



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

February 2024



Thank you, helpers!

Whether it's a missed punch-list item or an emergency call for a leaky toilet, the past six months in the Eastern Shore of Virginia Regional Library & Heritage Center have demonstrated that we have dependable friends from the department of Public Works with Accomack County.

Pictured above are Andy (left) and Jeremy (right). Missing from the pictures is Ruben who preferred to not be photographed. These three gentlemen are friendly faces who help us keep the library running well and looking like, as one 4th grader who recently visited the library on a school field trip described, "the most beautiful building on the Eastern Shore!"

With Jeremy's help scheduling, we ended February with a much needed repair to our HVAC system. A fan motor was replaced. The grinding and banging that were commonly heard in the back administration offices have been silenced. We appreciate having this support for maintaining the library's new home.

Director's Update



Miranda Wisor, Director

"It feels like we're home." "It feels like we're settled." "It feels like the move is behind us."

These are the comments that I keep hearing from library employees working at the Regional Library. Although the move occurred six months ago, it has taken us a while to find our groove—and that we have! The Regional Library is bursting with fun and engaging activities. Similarly, Northampton Free Library is starting to see a slow-but-steady growth of interest and attendance at the programs and events hosted at the library each month.

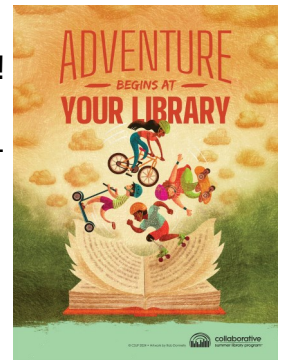
Hosting regular events has given rise to another phenomenon. We have received re-



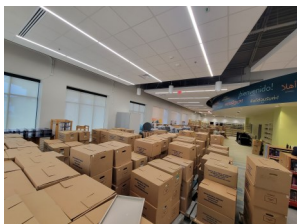
DIRECTOR'S UPDATE CONTINUED

quests from patrons of both libraries about future events that they would like to see. We have, and plan to continue, to respond. Hitting our stride means that we can and will acknowledge community requests whenever possible.

It also means that we can take on bigger and more exciting projects! Planning for an exciting Summer Reading program is nearly complete. A registration link was sent out to community partners to sign up for a table at Summer Fest on June 15th. We're excited to kick-off the program with such a fun event for children and families on the Eastern Shore.



Finally, hitting a stride gives us an opportunity to look back on what we've been able to accomplish together. We've been able to make some needed repairs and updates to Northampton Free Library; the building and the surrounding property. We've revitalized programming at the libraries and grown the library staff's capacity to offer programs. In doing so, we've developed new partnerships and grown our network connections on the Eastern Shore. The Heritage Center has flourished and been able to offer exhibits and lectures that highlight the unique history of the Eastern Shore in addition to serving as a robust research outlet.



Behind the curtain, the library system has been able to make advancements, too. We've updated technology management for the system and made some upgrades along the way. We've collaborated with the ESPL Foundation to procure sponsored equipment for the Regional Library. We've introduced new material types for circulation in the libraries. Working with the Board of Trustees, we've been able to make needed updates to many of the library's policies. We were fortunate to be able to offer continuing education to all ESPL staff last Fall and also send several staff members to VLA's annual conference. Several of our managers have had the opportunity to pursue leadership training.

All of these changes allows us to look at the year behind us with knowledge that we've come a long way from where we were, but there is always more work to be done. Recognizing our successes should empower us to look ahead to the next year with encouragement about how much more can be accomplished.

