



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

April 2026

Director's Update



Christopher Pote,
System Director

I talk often about the amazing staff we have in the library system, and we've been lucky to have very little turnover in the two years I've been director. But in April I was saddened by the departure of Chincoteague Island Library (CIL) Manager Teresa Wright. While Teresa was manager, CIL was able to increase the number of hours it is open to the public and to hire a second staff member for the first time in CIL's history. ESPL is proud to have CIL as an affiliate library, and the entire system wishes Teresa the best in her next chapter. Thank you for everything you've done for ESPL and serving CIL so faithfully.



Upcoming May Highlights Eastern Shore Public Library System

- **5/7: Visible Mending for Beginners 6pm- ESRL**
- **5/12: Teen Game Night and Craft 5pm - ESRL**
- **5/14: Teen Creative Writing 5:30pm - ESRL**
- **5/15: Adult Crafternoon: Beaded Earrings 12pm - ESRL**
- **5/16: Spring 2026 Garden Introduction 10:30am - NFL**
- **5/21: Adult Spring Tea Blending and Craft 6pm - ESRL**
- **5/22: Makerspace Class: Sewing Machine 12pm - ESRL**
- **5/28: Family Movie Night 6pm - ESRL**
- **Tech Help: Every Wednesday - NFL**
- **Ancestry Help: Every Wednesday - ESRL**
- **Heritage Center Reference Assistance: Every Thursday - NFL**
- **Storytime Anytime: Every Monday & Wednesday - NFL**

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

CIL = Chincoteague Island Library
CCML = Cape Charles Memorial Library
ESRL = ESVA Regional Library & Heritage Center
NFL = Northampton Free Library



EASTERN SHORE OF VIRGINIA

Heritage Center

esplheritage.org

Jazmine Collins, Reference Manager & Local History

Forty banker's boxes and several hundred folders later, Kirk Mariner's collection of roughly 2,700 magazines has been processed and cataloged into Proficio. The result is sixty-four catalog records which cover the collection and are arranged primarily by title. The next section of the Mariner Collection to be cataloged is the Non-Book series. This includes twenty-four boxes of photographs and research Mariner compiled while writing books such as *Off 13*, *Slave & Free*, and *Revival's Children*.

The Heritage Center recently received a draft version of the public access portal for Proficio. Very soon patrons will be able to browse the material that has been cataloged in the past few months. That will be in addition to the Frances Bibbins Latimer Collection that was already cataloged and will be back online through the new public access portal. The work that has been done on Mariner's and Latimer's collections is just the beginning. Staff will continue to catalog the Heritage Center's holdings so that they will be accessible for researchers.

The Eastern Shore Black History Trivia Tournament was held on April 11. Although several teams withdrew, the Heritage Center proceeded with the event to recognize students who had committed time to studying the material. Team Culture Keepers from Northampton demonstrated strong preparation, having met after school to study Francis Bibbins Latimer's book *Landmarks*. The team performed exceptionally well during the competition. The event drew an engaged audience, including students' parents and the Superintendent of Northampton County Schools, Mrs. Martin.



Heritage Center staff have been preparing for a gallery wall installation on religious freedom and Eastern Shore churches. This will be installed in May once the Virginia Folklife's Food, Culture, and Climate exhibit is removed. The Heritage Center is also preparing for outreach season and summer programs. Andy Nunez will bring in items from his "Treasures of the Eastern Shore" book series to be featured on display from May to August, when he will be doing a lecture/author talk. Tyrone Goodwin is scheduled for a lecture in June on Black Revolutionary Soldiers and Donna Rilling, Associate Professor of History at the State University of New York, Stony Brook, will lecture in June on George Black of Horntown, who moved to Philadelphia and helped establish the second African Baptist congregation.



Technical Services

Charle Ricci, Collection Management and Acquisitions Librarian



Rightsizing the Materials Collection

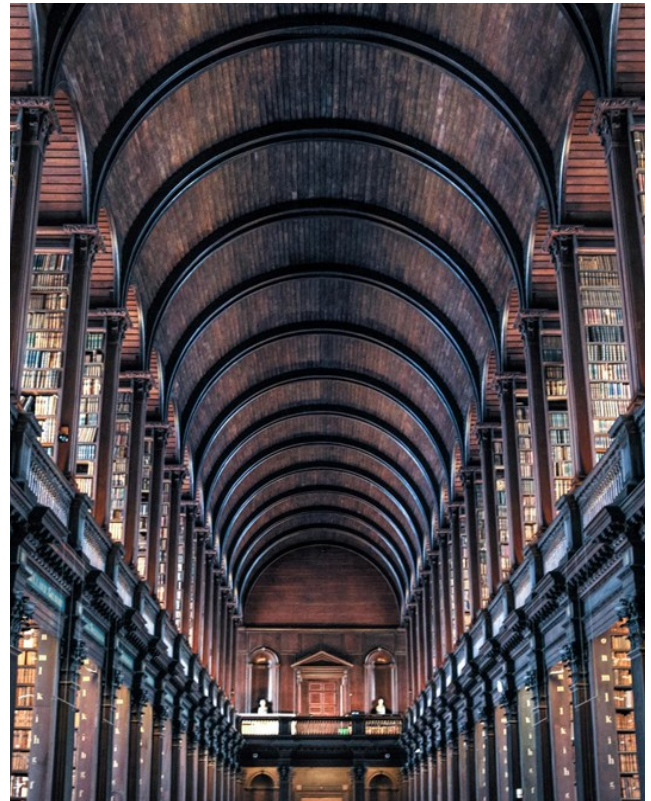
As people who love books and reading, library staff would wholeheartedly welcome a way to continuously expand the available shelving at our libraries. New items are constantly being cataloged and added to the existing collections, and with a finite amount of space in our facilities, the shelves can become crowded. Overly full shelves can make it more difficult to browse the collection and to find a particular item.

