This will be one of the most interesting outcomes of the new library we will experience: how the footprint of the library facility changes how people use it.

I have to say the library staff's work areas indicate change. Library staff historically are not usually the tidi-

Staff Changes

Congratulations on the following promotions:

- ♦ **Connor Buyrn is Branch Manager at Northampton Free Library.**
- ♦ **Jazmine Collins is Reference and Circulation Manager.**
- ♦ **Tiffany Flores is Family Services Librarian.**

To Meet the Goals of the Strategic Plan, New ESPL Positions will Include:

- ♦ Local History Reference Librarian
- ♦ Archive Specialist and/or Field Archivist
- ♦ Technology Librarian
- ♦ Administrative Assistant
- ♦ Library Specialist (1.5 FTE)
- ♦ Teen Librarian
- ♦ Volunteer and Events Coordinator

est; we tend to be collectors and clutter-bugs. We prefer to spend time with patrons and programs rather than filing. We just have too much going on as we wear different hats throughout the day.

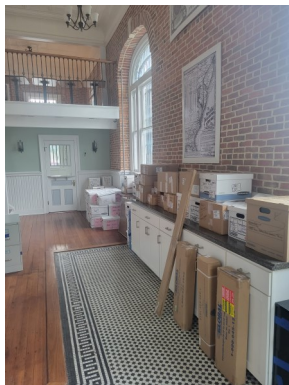
The ratio of the number of staff to the piles of papers and unprocessed books would be a good figure to indicate whether the library is properly staffed. It is not uncommon for me to stop, stare around my office, and then remind myself that the messiness of my office is not a fault and does not reflect my expertise at my job. The messiness does affect my ability to do my job. The messiness is a reflection of the lack of adequate workspace, storage space, and staffing I experience every day; as does all of my staff.

One of the joys of moving to a new building is the feeling of starting over. Sometimes it is easier to just totally clear out the closet in order to reorganize it so it is usable. New paint, new colors, new layout, and new spaces are a great opportunity to change how work is done and how we feel when we do our work. We appreciate and look forward to it.



Heritage Center

Christopher Pote, Heritage Center Manager



The transitional phase of the Heritage Center work has begun. Over the course of two days in August, the temporary holding facility for archival and library materials in Parksley was vacated. Roughly 500 boxes loaded with books, research materials, photographs, maps, etc., plus a significant amount of framed material and filing cabinets, were relocated. Many of the boxes of books are being temporarily housed in the library in Accomac, while the bulk of the material was brought to the Heritage Center's off-site processing space in Onley.

The next significant steps will happen concurrently: (1) we begin to assess the collections in Onley, which include the major Latimer and Mariner acquisitions, (2) assess the archives at Accomac and move them to Onley for temporary storage, and (3) prepare the Eastern Shore Room books, maps, microfilm, and equipment for its move to Parksley. Archives assessment and processing is time consuming work as every box will need to be handled, inventoried, and accounted for. This transitional phase will continue as needed, keeping the safety of the archives a priority, with the goal of occupancy at the permanent facility in Parksley.

Thank you, Jazmine Collins and Kasey Grier, for assisting with overseeing the physical move, and Craig Justis and his crew for loading, transporting, and unloading the materials safely.



Chincoteague Bay Field Station visited the library for various events at both locations. These weren't as successful with about three visitors per location. We tried doing teen events with them at ESPL and saw no participation. However, when NASA visited the library we had eight attendees at ESPL and three attendees at NFL, making it a moderately more successful event.

The Art and Poetry Contest did not have much success with only four participants. This was the first year to host this summer contest. It was originally advertised as a Teen Art and Poetry Contest, but was opened to all ages based on patron questions about the event. We hope to see more teen participation in the new library.

Overall, summer went well with a lot more on-site attendance than last year. Social media advertising may have helped with program visibility. Less concern about Covid-19 also increased library use.

One of the major projects Tiffany Flores has been working on is to outfit the Children's Room, Children's Program Room, and Teen Room with new and colorful furniture and equipment. Recent equipment purchases include a LEGO table, an activity cube for toddlers, and parts for a sensory wall. She is particularly excited about the HUSH privacy sofa as it will, hopefully, provide a semi-private place for nursing mothers and a comfort-space for autistic children and others sensitive to overly busy surroundings. Other items, such as the activity cube and sensory wall will provide easy-to-clean stimulation for mental development and motor skills.



Due to lack of staff capacity, equipment purchases for the MakerSpace are on hold. Staff are needed to provide training and management of the room. The use of the room in the meantime is under review by staff.

Due to the difficulty in filling staff vacancies, ESPL in Accomac will be closing on Mondays, starting September 19. Staff are needed for move preparations to help minimize long-term closing during the move process.



Technical Services

Charle Ricci, Collection Management and Acquisitions Librarian



Upcoming Changes for Libby and Overdrive

The Eastern Shore Public Library (ESPL) offers eBooks and eAudiobooks through Overdrive's Libby platform. Libby is easy to download to desktop computers, mobile devices, and eReaders. It is also simple to navigate and use. ESPL has offered access to the Libby platform since 2020 through generous support from the Library of Virginia.

The Library of Virginia has provided Virginia public libraries with access not only to the Libby platform, but also to a sizeable collection of eContent available for borrowing. This statewide collection has been crucial to the ESPL's efforts to provide a large selection of eBooks and eAudios for borrowing. ESPL, like many library systems across the country, has been unable to purchase sufficient quantities of eBooks and eAudios to meet local demand due to the high cost of each item – often three to four times as much as the same title in print.

While ESPL has steadily built a locally-owned collection of eBooks and eAudios on Libby over the past few years, it is nowhere near the size needed to provide a wide selection of materials for our digital readers and listeners. Without the large number of titles made available to Shore patrons through the state library, reading and listening choices would be limited, and wait times for popular items would be long.