Employee Policy Manual

Included in this Board Packet, you'll find proposed updates to the ESPL Employee Policy Manual. A few months ago, the Board approved updates to section 4.11 Holiday Pay and Emergency Closings and to Appendix B. Dress Guidelines. The Personnel Committee has been working to update the entire manual and it is now ready for wider review. Updates and changes of note include:

- ♦ Section 2.1: Changes to staff evaluation period to align with an annual cycle and establish goal-setting as part of the evaluation process. Current practice has been to enact evaluations on the anniversary of employees' hire date. This has led to inconsistencies in the evaluation process that recommended updates seeks to remedy.
- ♦ Section 4.5: Clarification of health benefits provided to employees of ESPL and align coverage with Accomack County as the fiscal agent of the library and administrative source of health insurance availability. It is recommended that this update be approved to take effect with the start of Fiscal Year 2025.
- ♦ Section 5.1: Reduction in maximum allowable accrual of vacation leave. Vacation time is part of the benefits package afforded to staff and this update attempts to encourage staff to use their leave time. It will further serve to reduce the leave liability of the library system.
- ♦ Section 5.2: Affords supervisors and/or the Director the authority to request a medical release for staff returning to work. This will protect staff returning to work by ensuring that they have been medically cleared to do so and similarly protect colleagues and the library system as a whole.
- ♦ Section 5.4: Expansion of bereavement leave to afford staff the opportunity for leave in the event of the death of an extended family member or non-relative.
- ♦ Other: Additional adjustments have been made throughout the document to provide further clarification to staff in subject areas such as travel reimbursement, grievance procedures, prohibited conduct, and other matters.



Library Theft & Email Updates

An ESPL staff member's email address was hacked in February resulting in a fraudulent transfer request to be sent to our accountant's office. A sum of \$1,197.03 was transferred from ESPL's operating account and the attempt to recover the funds via transfer account reversal failed.

As a result of this theft, two-factor authentication is being enabled on email addresses for all espl.org accounts. Our accountant's office has been directed to not accept emailed requests for account transfers; such requests will only be accepted in print moving forward.

The theft was reported to the Accomack County Sheriff's Office.

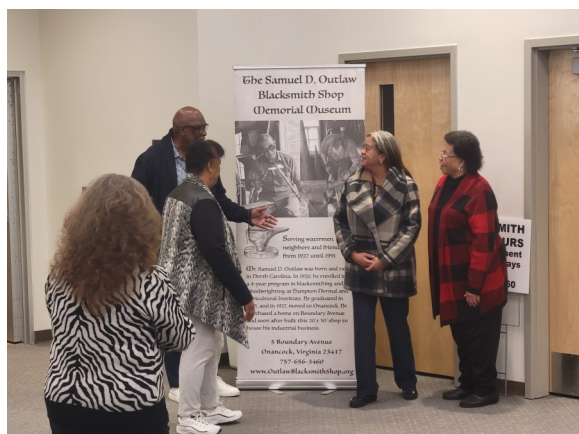


On Thursday, February 8, we were honored to host Gerald Boyd for his presentation on the historic Samuel D. Outlaw Blacksmith Shop in Onancock. Mr. Boyd discussed the history and legacy of Mr. Outlaw and the subsequent creation of the museum. Mr. Boyd hopes to increase hours and grow the programming and accessibility of the museum over the coming months and years. If you are interested in volunteering to be docent at the Samuel D. Outlaw Blacksmith Shop Memorial Museum, please contact Mr. Boyd at: 757-656-3460.



The Heritage Center was excited to receive a visit from U.S. Congresswoman Jen Kiggans for a tour of the facility and "Selections from the Kirk Mariner Collection" exhibit, as well as discussion about our mission and holdings. After her Coffee with a Congresswoman session in the Dennis Custis Lecture Hall on February 26th, Congresswoman Kiggans shared her past library experience with myself and other ESRL staff, and reaffirmed the import of collecting, preserving, and making available the historical resources available to us.

February also saw steady activity on the reference and acquisition fronts. Along with our usual genealogical queries, we also fielded several question about ships and shipwrecks, as well as the former railroad. The GFWC Women's Club of the Eastern Shore recently donated 16 scrapbooks from the middle of the twentieth century. They include newspaper articles that span the decades, articles about everything from the aftermath of the World War II, the Pole Tax, and the division among the clubs concerning the vote on women's rights. In January we received materials related to the Parksley Three Arts Club, and I have written about the Parksley Flax Spinners here before and we work collaboratively with D.A.R. frequently. The number of active women's groups on the Shore throughout its history is significant and we are excited to be growing our related collections so they can be studied in the future.