In addition to the drawbacks of crowded shelves, library collections that are not reviewed regularly for relevance, accuracy, and condition can include items that are of little interest to the community, are incorrect (I'm looking at you, Pluto), or are in poor shape. To address all of these factors, ESPL librarians carry out ongoing and methodical reviews of the material collections.

Utilizing best practices of the library science field, knowledge of the local community's information needs, and circulation data, each area of the collection is evaluated to identify outdated, damaged, unused, and irrelevant items. Volunteers from the Friends of the Eastern Shore Public Library and retired librarians are vitally important to this process. Assisting with the identification of items needing to be withdrawn, as well as with removing these items from the library catalog database, these volunteers amplify the effectiveness of staff time.

Special consideration is given to subjects that need to be augmented with new items to replace those that are damaged or outdated, but still of interest to library patrons. It truly is a balancing act of removing approximately the same number of items as are added, while maintaining quality core content. The ongoing evaluation of the collection results in a stronger, more heavily utilized selection of materials that is tailored to the information needs and interests of the local community. Shelves are not as crowded as they once were, making browsing and finding materials easier.

The materials collection will never remain fixed in quantity or content. The rightsizing progress resulting from this work will continue in order to maintain a library collection that fits the space it is housed in. Items will become worn or outdated and be withdrawn, while new, more relevant materials will be added. By continuing to utilize circulation data and patron interests, ESPL librarians will shape a collection that perpetually evolves to reflect the Eastern Shore community.





Programs & Outreach Report

Tiffany Flores, Programs and Outreach Librarian



This month the Khouris visited the Regional Library to present on their books: *Veiled Horizons: An American Woman's Trek into the Heart of Arabia* by Mary Khouri, and *The Young Terrorist: Journey from Arab Militant to Proud American* by Nabil Khouri. Attendees were able to listen to their experiences and see artifacts. Nabil also played the drums while Mary danced. Their Author Talks have been so successful at both the Regional Library and Chincoteague Island Library that both authors wish to visit the other libraries. Tiffany was happy to oblige and put them in contact with the other branches.

Due to popular demand, Alex Flores led two more classes for the 3D Printer, each with a total of eight participants. Many of the participants attend these classes because they own a 3D printer and want to learn more or they are interested in technology. Regardless, they leave happy and educated on the equipment. As a part of meeting the need for technological literacy on the shore, Tiffany collaborated with Catie Wilkinson, Digital Security Trainer, to try 'Lunch and Learn' Cybersecurity classes. The first class offered information on Signal, an encrypted messaging app. Catie also presented Password Managers at NFL on April 30th. April also celebrates National Library Week. As part of the celebration, Tiffany planned a passive activity for each day of the week. This included free books, crafts, sweet treats, and story time featuring "I'm So Happy You're Here" by Mychal Threets.



In addition to National Library Week, we also celebrated Earth Day by attending the Earth Day Event at Exmore Town Park on April 25th. Tiffany Flores attended with a van full of books, giveaways, foam dinosaur bones, and snails. Despite the cold and wind, many kids came over to the library's table, built dinosaurs, played with toys, and asked lots of questions about snails. Even the parents got involved in the curiosity and wanted to know about the creatures. All 75 visitors left with books, giveaways, and information about the library.

During the past year, the library has put sticker posters that work very similar to painting by number activities. These posters have been a huge hit for patrons over the past couple months. In fact, Tiffany has had to increase how often she changes posters because patrons are finishing the posters in 2-3 weeks if not sooner. The joy of programming is that, sometimes, the most effective program is simply inviting play and interaction in the building. Doing sticker posters, puzzles, and board games, and toys are an easy way to invite people into the space without any obligations.



Gerry the snail helps with outreach.



