



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

December 2024

Director's Update



Upcoming January Highlights @ Regional Library & Northampton Free

- **9th: Teen Creative Writing: Mythology & Fairytale Reinterpretation - ESRL**
- **10th: Stuffie Sleepover & Storytime - ESRL**
- **15th: Memory Café - ESRL**
- **15th: Kids' Game Day - ESRL**
- **16th: STEM Night for kids, Looking at stars with Telescopes - ESRI**
- **16th: Adult Craft Night - NFL**
- **20th: LIBRARIES CLOSED**
- **23rd: STEM: Telescopes101**
- **23rd: STEM Night for kids, Looking at stars with Telescopes - NFL**
- **25th: The Nature Conservancy Family Nature Day - ESRL**
- **30th: Family Movie Night: *Inside Out 2* - ESRL**
- **Tech Help: Every Tuesday - NFL**
- **Teen Gaming Night: Every Tuesday - ESRL**
- **Storytime Anytime: Every Monday & Wednesday - Northampton Free**

For more information: espl.org; (757) 787-3400



Christopher Pote,
System Director

The end of the calendar year is always a good time for reflection. ESPL has had quite the successful year seeing more patronage than ever before. I credit our amazing, dedicated staff for powering through the tough times with a singular focus: How can we best serve our patrons? Through the turmoil of multiple director changes and the continued challenges of facility relocations, ESPL staff never once complained or lost focus that our patrons come first and we're here to serve them. Thank you to all ESPL employees and volunteers that make this such a wonderful organization; I am honored to be your director.

New Archivist for ESVA Heritage Center

The ESVA Heritage Center is honored to announce that Luke Kelly is joining the team as Archivist in January. Luke is from the Eastern Shore, has degrees from Radford and George Mason Universities, and has been working professionally with the history of the Shore for years, with his most recent position being at the ESVA Historical Society. The search committee was thrilled with the quantity and quality of the candidates that applied for the position, but Luke and his education and experience stood out above the rest. Luke is a great addition to the team, augments the Heritage Center greatly, and I look forward to working with him closely.

The ultimate goal of the Heritage Center is to have three full-time staff in order to best serve the communities of the Shore. In addition to Local History and Reference Manager, Jazmine Collins, Luke's hire get us two-thirds of the way there. Preserving the rich cultural history and heritage of Shore is a gargantuan task, and making this material publicly accessible takes a team with specialized skills. And I am thrilled to report that the team is coming together nicely.

If you're interested in donating materials of cultural or historical import, or are interested in conducting research in the Heritage Center, Jazmine and Luke can be reached at heritage@espl.org or by phone at (759) 709-6639.



Feature Films at Your Local Library

As I mentioned briefly last month, the ESPL has purchased a license through Swank Motion Pictures, Inc. that allows us to show. This license allows ESPL to publicly show any movie that we own from most of the major studios: MGM, Warner Bros., Columbia, Dreamworks, Disney, Sony, and many, many more.

To start, we will be hosting monthly movie nights in the Dennis Custis Lecture Hall. For our grand premier, we will be hosting Family Movie Night while showing *Inside Out 2* on Thursday, January 30 @ 6PM. Disney and Pixar's "Inside Out 2" returns to the mind of newly minted teenager Riley just as headquarters is undergoing a sudden demolition to make room for something entirely unexpected: new Emotions! Joy, Sadness, Anger, Fear and Disgust, who've long been running a successful operation by all accounts, aren't sure how to feel when Anxiety shows up. And it looks like she's not alone.

Also coming soon, we will be allowing library patrons to host and schedule their own movie events. So the next time you want to have a Little Mermaid themed birthday party with the movie and popcorn, why not do it at your local library? For more information, please stop by the Regional Library in Parksley, or we can be reached by email (youthservices@espl.org) or through our contact form: <https://espl.org/contact/>



EASTERN SHORE OF VIRGINIA

Heritage Center

esplheritage.org

Jazmine Collins, Reference Manager & Local History

In the holiday spirit for December, the Heritage Center displayed a number of cookbooks from both the Eastern Shore Room Collection and the archives, which included several church cookbooks including recent acquisitions, Pungoteague Community Church's *Taste and See* and Parksley Baptist Church's *Blessing's Remembered*, donated last year. Each of the cookbooks featured bookmarks highlighting a sweet treat. Two of our most recognizable cookbooks, *Housekeeper's Companion* and the *Parish House Cookbook*, were given special recognition in the display's signage to ensure that the absence of eye-catching covers did not cause these local favorites to be overlooked.

