



# Library System Report

EASTERN SHORE OF VIRGINIA • PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM

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

January 2024



## I Love My Library!

In the month of February, Northampton Free Library and Eastern Shore of Virginia Public Library & Heritage Center will be asking our patrons to tell us why they love their library! Valentine stations and decorated return boxes will be set up in the libraries to collect patron feedback.

What do you love about the library? Is it the wide selection of books? The variety of programs we offer? Our fabulous staff who are always ready to help? We want to know!

It's not just a love of libraries that we will be encouraging patrons to express. Both libraries will be offering valentine stations where patrons can stop by to fill out a literary-themed valentine for friends and loved ones. This passive programming will continue through Valentine's Day on February 14th. Stop by either library to share the love!

## DIRECTORS' UPDATE

Miranda Wisor, Director



January was a period for reflection and for planning.

January means that we are half way through the current fiscal year. It is a time when we can look back with both an eye to the budget and an eye to what we've accomplished! We have certainly accomplished a lot. As has been demonstrated in previous System Reports, programs offered and programming attendance at the Regional Library and Northampton Free Library has exploded in Fiscal Year 2024. But programming is only part of the story. A closer look at the numbers shows that library use on the Eastern Shore is growing in many ways. New card distribution is up. Computer use and WiFi use is growing. Circulation of library materials



# DIRECTORS' UPDATE CONTINUED

is growing. While it might be tempting to assume that the growth can be entirely attributed to the opening of the Eastern Shore of Virginia Regional Library & Heritage Center, the numbers tell a different story. Northampton Free Library has shown slow but steady growth in new library card sign-ups, circulation, technology use, and program attendance. This tells us that the library system is moving in a great direction!

The numbers shown to the right are for the entire library system. We have seen significant growth across the board. It is also important to note that this growth is despite the 22-day closure of the library in Parksley last August. These statistics are worth celebrating!

The public response to the library's new initiatives are encouraging, and it means that we have no plans of slowing down. We launched a new teen book club in January and have a new romance book club planned to launch in February. Spring programs offered in the libraries are already being planned including a fun Easter event for young people. The Heritage Center has exhibits and programs planned for the coming months. Summer Reading events are planned including an exciting kick-off event in partnership with the Eastern Shore Community College and the Eastern Shore Literacy Council.

The ESVRL Friends have already committed funds to helping ensure that Summer Reading 2024 will be bigger and better than ever! We intend to make a similar request of the NFL Friends group. The ESPL Foundation has committed two commemorative bricks outside of the Regional Library to honor top readers from both libraries this summer.

January has shown us that great things are happening in the library system and they are going to keep going!

## FISCAL YEARS 2023 AND 2024 COMPARISONS

**Circulation** 52,790 88,781  
19% growth

**Computer Use** 2,549 4,088  
25% growth

**Wireless Use** 15,487 24,720  
25% growth

Numbers reflect Fiscal Year 2023 totals and first half of Fiscal Year 2024 totals for Eastern Shore Public Libraries.

## FISCAL YEARS 2023 AND 2024 COMPARISONS

**New Cards** 1,052 1,428  
47% growth

**On Site Program Attendance\*** 213 1,191  
1,013% growth

**Total Program Attendance** 1,718 2,492  
38% growth

Numbers reflect Fiscal Year 2023 totals and first half of Fiscal Year 2024 totals for Eastern Shore Public Libraries.

\*Total for Fiscal Year 2024 has already exceeded totals for Fiscal Year 2023.

# Fiscal Year 2025

Programs and services aren't the only planning that has been happening recently in the library system. In February, the System Director will be presenting Fiscal Year 2025 budget requests to Accomack County and Northampton County Board of Supervisors.

As discussed with the Personnel Committee, in addition to funds for a modest COLA for staff and an estimated increase to insurance premiums, the library system will be requesting funds for two new full-time positions. While the request is an ambitious one, it should be achievable thanks in part to the planned increase in State Aid for FY25. Unfortunately, there is a limit to how much State Aid can go to employee wages and so we are asking the counties for help.

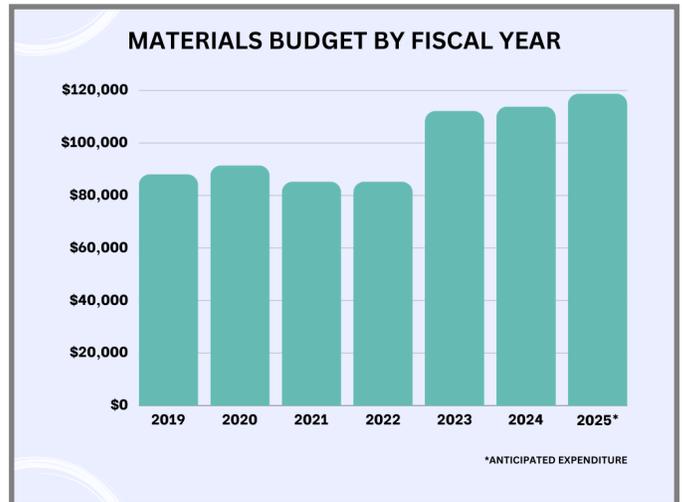
The first new full-time position would go to support Technical Services. Although spending for new materials has grown over the past few years and is expected to continue to grow, this department has not seen an increase in staffing. We are confident that the expertise that Technical Services needs to continue to provide new reading material to each location and maintain the libraries' bookshelves can be filled with a local search.