Northampton Free Library

Connor Buyn, Branch Manager



April was Northampton Free Library's busiest month of public programs to date, with two adult crafts, two kids crafts, a garden tour, and a cybersecurity lecture. We started off with a spring-time bonnet craft for grownups on the 2nd. The following week, we hosted our first kids craft of the month, with attendees making easter bunnies out of paper plates, cotton balls, and pipe cleaners. On the 16th adult patrons were invited back again to make spring-themed hair clips. Our final craft activity of the month – a paper flower bouquet coloring activity—was hosted on April 23rd.

Northampton Free Library also hosted two special programs in April. On Saturday April 18th the Eastern Shore Master Gardeners were here again to answer questions about our pollinator garden and give out free wildflower seedlings and seed packets. In a first for the library, we also hosted Catie Wilkinson to teach a class on password managers and other basic cybersecurity questions on Thursday, April 30th. Tech Help was also offered on every Wednesday.

In other news, our hot pink azalea bushes were in full bloom this month and many patrons were able to enjoy them on their way into the building.



Northampton Free Library will continue to offer tech help on demand on every Wednesday during the month of May. We will host two kids craft nights on the 7th at 4:30 PM and on the 21st at 6:00 PM. For the first we'll be making paper plate flower pouches and for the second we'll paint festive paper plate rainbows. Both programs are free and no signup is required. There will be snacks provided at both. Adult patrons are invited to join us for a tea blending and craft night on Thursday, May 14th at 6:00 PM. Come sample springtime herbal tea flavors and learn how to craft your own teapot drip protector! This program is free, but signup is required. Keep an eye on our Facebook page or ask at the front desk for more information.

On Saturday, May 18th the Master Gardeners will be back again for their final garden tour session of the spring. Stop by between 10:30 and 11:30 for questions and answers, to learn more about the plants in our garden as they start to bloom, and maybe to take home some seedlings of your own!

Northampton Free Library will be closed in observance of Memorial Day on Monday, May 25th



Cape Charles Memorial Library

Sharon Silvey, Library Manager



April is National Poetry Month, and we've set up a book display featuring a variety of poetry books to check out! We included a few interactive pieces to our display, including a worksheet with a prompt to get everyone waxing poetic and a free "poem for your pocket" at the circulation desk. The upcoming *Poetry after Hours* is scheduled for Wednesday, April 29th.



This month, we had guest readers from the Eastern Shore Literacy Council join us for Little Sprouts story time. They will continue visiting Cape Charles Memorial Library

on the third Tuesday of each month.

Don't forget! Our Seed Library offers families up to four free seed packets each month, featuring native and non-GMO flowers, fruits, herbs, and vegetables. The Eastern Shore Master Gardeners will be available to answer gardening questions every fourth Thursday of the month from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.



Cape Charles Memorial Library has been chosen to participate in the Play for Resilience™ campaign for Mental Health Awareness Month in May, partnering with MESH Helps. This national initiative, in partnership with the American Library Association and various toy industry partners, aims to support children's mental, emotional, and social health through play.



Also, mark your calendars! New Saturday hours for Cape Charles Memorial Library will start on Saturday, May 2, 2026, from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.



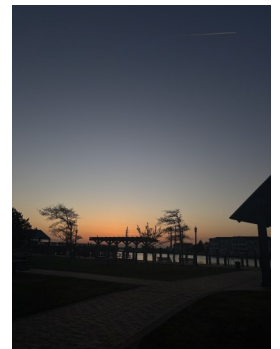
Chincoteague Island Library

Jodi Novak, Chincoteague Island Library

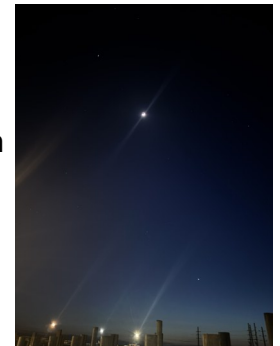


In the month of April we had a lot going on! From our Writers Workshop, to school outreach events, to our Earth Day celebration in the park, our library was right at the center of it all.

Every Thursday at 10AM we have Tales 4 Tots. It's a great time where kids have a safe place to explore books, learn, make friends, and enjoy fun, age-appropriate crafts. One of our favorite moments this month was our Earth Day craft, where the kids got to get hands-on and a little messy making dirt pudding—a fun, yummy, and still educational activity that everyone enjoyed!



We had the opportunity to enjoy the Lyrid Meteor Shower at the library, where Solar System Representative Daniel McGill guided us through the experience. He explained how meteor showers occur and shared fascinating insights about them. We also had the chance to observe Venus and the Moon in its waxing crescent phase, making the evening both educational and memorable.



We host two needle art programs where people can come in, sit, and chat while sharing their love of crochet, knitting, quilting, and so much more. Our participants always look forward to these nights, enjoying the time together and sharing their own takes and creativity on their needle crafts.



We had an Earth Day Festival that we participated in where we shared information about what the Library offers as well as Making Seed Bombs where participants got to learn about the importance of pollinators and recycling.