Staff devoted a significant period of December to becoming more familiar with entering individuals in the MilesFiles. The process is arduous, but the database is an invaluable resource and its capabilities in generating family charts and relationship connections deserves further exploration and promotion. Staff will continue to regularly add to the MilesFiles and maintain its standards of accuracy in source material. Heritage Center staff met with a potential donor to view a significant collection of documents, pamphlets, and photographs that center around African American education on the Eastern Shore. The individual is a retired educator from a family of educators hailing from Northampton County—which include an aunt, Mary Nottingham Smith, and an uncle in whose honor the Solomon D. Spady Cultural Arts Museum was recently dedicated in Delray, Florida. An agreement to donate has not been reached at this time, but the Heritage Center has been welcomed to scan the collection and help come up with a plan for preservation while the family decides long term plans for housing.

Dennis Custis gave the second part of his lecture "Henry Wise and Friends" on December 22, picking up with Wise's tenure as the U.S. Ambassador to Brazil and detailing Henry Wise's time as Governor of Virginia, his reaction to John Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry, and his Civil War service and relationships with General Robert E. Lee along with other Virginia statesmen. Upcoming lectures will include Grayson Chesser in February and Ted Corbett in March.

Before the holiday closings, the Director announced that our new archivist, Luke Kelly, will be starting in the new year. Merry tidings indeed!





Graphic Novels : Perennially Popular and Ever Expanding

Now that the Main branch of the ESPL has been operating in the new facility in Parksley for over a year, Technical Services staff are evaluating the current layout of the materials collection in relation to patron interests and circulation activity. One subcollection that continues to be extremely popular with readers of all ages is Graphic Novels.

Graphic novels are similar to comic books in that they use sequential art and text to tell a story. Graphic novels can be fiction, non-fiction, history, fantasy, or anything in-between, and offer a rich reading experience. Research has shown that graphic novels enhance reading comprehension and vocabulary, serve as a bridge for reluctant readers, increase critical thinking skills, and can be particularly effective for English as a Second Language (ESL) learners.

For the past several years, ESPL librarians have recognized both the benefits of reading graphic novels and the ever increasing patron interest in this format. When selecting materials for the library, special attention has been given to increase the selection of highly reviewed and popular items for readers to choose from.

In 2024, the teen and adult graphic novel collection saw a Turnover Rate (number of circulations divided by size of the collection) of 1.35, while the children's graphic novel collection had a turnover rate of 2.35. In comparison, the adult fiction collection's turnover rate is .93.

ESPL Librarians also evaluate Relative Use for each subcollection to help determine how to best allocate financial resources. The goal is to have a 1:1 ratio between a subcollection's circulation and it's size when compared to the entire collection. Teen and adult graphic novels have a 3:2 ratio, while the children's graphic novel collection has a 3:1 ratio. Clearly, circulation statistics support continued growth of the library's graphic novel collections for all ages.

In order to accommodate the expanding selections of graphic novels, Technical Services and Circulation staff have been hard at work to create shelving space for these collections. New shelving has been purchased and located under the windows at the front of the library to house board books and early readers for some of the library's youngest patrons. This move freed up space to expand the children's graphic novels.

Staff have also embarked on a project to move the Young Adult graphic novels into the Teen Room and out of the general graphic novel collection. This new location should help boost the circulation of these items even more, as they will be more easily discovered by teens browsing the Young Adult fiction and manga collections, or just hanging out in the Teen Room.





