

2018-19 Annual Report



A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Library Supporters,

Ninety years ago in 1929, our county's first library, run by the Woman's Club of Essex County, opened in the former jail located on the County Courthouse green. Since those early days in the 575-square-foot Woman's Club building, the public library has grown from just 500 books to a modern collection of 30,000 print books, 5,000 audiobooks and DVDs, and 24,000 downloadable e-books.

Today, along with our impressive materials collection, we offer technology access, special events for all ages, free community meeting space, and online tools and resources. Our friendly and knowledgeable staff members are trained to guide library users through all stages of lifelong learning. Essex Public Library is truly a hub for learning, culture, and community.

While many things have changed since 1929, our community is as supportive as ever. This support has helped make our success possible. That's why sharing our accomplishments with you each year through our annual report is such an exciting opportunity.

During the last year, we focused on enhancing the public spaces within our building. We strategically updated our furnishings to welcome the community and make our library resources easy to use. When you visit the library today, you'll find new furniture in the teen area, computer area, and children's space.

This work will continue during the next year as we update adult reading areas and create a new "maker space" aimed at ages 8-12.

Just as it has over the last ninety years, Essex Public Library continues to grow and change as we adapt to meet the needs of the community and provide access to vital information and resources. This growth would not be possible without the hard work and dedication of our staff, the library board of trustees, the Friends of the Library, and our elected officials. Thank you for the support you've provided over the years and for your continued support now.

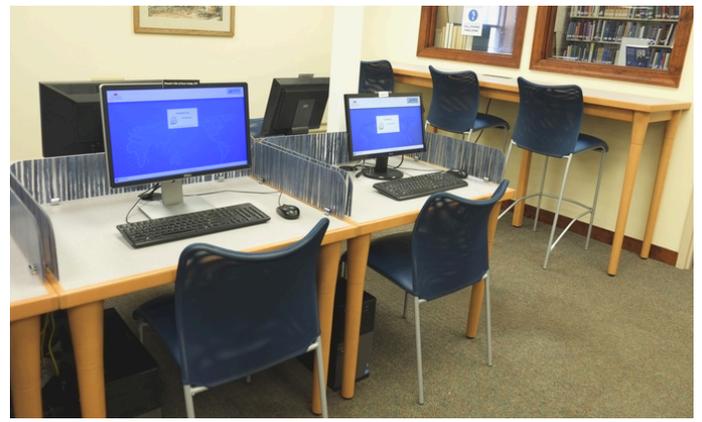
You'll learn more about the dynamic and important work we do in the pages ahead. I'm sure you'll agree after reading this report, there are lots of things to celebrate at this little public library! I look forward to continued growth and success in the year ahead as we expand learning opportunities for our residents and work toward a stronger and more connected community.

What might the next ninety years bring? Only time will tell! But you can rest assured that your public library will still be here, connecting people to ideas and information and improving lives in our community.



DANA SMOOK

Director, Essex Public Library



ANNUAL HIGHLIGHTS

- **Furnishings in the teen zone, public computer area, and children's space were updated** to meet the needs of modern library users. The children's area furniture update was made possible by a donation from the Tappahannock Rotary Club in memory of C. Norman Wood.
- We **increased book display space** throughout the library to showcase more materials and encourage checkouts.
- To celebrate our new library card design, we launched a **"Show Your Card" campaign** for Library Card Signup Month. During the month of September, library card holders were encouraged to present their card at local businesses in order to get access to special deals. Throughout the year, we added almost 400 new library card holders.
- The Library was awarded a grant for \$11,965 by the Rappahannock Electric Cooperative Charity's Power of Change program to purchase computer reservation software and a **self-service print release terminal** with a state-of-the-art scanner for the public computer area.
- **Participation in youth summer reading programs increased by over 200%** over the previous year.
- With a grant from the AARP Foundation, the Library **added a new digital signage screen** behind the service desk to advertise events and resources.
- **Visits to the Library increased by over 30%** compared with the previous year.