Technical Services

Charle Ricci, Collection Management and Acquisitions Librarian



While the bulk of the materials added to each of the four Shore libraries are purchased using monies allocated from the operating budgets, there is a valuable supplement to these materials that comes from the local community: Donations! These particular donations are not monetary in nature, but are instead physical items: books, sound recordings and video recordings.

Donations are dropped off at the libraries by individuals who may be frequent library customers, or who may never have used the library before, but all are interested in giving the items they longer want or need another chance to be enjoyed. In some cases, the materials are in such poor condition that our only choice is to recycle them, but oftentimes, they are excellent candidates for adding to our collections or giving to the Friends of the Library for fundraising purposes.

At Parksley, we rely on the ESPL Friends group to process the donations. After a preliminary review, during which Technical Services staff selects items to be added to the collection, the Friends then sort the remaining donations to be either offered for sale in their Bookshop, or sent to Better World Books and sold at a commission.

The items selected for the library also make their way through a sorting process. For newly released titles with a waiting list, the donated copy will be added quickly to help shorten the wait times for patrons on hold for that title. For significant or popular titles that the Main library in Parksley already owns, Technical Services staff will catalog the donated copy and share it with another ESPL location. In cases where enough copies of the title are already held in the ESPL system, the donated copy will be compared to the shelf copy. In many cases, the donated copy is in better condition than its match on the shelf, and the cataloged copy will be upgraded.

Donated items are just one way that the Shore community supports the ESPL system through generous giving. The value of these donated additions to our library collections is significant, and allows the materials budget to go farther.





Programs & Outreach Report

Tiffany Flores

Programming at the Regional Library continues to see great growth. February kicked off with a special story time done by Chincoteague Bay Field Station for national 'Take Your Child to the Library Day'. This story time featured *A House for Hermit Crab* by Eric Carle and a craft activity. In total, the event had 6 participants. Additionally, the monthly crochet stitch-a-long has grown large enough to warrant moving the program into the lecture hall. Lecture-based programs have also seen good attendance. Dr. Author Fournier's talk on his new book, *Hope Makes Us Live! Hope Makes Us Die!* had 8 attendees and Gerald Boyd's lecture about the Samuel D. Outlaw Blacksmith shop was well attended by 30 people. The Barrier Island Center's presentation of the film *The Gatherings* had 2 attendees. While this is a low turnout, we are hoping for continued growth as the weather gets warmer and daylight lasts longer.

The Regional Library hosted its first-ever Romance Book Club which had 3 attendees who were excited about the club and looked forward to the next meeting in April. Teen programming also seems to be doing well. The monthly teen writing program was attended by 2 teens who suggested character creation for the next session. Teen gaming is seeing good support. The Teen Gaming and Manga Book Club at the end of the month had 9 participants playing games and discussing manga.

Adult programming continues to be successful at Northampton Free Library. This month, patrons made bee hotels. The registration for the event filled up immediately and was well attended with 6 participants. Patrons who attended were very pleased with the program. Additionally, Tech Help Tuesdays have seen higher engagement. The children's programming was not as successful this month. No one visited the library in Nasswaddox for the 'Take your Child to the





Programs & Outreach Report Continued...