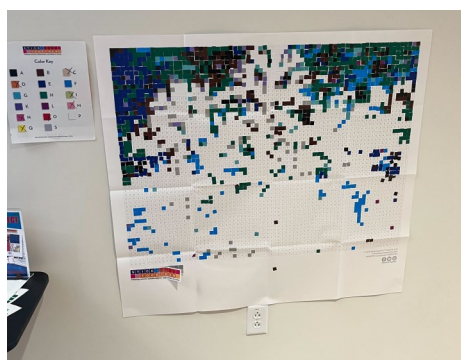
Programs & Outreach Report

Tiffany Flores, Programs and Outreach Librarian

December began with a wonderful visit from Santa and Mrs. Claus. During their visit, they listened to the children's Christmas wishes and gave them a book and a candy cane. 57 children attended with an estimated 30 parents. Additionally, Children's storytimes had a total of 23 attendees across 3 story programs. Chincoteague Bay Field Station's story time had good attendance, as well. Chincoteague Bay Field Station has decided to schedule future storytimes on Wednesday mornings. Despite the winter lull, teen programming has remained consistent. Teen Gaming and additional Tuesday teen programs had 11 attendees while Teen Creative Writing had regular participation. During this month's Author talk, Dr. Fournier presented his new book. He engaged his attendees in discussion about the medical world. Finally, Dennis Custis presented part 2 of the Henry Wise and Friends lecture which had 21 attendees.



Additionally, passive programming has been successful. This month the library put out a Stick Together sticker poster. This poster is, essentially, a paint-by-number but with stickers. Patrons can place stickers on a grid and slowly reveal an image. So far, patrons have completed a third of the poster which will remain up until completed. Additionally, puzzles have been very popular this month. Both the teens and adults finished their respective Holiday-themed puzzles and Tiffany has put out new ones. Puzzles have been so popular that the library is planning to do a puzzle competition in the Spring.



This month a pre-k class from Accomack Elementary School visited to listen to a story and created ornaments based on Mo Williams's books. Maria Burns led the storytime and craft. 20 students visited the library and were able to participate in a program. The hope is that these kids will go home and encourage their parents to bring them back. In

addition to this one's success, another pre-k group will be visiting the library in January for storytime and play. The feedback has been teachers want these children to know what the library has to offer beyond reading materials. Tiffany hopes that these field trips help families understand that the library is about coming together and having fun.





Northampton Free Library

Connor Buyn, Branch Manager

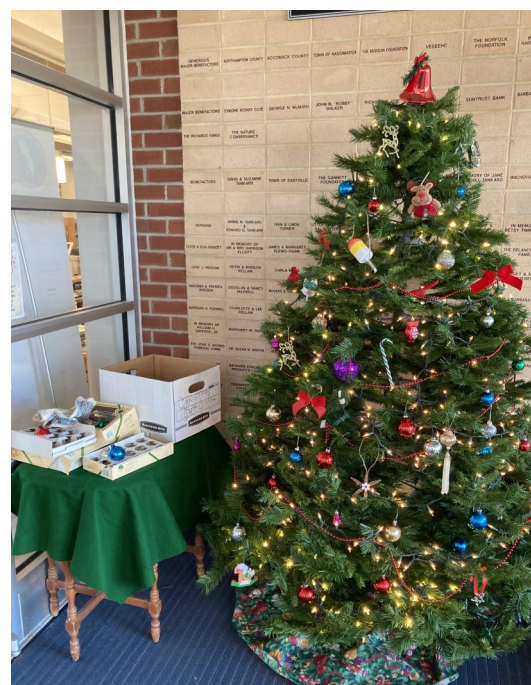


December saw Northampton Free Library offer a variety of holiday-themed displays, decorations, and public programs. The library hosted a children's story time on December 5th and a LEGO building competition for kids on December 12th. Contestants showed off their winter-wonderland themed builds and vied for wintry LEGO sets to take home as prizes. On December 19th, the library hosted an adult arts and crafts activity centered on handmade Christmas tree ornaments. Participants learned how to make miniature crab-pot buoys and rustic clothespin stars to decorate their trees at home. Anyone who attended was also entered into a raffle for a free gift basket. Our popular Tech Help Tuesdays program also continued throughout the month. Finally, library patrons were invited to participate in some seasonal cheer by helping us decorate our Christmas tree provided by the Friends of Northampton Free Library.