The second new full-time position would go to support the Heritage Center. Hiring Christopher Pote to convert the old Eastern Shore room into a world-class Heritage Center has

led to significant and exciting transformations. Despite Chris's expertise, the sustainability of the Heritage Center relies on additional support for him and the Heritage Center. Currently, multiple ESPL employees fill-in and help with Reference questions and research requests. This leaves other library duties neglected. Currently, Jazmine Collins works as both the Circulation Supervisor overseeing circulation staff at three library locations and as the library's Reference Librarian. If funding is made available, this position could be split to add a full-time Reference position to the Heritage Center. We are confident that this position could be filled with an internal search or, if interest persists, by permitting Jazmine to focus on Reference service exclusively and begin a local search for a new Circulation Manager.

Finally, the additional funding from State Aid in FY25 will empower the library system to purchase a new courier vehicle. The van currently used for courier deliveries is also used to attend outreach events, but its mileage is now over 100,000 miles and it is not a fuel efficient vehicle. Courier services could be easily managed with a smaller vehicle purchased on state contract pricing. This will ensure uninterrupted service between the libraries and realize cost savings on fuel for the library system. It will also empower additional outreach options for the library system.

A drafted FY25 Budget has been created that reflects these plans for the library system. If requested funding is made available, it will be provided for review by the Board of Trustees for further consideration. Of course, these plans are subject to change depending on available funding and best serving the needs of the library system in its mission to serve the Eastern Shore.





# Heritage Center

Christopher Pote, Heritage Center Manager



The first Heritage Center exhibit is up and open to the public in the Malarkey Gallery here at ESRL. "Selections from the Kirk Mariner Collection" is a 29-piece exhibit highlighting the various types of materials that Kirk Mariner collected and displayed in his home. Included are posters, maps, political cartoons, newspapers clippings, photographs and more all pertaining to Shore happenings and history. The Kirk Mariner Collection is the largest collection in the Heritage Center to date, and the exhibit highlights a mere fraction of its holdings, but is a great example of its breadth. The exhibit is accessible any time the library is open and will be on display into March. Thank you to Haydon and Janet Rochester for donating the hanging/display system.

On Thursday, February 8, we are excited to welcome Gerald Boyd for his presentation on the Samuel D. Outlaw Blacksmith Shop in Onancock. Mr. Boyd and his wife, Polly, are civil rights activists, social justice practitioners, and established and run the Peaceworks Center for Well-Being and Eastern Shore Training & Consulting, Inc. Mr. Boyd also runs the historic Outlaw Blacksmith Shop and Museum and will be discussing the role and influence of Mr. Outlaw on the Shore.



February 8th also marks the last day of work for archives assistant Judith Grier. For the past 15 months Judith has re-housed collections, conducted condition assessments, assisted with research queries, aided in relocation activities, and just about anything else asked of her. Her last main task was selecting the material for display for the above mentioned "Selections from the Kirk Mariner Collection" exhibit and assisting in its installation. It's has been a real joy working with Judith, and I will forever appreciate her good cheer and good counsel.

Lastly, I would like to highlight our partner project the MilesFiles. The MilesFiles is a genealogical database of thousands of individuals with direct ties to the Eastern Shore. It is run by Moody K. "M.K." Miles, and it has been aiding people with their Eastern Shore genealogical research for years. In fact, Brice Stump just wrote an outstanding feature about Mr. Miles and the MilesFiles in the Crisfield-Somerset County Times (01/24/2024). In 2023 alone, the MilesFiles saw over 20,000 users from 10 different countries access and utilize the database. That's roughly 1,700 users per month. These are really impressive statistics. It is also the first place Heritage Center staff look when posed with genealogical queries. The MilesFiles is an invaluable genealogical resource, and I am grateful for M.K. for his continued support of the database and the Heritage Center and honored that the MilesFiles will live in the Heritage Center in perpetuity.



# Technical Services

Charle Ricci, Collection Management and Acquisitions Librarian



Book displays are an excellent way for libraries to encourage browsing and increase the visibility of items from the materials collections. By perusing items in a display, library patrons may stumble upon a new favorite book that they wouldn't have encountered otherwise. Book displays can help readers discover new interests or authors, and be inspired to expand their literary or informational horizons.