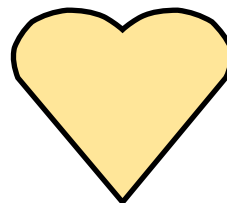
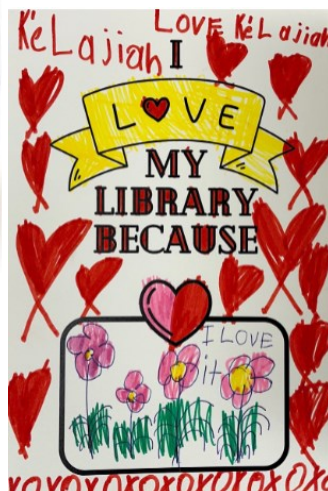
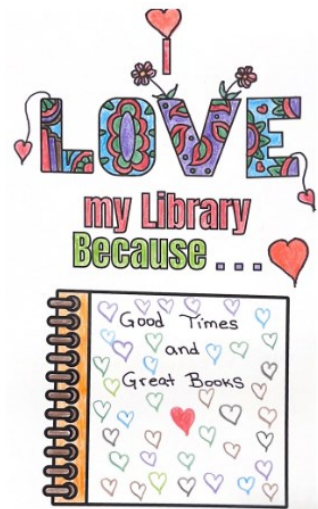
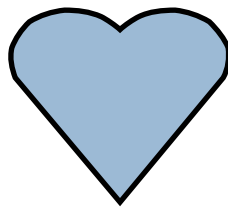
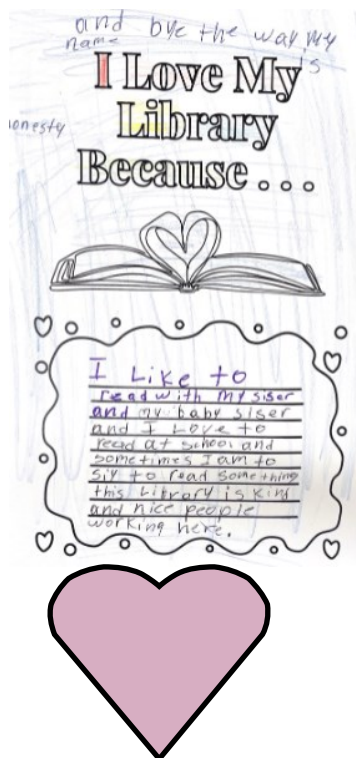
Tiffany Flores

Library Day' program or the Bedtime Storytime Program. Despite the disappointing turnout for children's programs, Kid's Take and Make Craft kits are well received by the community.



All month long, both library locations provide Valentine's Day cards for people to take home and other cards for patrons to complete telling why they love their library. Both passive programs were successful. Many people participated in taking cards and creating a valentine for the library. In total, there were 81 participants between the two locations. Nassawadox had 39 participants and Parksley had 42 participants.

Ready Region South Eastern with Go and Grow Eastern Shore hosted the Northampton County and Accomac County's Child Care and PreK Connections and Resources Fair. The library attended both county events and provided library informational resources, promoted e-resources, and gave out free books. Between the two events, the library was able to reach 40 people. While these events were low-attended, it was the first year for both events. Ready Region South Eastern plans to do the event every year with the hope that the event will grow each year.





Northampton Free Library

Connor Buyn, Branch Manager



February may be the shortest month of the year, but Northampton Free Library's schedule was still packed with public programs. The library's craft programs for children and adults focused on supporting local wildlife, with a children's STEM program focused on bird identification and birdhouse building and an adult craft focusing on native bee species and building bee hotels. The bee hotel program was particularly successful, with the sign-up sheet being filled within 24 hours of going live. Patrons and library staff worked together to build nesting structures for local wild bees out of reeds, bamboo, and cardboard tubing.

Northampton Free Library's ongoing offer of Tech Help Tuesdays saw increased public interest in the month of February, and this program will continue into the month of March. Every Tuesday, patrons can come to the library with their tech support related questions and receive help from library staff. This service is available on request during open hours. No reservations are needed. The library will also continue to offer on demand story times every Monday and Wednesday. Just come to the front desk and ask.

In honor of Valentine's Day, we asked our patrons to decorate cards and tell us why they love the library. Northampton Free Library patrons didn't disappoint, and created many lovely cards with supportive messages that were displayed at the front desk. We would like to give our heartfelt thanks to all the patrons who participated.