In January, Northampton Free Library will host a series of dark-sky and winter-themed public programs. On Thursday, January 9th, the library will host a special evening story-time for kids starting at 4:30 PM. Snacks will be provided. Adult patrons are invited to join us to learn how to make DIY snowflake earrings on the following Thursday, January 16th for an arts and crafts program to start at 6:00 PM. This program is free, but sign up in advance is required. Keep an eye on the Northampton Free Library Facebook page for more information or ask at the front desk. Finally, January's STEM program for kids will take place on Thursday, January 23rd starting at 6:00 PM. Weather permitting, attendees will meet up at the library and then move to the field out back to do some stargazing with a real telescope! Tech Help Tuesdays will also continue to be offered all day long on every Tuesday throughout the month of January.

Northampton Free Library will be closed on Monday, January 20th in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day.





Cape Charles Memorial Library

Sharon Silvey, Library Manager



The month of December was full of festive fun! Cape Charles Memorial Library staff spent time decorating our building for the holiday season, creating a warm and cozy environment. We transformed our Thankful Tree into a Winter Wishes Tree, inviting patrons to write their wishes on a snowflake and hang them on the tree.

Cape Charles Memorial Library participated in Festive Friday events on December 6 and December 13 and had close to 300 people come through our building each of these evenings. Leading up to the events, CCML staff designed several crafts for young participants to create. We had a "Letters to Santa" station, complete with stationery, envelopes, and a special North Pole gold seal. A children's outreach specialist with PBS (WHRO - Norfolk) attended one evening, distributing free activities to the children. Live music by Alex Palmer was provided on the other evening. Many thanks to our Library Board and students from Northampton High School for volunteering their time.



Cape Charles Memorial Library
Festive Friday



Cape Charles Memorial Library
Festive Friday

Additional programs this month included a weekly Story Time, Dungeons & Dragons, and STEM Club. Beginning in January, we hope to add a Crochet & Knit club to our list of monthly programs. The Crochet & Knit club will be for all skill levels and activities will be provided for children who attend with their caregivers.



Cape Charles Memorial Library
Maureen (staff) Richard (Board)
Sharon (manager) Olivia (staff)



Chincoteague Island Library

Linda Ryan, for the Board of Directors



In December, our little library played a major role in Island festivities. First, the Annual Tree Lighting and Visit from Santa Claus took place in the park adjacent to the library. The Downtown Merchants provided hot chocolate for all in attendance, the master of ceremonies performed his duties on the library porch, and the deejay set-up his equipment next to the library porch. After Santa threw the switch to light the tree, he came into the library to visit with the children.



Next, the reviewing stand for the Chincoteague Chamber of Commerce's Annual Christmas Parade was held on the front porch of the library. The judges then went into the library to make their choices for the awards for the floats, bands, and fire companies.



Our holiday displays, both inside and outside the library reflect our commitment to partnering with our Island community and its organizations.

Adult Programs: The Chincoteague Writers' Group held a very successful first meeting and will meet twice monthly. This program is open to writers of all skill levels and genres.

Eastern Shore Community College representative, Liz Walraven, was on hand at the library to provide information, answer questions, and assist with registration.





Chincoteague Island Library

Linda Ryan, for the Board of Directors



Adult Programs (continued): Our Thursday book club held its annual planning meeting to choose the topics for the upcoming year. Following the planning session, all the participants enjoyed a holiday lunch at Bill's Seafood Restaurant. The Tuesday evening book club hosted an author presentation with Brooks Yeager discussing the books Chilly Winds and Jaguars' Claw.

Tales 4 Tots Storytime: Volunteer Beverly Gorsuch read two Micky Mouse Christmas stories in our first December Tales 4 Tots Storytime. Following the songs and stories, the children made Mickey or Minnie Mouse hand puppets.



On December 12, we held a holiday sing-a-long in addition to our stories and crafts. Members of the praise team from Christ United Methodist Church led the children in songs. Volunteer Aaron Reams read two Christmas stories, the children then made gingerbread ornaments, and received a special gingerbread cookie as their treat. Tales 4 Tots will resume after the holidays on Thursday, January 9 with a pajama party.



We are looking forward to a productive 2025 with many new programs being planned. Happy New Year from all of us at the Chincoteague Island Library!