Recently, the Library of Virginia announced that Libby would no longer be a part of the package of electronic services that are provided

to Virginia public libraries, as financial resources were being reallocated to meet other needs. This change will take effect on October 1, 2022.



To remedy this situation, ESPL is in the process of joining a consortium known as SOVALUE, which stands for "Southern Virginia Libraries United Electronically". Membership in SOVALUE will allow ESPL to retain Overdrive's Libby platform, which many local readers have become accustomed to using. In addition, with over twenty participating library system members sharing their eContent collections, membership in SOVALUE will allow ESPL to continue to provide a substantial collection of eBooks and eAudios for local library patrons.

ESPL's current eBook and eAudio collections will migrate into the SOVALUE consortium, and new purchases will continue to be made to increase the library's collection on Libby. These items will soon be supplemented by the digital collections of the other member libraries in



Northampton Free Library



By Connor Buyrn, Branch Manager

The month of August saw progress made on several of Northampton Free Library's ongoing projects. With the review of our science fiction and mystery collections complete, these books were re-shelved to improve access and navigability. Outside the library, more brush was cleared behind the building to increase the amount of usable outdoor space. Discussions are underway about how we can continue to develop this resource and provide links to other recreational opportunities nearby. Northampton Free Library's resident pair of barn swallows also kept busy, raising their second brood of chicks for this summer.

The Eastern Shore Public Library system's new logo and library cards rolled out this month to an enthusiastic public response. The rollout attracted many new patrons to the library, and more new patrons were added this August than during any other month for nearly two years. Dozens of long-time Nassawadox patrons also opted for new cards, and several made a special trip to the library for just this purpose. Overall, the rollout has been very successful in increasing public interest in and optimism about the library system.

Libby, continued from page 5

SOVALUe. As October 1st grows near, details about logging in and accessing the SOLVALUe collections will be posted on the library's website and Facebook page. The library appreciates your patience as we begin this journey into the SOVALUe consortium and looks forward to a bright future, full of eReading and listening choices!

\$100,000, these non-collectible balances cluttered up the library software system and created barriers to efficient customer service. Connor Buyrn, Northampton Free Library Manager, is now systematically examining patron accounts and waiving the long-standing fines.

When this project is complete, the library patron and circulation databases will accurately reflect active and current library users, and the residual cobwebs from previous software systems will be gone. New and returning patrons will have the opportunity to open or renew their library account (and receive a striking new library card) without the barrier of outdated account information interfering with the process.



Cape Charles Memorial Library

Sharon Silvey, Library Manager



This past summer was one of our busiest summers ever! We returned to hosting in-house programs for the first time since early 2020 which was exciting for Cape Charles Memorial Library staff and our guests. It was wonderful to welcome back families and to meet new friends.

As the summer winds down and we transition to fall and back-to-school, we look forward to visits from local classrooms and homeschoolers and introducing all students to everything a library has to offer. From discovering the new “Pete the Cat” early reader or the new “Magic Tree House” graphic novel series or researching an influential artist or printing off a report that is due tomorrow, we are here to help. With the recent rollout of the new ESPL website, students and parents have many additional resources available at their fingertips just by visiting espl.org/kids-and-teens.

Cape Charles Memorial Library joins the American Library Association in celebrating September as “Library Card Sign-Up Month”. This annual campaign began in 1987 to “encourage all children to obtain a library card and use it” (ilovelibraries.org/librarycard). Make sure your child has the most important school supply of all – a library card! Stop by CCML (or any of the ESPL’s) and register for a FREE card.

CCML is currently in the process of creating our fall program schedule, including weekly story time! Please stay tuned – we will post our schedule as soon as it becomes available.

The Friends of Cape Charles Memorial Library held a book donation drive last month and received many items for their upcoming book sale on Friday, September 16th.

We wish everyone a happy and safe 2022-2023 school year!





The “Lubbock’s Learners” Summer Reading Challenge wrapped up at the end of August. All readers who turned in their completed logs by the deadline received a backpack filled with school supplies. There was also a drawing for prizes. First place winner was Parker Joy Watson who won a Kindle Fire, second place was the Deitch twins who won a Sundial Books gift card and the third place winner also won a Sundial Books gift card. The book bags were provided by the Eastern Shore Public Library!

The summer reading challenge program was a big success, thank you to the volunteers and all who made this happen. A special thanks to the owners of Lubbock, a beloved pet who passed away in 2018, for their financial support of this program. Congratulations to all! books and talked about the different sounds birds make and sounds one hears outside. Ms. Diane then challenged the children to take a garden music walk and check off on the list all the sounds we hear. The children learned how to make a garden music wall using household items. At the end of the program, Ms. Diane passed out pinwheels and a take-home craft to paint and create a wind chime. Thank you, Ms. Diane!



ESPL Grant Update

Cara Burton, Library System Director

LVA ARPA from Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) –The TalkBox pods are on order and hopefully will arrive to meet the grant deadline.

NEH Challenge Grant –NEH approved the grant budget. See the ESRLHC Equipment and Consulting Budget spreadsheet for details. Barbara Schwenk has been communicating with NEH via their portal.

Federal Communications Commission (FCC) –Emergency Connectivity Fund. awarded \$148,000. Devices have been distributed to nonprofits in the project. Jazmine Collins has done a phenomenal job of organizing and managing the inventory and distribution. One nonprofit requested more devices due to success. A balance remains to purchase more devices. Three Smartbus devices are being purchased/leased.

The ESPL Finance Committee continues to review grant budgets as part of the overall finances for the ESPL.

No active grant writing is taking place at this time due to the pending move and the time involved in implementing existing grants and the reporting requirements.