



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

June 2026

Director's Update



Christopher Pote,
System Director

SummerFest, ESPL's Summer Reading kick-off event, was a tremendous success. Held at the Regional Library & Heritage Center in Parksley for the first time, we were able to provide more fun and games for the kiddos, while also providing air conditioning for the community partners, parents, and staff. Being able to get out of the heat allowed families to stay longer and enjoy all we had to offer. Making reading fun and enjoyable opens up kids imaginations and gives them a tool for lifelong discovery. We look forward to hosting an even bigger and better event next year! Thank you to all ESPL staff and volunteers that helped make it so successful!!



Upcoming July Highlights Eastern Shore Public Library System

- **8th: Creature Feature, Waldo the Crested Gecko 12pm - ESRL**
- **9th: ESCADV Lecture, Practical Tools for Supporting Survivors of Sexual and Domestic Violence 6PM - ESRL**
- **11th: Speed Puzzling Workshop and Puzzle Social 9am-12pm - ESRL**
- **21st: Heritage Center Lecture, Eastern Shore Maritime Influences 5:30pm - ESRL**
- **23rd: Kids' Dinosaur Dance Party 5pm - ESRL**
- **29th: 3rd Annual Kids' Super Smash Bros Tournament 4pm-6pm - ESRL**
- **30th: Family Movie Night, *The Good Dinosaur* 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

The Heritage Center's newest exhibit, "The Eastern Shore's Religious Freedom," is now on display. The exhibit explores the history of religion on the Shore beginning with the Anglican church in the 1600s to the founding of independent Black Baptist and African Methodist Episcopal churches after the Civil War. In between those dates it shows how groups like the Quakers and Presbyterians operated under the watch of the Anglican church and how Baptist and Methodist congregations popped up because of the Revolutionary War. Photographs of historic figures and churches are featured in the exhibit ranging from Lower Northampton Baptist near Cape Charles to Downing's United Methodist Church in Oak Hall. A timeline of major local, state, and national political and religious events rounds out the exhibit.

In June the Heritage Center received a donation from Dr. Brooks Miles Barnes, former librarian at ESPL and the namesake of the Heritage Center's Archives Room. Much of our collection was acquired by Dr. Barnes over his forty-plus year career, but this is the first donation of his personal research material. This material includes research from Dr. Barnes' dissertation on Southern politics in the late 19th century. The Eastern Shore of Virginia material covers politics from that time period as well as topics like Life-Saving Service, the barrier islands, Peter Jacob Carter, the Onancock Race Riot, local court orders, and more.

The Heritage Center hosted a talk called Patriots of Color from the Eastern Shore of Virginia, presented by Tyrone Goodwyn, Luke Alexander, and Kevin Graham on Saturday, June 20th. Starting with families in North Carolina that left the Eastern Shore, the 3 were able to locate at least 29 patriots of color either living on the Eastern Shore or from Eastern Shore families. During the presentation, Goodwyn shared a likeness of Arlington Jacobs, an ancestor enslaved by the Custis family that documents show lived at Arlington in Northampton, in Williamsburg, and at Mount Vernon. The image was generated by AI software using 12 different photographs of living descendants.

For Civic Season and the country's 250th Anniversary, the Heritage Center is encouraging library patrons to share their wishes for our country's future on our wish wall. The Heritage Center is also participating in the Virginia250's share your story audio submission using the library's talkbox. Patrons can enter the booth and record a short audio to share a story, memory, or reflection about history, freedom, community, and what independence means to them. Prompts are provided and audio submissions are recorded directly in the web-based software.



Next month, on July 21st at 5:30, the Heritage Center will host Laura Smith, who will lecture on Eastern Shore (MD) Maritime History, focusing on Oxford, MD, Robert Morris, Jr., a founding father, and Oxford's connection to the Eastern Shore of Virginia.



Technical Services

Charle Ricci, Collection Management and Acquisitions Librarian



Behind the Scenes with the Technical Services Department

New books and audiobooks arrive each week at the library and are processed, cataloged, and placed on shelves at all four ESPL locations. It may seem somewhat magical when carts of brand new items are rolled out from the workroom at the Regional Library, or delivered via the library courier to the branch and affiliate locations, but the new items are a result of a dedicated team of staff working behind the scenes to ensure that ESPL patrons have access to newly released and requested materials.

The staff members who select, order, process, and catalog all of the new (or new to ESPL) materials make up the Technical Services department. While the name of the department may sound as though the focus would be on computers and technology support, instead, the department's core work centers on library materials at every stage - from beginning, with acquisitions, to the end, at deselection.



The Technical Services workflow begins with the acquisitions librarian who evaluates professional journals and reviews of items that will be released in the near future. Utilizing knowledge of ESPL circulation patterns, as well as the local popularity of particular authors and subjects, the librarian selects and orders materials that will supplement the existing collection and best meet the interests and informational needs of Shore readers.

Once the orders arrive, the boxes are unpacked and call numbers are assigned to each item. These call numbers provide direction as to which subcollection and library the item will belong to, as well as the exact place on the shelf where the item will be placed. The items then travel to the processing desk where a staff member or volunteer adds a protective book jacket cover, a barcode, and library ownership stamps.

Next, the processed items are ready for cataloging, where, for each item, a bibliographic record is downloaded from a worldwide database, edited for clarity and accuracy, and uploaded to the ESPL's catalog software, ShoreCat. At that point, the new materials become visible in the catalog, and can be reserved or checked out by library patrons. This is also the time when the new items are distributed to each Shore library and placed on the shelves.