Now that the Regional library has relocated to Parksley, the larger space has made it possible to feature items from the collection throughout the building. In addition to the permanent New Book displays in the children's and adult areas, February displays feature African Americans and the Arts, Valentine's Day, Newbery and Caldecott Award Winners, Dragons, Cozy Mysteries, and Local Authors.

Jamie Johnson, the library's Administrative Assistant, is the creative mind behind selecting the in-library display themes, choosing items to feature, and designing eye-catching signage to accompany each.

In addition to the physical book displays, librarian Charle Ricci curates a monthly selection of Book Rivers on the ShoreCat catalog home page. These virtual book displays allow library patrons to view and request highlighted items online. The Book Rivers can be found just below the carousel of Trending and Just Added items at the top of the catalog page. For February, ShoreCat includes Book Rivers focusing on Black History Month, Valentine's Day (Celebrating Women's Friendships), Warm-Hearted Reads for Winter's Chilly Days, Books for Settling into Winter, and ESPL Staff Favorites from 2023.

Whether you choose to visit the library in person or through ShoreCat, be sure to take a look at the featured items in the Displays and Book Rivers. You might just find something that you didn't even know you were looking for.



## BLACK HISTORY MONTH



## VALENTINE'S DAY - CELEBRATE WOMEN'S FRIENDSHIPS



## WARM-HEARTED READS FOR WINTER'S CHILLY DAYS





# Programs & Outreach Report

Tiffany Flores

Programming continues to be a hit at the Regional Library. Tiffany's Crochet Stitch-a-Long program had 4 attendees this month and many more interested. If the program continues to grow, it may need to be held in the lecture hall. While not as well attended, Tech Help tends to be popular with adult patrons. With only 1 attendee this month, Tiffany was able to provide one-on-one service. The patron left grateful for the assistance she received and expressed interest in attending more sessions in the future. Additionally, the flower earring craft led by Maria Burns was successful. While only 1 adult attended, the 2 teens who attended were greatly pleased with the craft and would like to see more jewelry-making programs. This provides insight that jewelry-making programs may be more popular among the teen and tween demographic.

Unlike most libraries that struggle to gain a teen audience, the Regional Library has seen a lot of teens attend and request programming. Teen Gaming Tuesdays tend to have a consistent 2-4 teens who often engage in the additional activities held during the program. The creative writing program hosted by Maria Burns was attended by two teens who requested that the program be held monthly. In addition to requesting a monthly creative writing program, there has been a demand for more teen programming in general.

Kid's programming is also well attended. The Pre-K Puppet Show done by Kelly Harries was successful with 24 attendees. With that being said, the School-age puppet show was only attended by 2 people. Tiffany is enthusiastic about future programming with Kelly Harries and her puppet Mr. Dee-Oh-Gee. In addition to the puppet shows, The Lego Competition hosted by Tim Hall was attended by 12 patrons who enjoyed participating in the event. And, finally, this month's Hometown Heroes hosted by Frank Russell was attended by 5 children.

Northampton Free Library has had good program attendance this month. Monthly Take and Make kits have resumed and patrons have shown interest in them. 50 kits are made





## Programs & Outreach Report Continued...

Tiffany Flores

available each month and, by the end of the month, most have been picked up by patrons. Additionally, The Tech Help Tuesday program had participation this month. Finally, the snow globe craft program was attended by 4 patrons. Kid's programs were hit or miss but 2 patrons did attend the monthly STEM program.

As a part of the library's outreach initiative, Tiffany Flores visited Northampton High School to provide Mr. Barone's special education class with a presentation covering the library services and resources. This included discussing the new building, programming, and all the e-resources the library has to offer. The students were most excited about Kanopy and all the films they could watch. In addition to the presentation, the classroom played a STEM game using KEVA planks where Tiffany challenged them to build a structure from a prompt she gave. Overall, the students were excited about the new building and all the library services offered. Tiffany hopes they will visit the library on a school field trip. In addition to visiting the high school, Tiffany visited Eastern Shore Headstart in Accomac as a guest speaker for their parent's meeting. At this meeting, she was able to educate both parents and Headstart staff on library resources and programs. Many were surprised by how many of the services were free.

During this month, Tiffany Flores, Charle Ricci, Sharon Silvey, and Betsey Doherty met to discuss how to best go about planning the STEM kits. This meeting was extremely productive as it allowed everyone to share ideas and resources and brainstorm. Another collaborative meeting will be held in February and will include Chincoteague Island Library. Tiffany has begun planning out the kits for Northampton Free Library. On top of good progress with the STEM kits, programming has also been successful at both Parksley and Nassawadox libraries. The Regional Library had 5 attendees and Northampton Free Library had 2 attendees. All participants were happy with the activity provided despite the bad weather.