In addition to our recurring Tech Help Tuesdays and Story Time Anytime offerings, Northampton Free Library will host four exciting special programs in the month of March. On Thursday, March 14th, there will be a Bedtime Storytime beginning at 6 PM. Snacks will be provided and no sign up is required. The Children's STEM program for March will be geode cracking, and will be held at 6:00 PM on Thursday, March 21st. The library's younger patrons are invited to learn about geology by smashing rocks with hammers to discover the crystals hidden inside. Sign up is required for this event – the form will be posted on Northampton Free Library's Facebook page and signups will also be accepted at the front desk. Local children's book author Nan Carlton will host a children's craft and story time on Saturday, March 23rd starting at 10:00 AM. Snacks will be provided by the library. Finally, adult patrons are invited to build terrariums in March's adult craft, which will take place at 6:00 PM on Thursday the 28th. Sign up is required for this event – keep an eye on the library's Facebook page or ask at the front desk.



Cape Charles Memorial Library

Sharon Silvey, Library Manager



The month of February was quite busy at Cape Charles Memorial Library! We had over 900 visitors and hosted 10 programs with 184 people in attendance.

Staff was busy preparing for spring and summer programs, collaborating with other non-traditional educators on the Eastern Shore. These collaborations allow us to offer amazing educational experiences for families, mostly at no cost to the library. Seeds have been ordered for our Seed Cart and free packets of herbs have been attached to books about gardening and cooking with herbs – seed packets are free with checkout of displayed book(s).



Additional book displays highlighted Black History Month. A free activity booklet, *Dear Ruby, Hear Our Hearts* was available for the taking. The booklet contained responses to letters from young students across America from civil rights activist Ruby Bridges. The letters and responses encouraged students to Be Brave! and Save Our Planet!

As part of Black History Month, local genealogist Bobby Harmon presented, *The Untold Black History of Northampton County*. Mr. Harmon researched and discussed the history of local African American families and their connection with local Native American tribes and local white families. Mr. Harmon is well versed in local family connections and an excellent storyteller. An interactive audience of 25 was most impressed with his presentation.

Another wonderful program staff was excited to be a part of was the launching of local author Nan Carlton-Mosteller's new children's book at Cape Charles Memorial Library. Staff followed Nan on her journey and boy, did we learn a lot! Writing and illustrating a book takes time and an abundance of patience. Miss Nan held two readings of her book, *Huck, Chuck & Bruce: At the Shore*. Quacks and giggles filled the room as listeners enjoyed the first public reading of the brand new book.

CCML was delighted to have a local homeschool group visit our library this month. Younger students learned about "Following Rules" and "Taking Care of Library Books" with a game of Simon Says and coloring sheets. Older students were introduced to Melvil Dewey and his classification system. Though the Dewey Decimal System was a bit overwhelming, students did have fun with a helping to reshelve books activity.



Chincoteague Island Library



February was a busy month for our library. The window and book displays focused on Valentine's Day and Black History Month. We participated in the *Historic Downtown Merchants' "Death By Chocolate"* event which ran from 3 – 7 p.m. on Friday, February 16 and 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. on Saturday, February 17. Over eight hundred people visited our library. We initiated their playing cards, handed out chocolates, and sold basket raffle tickets. Many of the participants worked on our "Chocolate" puzzle.



The Thursday morning book clubs read and discussed books about true crime. The Tuesday evening book club discussed *The Magic Hour*.

During the month, patrons and visitors came into the library to read, play in the children's room, and help complete our community puzzle.



The Tales 4 Tots program, which consists of stories, stretching, songs, finger plays, and crafts, meets each Thursday at 10 a.m. at the library. This month, the Chincoteague Bay Field Station presented two programs—one about hermit crabs, one about jellyfish. Other themes included Valentine's Day, Snowmen, and Monkeys. We will be concluding the month with a field trip to the Island Creamery where they will learn how ice cream is made, listen to some ice cream stories, and each get a cup of their favorite ice cream with their choice of topping. In addition, they will take home an activity bag. This program is a favorite for Island families and friends, averaging 18 children each week.