While all booklovers wish for shelves with unlimited space, continually adding new items to the library results in the need to remove outdated, irrelevant, and damaged materials from the collection. This process is carefully carried out with local circulation data, as well as guidance from well-regarded reference volumes. Deselected items are withdrawn from the catalog and then passed along to the Friends of the ESPL for sale, or given to local nonprofit organizations.

From start to finish, the library's collections are carefully curated by Technical Services staff, with the objective of making materials available and accessible to readers across the Eastern Shore.



Programs & Outreach Report

Tiffany Flores, Programs and Outreach Librarian



On June 13th, The Regional Library hosted their annual Summer-Fest event. From 10AM to 2PM, patrons visited the library to sign up for the Summer Reading Program, play games, participate in activities, and eat food. This was astoundingly successful with well over the roughly 300 person average of previous events. Because of the location, many families stayed for the entire day and participated in both indoor and outdoor activities. They also utilized the li-

brary, checked out books, read, and signed up for library cards. The most popular activities included: the bounce house, face painting, Mike Klee's magic show, and the bracelet making station. In addition to patron success, vendors were pleased with their participation and location. By having it at the Regional Library, people were able to be inside in the AC on a hot summer day. This meant people were more comfortable and able to access building amenities such as restrooms. Overall, it was a huge success and will continue to be hosted in the library.



In addition to Summerfest, Summer Programming has ramped up. The Community Service Board is back with the Hive! This has been immediately well attended. The first session was well attended, and by week 2 attendance almost doubled. Each kid has enjoyed a story and an activity. Makerspace classes have been well attended, and many patrons are interested in additional

courses and demonstrations. Because orientation classes focus on machine safety, there is a lack of education on project completion. To resolve this, Tiffany is hoping to start live demos in the Fall. For example, the



sewing students would like to know how to mend clothes, hem pants, and make simple projects.

Another project that has been going on in the background is recruiting volunteers for Story Time. Since 2024, Story Time has been led by a small and mighty group of volunteers. Over the past few months, there has been a need to recruit more volunteers. Fortunately, The Accomack



County Women's Club and the Literacy Council were able to help! The Literacy Council will be doing Story Time every second Saturday and utilize their Dolly Parton Imagination Library books to advertise their program. The Women's Club has been able to recruit enough readers to double the current reading pool. Due to both of these organizations, readers will be easier to find and the workload on each volunteer will be lighter. Thank you so much to both orgs!



Northampton Free Library

Connor Buyn, Branch Manager



Northampton Free Library had a busy first month of summer this June, with staff helping with the Summerfest celebrations up in Parksley and a calendar full of programs. The library kicked off the month with a paper plate dinosaur craft for kids on June 4th. Our most popular program in June was the geode cracking STEM activity on June 18th. Kids were able to smash open real geodes to find the crystals hidden inside. Northampton Free Library was also able to offer two adult craft nights in June—one on June 11th and another on June 25th. Attendees painted their own tote bag for the first activity, and learned how to

make festive paper bead earrings for the second. Tech help also continued to be offered on demand throughout the month of June.

Northampton Free Library will be closed on Friday, July 3rd and Saturday, July 4th in observance of the Independence Day. After that, we will host several programs over the remainder of the month. Our first program will be a kids' art night on Thursday, July 9th starting at 4:30 PM. This time, we'll be continuing the summer reading theme by making paper dinosaur hats. Our second kids program will be held two weeks later on Thursday, July 23rd and will start at 6:00 PM. For this second activity, we'll be making sand art dinosaur necklaces. Both kids' programs are free and sign up is not required. There will be snacks! Our adult craft night for June will take place on Thursday, July 16th starting at 6:00 PM and will feature make-your-own beach hats for summertime relaxation. This program is free, but signup will be required. Please watch our Facebook page or ask at the front desk for more information.



Patrons who have technology-related questions are encouraged to keep visiting us for our Tech Help Wednesdays, offered on demand all day long on Wednesdays during the month of July.



Cape Charles Memorial Library

Sharon Silvey, Library Manager



June was full of Library Joy at Cape Charles Memorial Library!



We celebrated Pride Month and Juneteenth with book displays and educational posters. Keith Haring coloring sheets and rainbow pencils as well as Juneteenth flags



Big Sprouts measured the size of dinosaurs using Legos

Eastern Shore Literacy Council visit CCML the 3rd Tuesday of each month as special guest readers at our Little Sprouts storytime. Come by for stories and crafts and information on Dolly Parton's Imagination Library.



Ryan the Balloon Guy— RAWHR!



Summer 2026 Reading Program kicked off on June 18th. Thank you to ES Literacy Council and Baycreek Nature Education for participating!



Virginia Living Museum presented Hungry Critters program with Bean the Turtle and Chomper the Sala-





Chincoteague Island Library

Jodi Novak, Chincoteague Island Library



In the month of June we had a lot going on! From a Elementary School Outreach, to Needle Crafting clubs, to music in the park, and much more.

Friday June 5th, Jodi Novak and Board Member Diane Fisher went to the elementary school to tell the students about our wonderful summer reading program, and shared the information as well as sent home flyers to over 300 students. We already have a number of students moving their pieces and collecting their Prizes!



Thursday June 11th at 10 AM Chincoteague Combined School Band Came out to play music to the kids at Robert Reed Park. It was a wonderful Afternoon filled with great music, and better company. With lots of smiles and laughs.



June 13th in Robert Reed Park we had a Kick off to Summer Reading Party. We had about 50 Members of our community come out to join the fun and at the end of the day we have had 38 kids sign up to participate.



On June 25th, we welcomed a local author who recently published a children's book. The kids loved listening to the story during a special Storytime and had a blast making a themed craft afterward.

