

LIBRARY DIRECTOR INITIATIVES

A couple years ago, I presented my “Library 2020” initiatives to the trustees. These were organizational plans to implement themes within the 2016-2021 ESPL Strategic Plan. My initiatives were also aligned with the United Nations Sustainability Plan and included a table that identified how our goals met that global plan (see section 5b.1, Library 2020). The four initiatives of Library 2020 include: **Heritage Hub, Culture of Reading, Nonprofit Capacity, and Organizational Capacity**. These are still relative areas of focus.

Since 2020, a major shift has happened: the pandemic. ESPL did well to prepare for this new age by partnering with ESVA Healthy Communities and ESVA Community Partners. Those groups have focused on ACES: Adverse Childhood Experiences. All staff are required to take the Community Services Board ACES training which proves valuable in working with the general public. ESPL has had some programs related to **health literacy**. This topic covers all generations.



Additionally, in the family history community, generational trauma studies has gained traction. Our “Roots Matter” author program is an example of a (virtual) program we held that was well attended. The health benefits of doing family history research are being increasingly recognized. Not only medical family history is learned, but a sense of purpose, understanding resiliency, and other benefits are being recognized.

With our Heritage Center and community health partnerships, ESPL is uniquely and strategically aligned **to develop integrated programs that promote both family history education and health literacy that can impact our community by fostering family health and well-being.**

We can use these family history and health programs to develop nonprofit capacity by creating cooperative granted programs and continuing partnerships, training, and cross-promotion of services. The training of ESPL staff has helped improve public service, which in turn, improves the Culture of Reading.

As we have nurtured the four initiatives, you can see we are taking a holistic approach to library services. We can truly help people thrive and develop self-sense!

In addition to the Library2020 plan, I plan the following:

Memory Lab – In the Heritage Center, families will be able transfer, digitize, and preserve their family documents. This wellness activity stimulates memories, fosters family discussion, and creates family generational connections. Heritage Center staff can bring scan-athons to area nonprofit groups, such as churches. These outreach programs can also train families on the care

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and handling of family archives. Visitors to the area can use the Memory Lab equipment as well by digitizing images they share with local families or reformatting images to electronically transfer to other locations.



Action Plus – Each ESVA town should have a walking trail to have a concise narrative of the town’s history. Families will benefit by walking together on these trails and stimulating discussions and interest in further study/reading. ESPL can partner with towns to develop new trails and will continue to work with the Tourism Board, Museums, and local businesses to distribute and promote the trails. The trails support the Healthy Communities walking trails initiative and the Community Services Board Walk-Kits. Walking challenges can be created as well, challenging residents to walk the town trails and others. The future ESVA RailTrail is a local asset that will help us promote both healthy activities and local history. Not only do these trails promote the health of citizens, they also give tourists activities to do while visiting. ESPL also has the ability to have recreational equipment to loan. Disc golf, balls, bocci, pickle

ball paddles, and tennis rackets are some of the sporting equipment people may want to borrow to try an activity before investing in equipment. Visitors to the area may want to use the equipment when here for longer stays, as well.

ESPL’s capacity to implement such programs is increasing with new professional staff appointments. The dedicated Adult Services Librarian position, however, is sorely needed to implement many of the programs we would like to host. There are certain target populations, like veterans, that need attention, but we do not yet have the capacity. In the meantime, staff perform hybrid duties, working on parts of these initiatives as time and funds allow.

The library system is at a real point of change. The new \$5 million regional library and Heritage Center is just a tool in this change process. It is our resilient, skilled staff and volunteers that are transforming library services here on the Shore. We all have a vision! And it is one most worthy.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cassia Jean Burtas".