# Northampton Free Library

Connor Buyn, Branch Manager



Northampton Free Library kicked off the New Year with several programs for patrons of all ages. This month's children's STEM program focused on the night sky, and attendees were lucky enough to see a shooting star while learning about constellations outside the building. Library patrons had a lot of fun building home-made snow globes in January's craft program, and NFL's ongoing Tech Help Tuesdays offering also saw increased public interest.



Outside the building, a large area of overgrown landscaping gravel was removed, and straw and grass seed was put down in its place. This will make the library's exterior easier to maintain and more inviting for future outdoor programming opportunities.



Even though February is a shorter month, Northampton Free Library will offer a packed programming calendar. Storytime Anytime will continue on Mondays and Wednesdays, as will Tech Help Tuesdays. Both programs are available by patron request throughout open hours. Bookmark coloring will be offered on Saturday, February 3rd in celebration of Take Your Child to the Library Day. A Valentine's Day card station will be open through February 14th – library patrons will be able to make cards for their own sweethearts and can also make cards expressing their love for the library system. These cards will then be put on display in the library.



February's children's STEM and adult craft programs will focus on helping and learning about local wildlife. The STEM program will take place on Saturday, February 17th at 11 AM, during the Great Backyard Bird Count. Participants will learn about some common local birds and will be invited to build and decorate bird-houses for the spring. The adult craft program will take place on Thursday, February 22nd at 6 PM. Participants will build bee hotels to provide nesting space for solitary bees. This program is open to patrons of all ages.

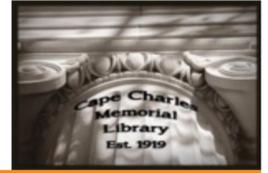
There will also be a Bedtime Storytime offered at 6 PM on Thursday, February 15th. The library's younger patrons are invited to join library staff for snacks and stories.





# Cape Charles Memorial Library

Sharon Silvey, Library Manager



The month of January was filled with compiling end of year statistics and reports, reflecting all the hard work and fun we had in 2023. Cape Charles Memorial Library set a new attendance record last year with over 16,300 people visiting! Almost 1,700 people attended one (or more) of the free programs we offer throughout the year! Numbers for our total circulation, notary public service, public computer use, and new library cards also showed more people taking advantage of all that libraries have to offer.

CCML is excited to share that we were one of three libraries in Virginia to be selected as a recipient of the Thinking Money for Kids Program Kit, sponsored by the American Library Association (ALA) and the FINRA Investor Education Foundation. The program kit includes programming resources to assist libraries with financial education for children ages 3 to 12.

The kit will also provide materials for CCML to host in-person children's programs as well as a set of preloaded Playaway Launchpad tablets that families can check out for home use.



We look forward to learning and sharing with you this year.



# Chincoteague Island Library



The library board, staff, and volunteers began the New Year with a bang. We changed our book displays and windows to reflect the winter season and to honor Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday. The Board is once again planning for our annual fundraisers—a basket raffle which will run from February 16 through October 14 and the annual sunset cruise which is scheduled for Thursday evening, June 20 from 6 to 9 p.m. The library benefit shop is continuing to sell used books and puzzles. And, we have an unfinished puzzle set up in the front room for patrons and visitors to take time out of their busy schedules.

**Children's Programs:** Our Tales 4 Tots Storytime began again on January 11 with a Pajama Party. Children and adults came dressed in their pajamas, robes, and slippers, sang songs, listened to stories and did a "Llama Pajama" craft. The following week, we visited the Museum of Chincoteague and had a chance to see Misty and Stormy, listen to stories, and create a penguin craft. And, last Thursday, Claire and Lexi from the Chincoteague Bay Field Station visited the children who learned all about hermit crabs. We have many fun programs planned through the winter and spring months including a visit to The Island Creamery. Tales 4 Tots Storytime will run weekly through May. We are averaging eighteen children each week.



**STEM Grant:** We are excited to work with Tiffany and Charle on developing STEM programs and STEM kits for our school age children.

**Summer Programs:** Planning has begun for the library's summer reading challenge which will coincide with the County Library dates. We are also planning our Tales 4 Tots, Young Explorers programs as well as several paid performances with the Island Theatre.

**Adult Programs:** Our book clubs have been busy. The Thursday book club had lunch in Parksley and then met at the regional library to discuss our favorite reads of 2023. In February, our topic will be "True Crimes." The Tuesday book club will be discussing The Complete Maus, by Art Spiegelman. Thursday evening, January 18, Shuli Tor presented a talk about the origins of the Israeli/Palestine conflict. Several programs are being discussed for spring including a poetry reading.