IMPACTS BY THE NUMBERS



43,610
visits to
the library



34,078
item
checkouts



15,232
Wi-Fi
connections



95 events
with
1,705
attendees



1,353
meeting
room users

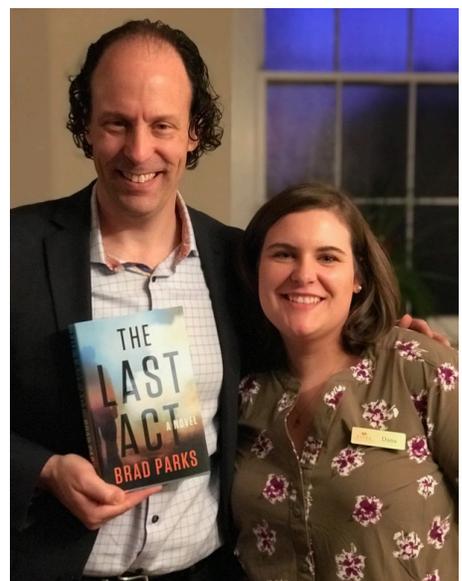


8,288
public
computer uses

PROMOTING THE JOY OF READING

Our book-centered events bring the community together, inspiring imaginations, expanding horizons, and adding to the local cultural experience.

- The Library offered summer reading challenges for all ages as part of the **Universe of Stories Summer Learning Program**. 156 children, 6 teens, and 59 adults participated in the reading program. 466 attendees came to summer learning events.
- To celebrate Children's Book Week, we hosted a **stuffed animal sleepover** followed by a stuffed animal storytime. Children brought in their favorite stuffed toys to party overnight at the Library.
- The Library held a **Book Club Bash** inviting book club members from across the region to connect with each other, share ideas, and reflect on the value and purpose of book clubs and book discussions.
- The Friends of the Library hosted a **book launch pizza party for local author Brad Parks** in celebration of his new novel, *The Last Act*.
- The 2018 **Evening with a Writer** featured Robert Goolrick, who read from his latest novel, *The Dying of the Light*. Evening with a Writer is a signature annual event hosted by the Friends of the Library every fall.
- In May, we launched the **River Readers Book Discussion** event series. These book discussions feature live insights from a book's author. Our inaugural meeting featured a discussion with David Williams, author of *When the English Fall*.
- Books from our new **book club set collection** circulated more than one hundred times. This collection is used by community book clubs as well as for library-sponsored discussions.





COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

- AARP Tax-Aide **volunteers provided tax filing assistance to 240 people** at our location.
- Our second annual **community seed and plant exchange**, held during the first week of May, brought plant lovers to the library to share their love of gardening. The Northern Neck Master Gardeners offered extra support through their plant question and answer service.
- Staff provided **marketing and publicity support to Tappahannock Farmers' Market** for the 2019 season.
- The Library **hosted a voter registration drive** in partnership with the Essex County General Registrar's Office. Voters were provided with information about the November 2018 election.
- As part of St. Margaret School's Community Service Day, staff organized a special "**Little Lending Library**" **service project**. Students organized a book drive and built and decorated three containers which will be strategically placed in the community to help get free books into the hands of children.
- Staff participated in **Essex Youth & Family Day** in September by hosting an informational booth and providing two storytime presentations for participating families.
- We are grateful for **generous financial support** this year from the Friends of the Library, the family of Gordon & Olive M. Lewis, and Tappahannock Rotary Club.

HISTORIC FACT:

Essex Public Library moved from the Woman's Club to the current Extension Office building (pictured right) in 1977.

The Library's current building opened in 2000.



SUPPORTING STUDENT SUCCESS

- Our **Preschool Storytime program helps boost early literacy skills and school readiness** for children under five. We had 396 attendees at storytime programs throughout the year.
- Youth Services Specialist Beth Rohne **provided library tours and storytime programs to nearly 600 Tappahannock Elementary School students** at the end of the school year, encouraging students to visit the library and participate in our Summer Learning Program.
- Staff **reorganized the children's book shelving to help parents and kids find the right books for their reading level**. We now have a new shelving space for early reader books and for toddler board books.
- We worked with the Tappahannock Rotary Club and Tappahannock Elementary School to help promote the **Big Croaker Fishing Tournament art contest** for youth.
- We introduced **new STEAM programs** to enhance science and technology learning, including a popular monthly LEGO-Mania event and "Mad Science" workshops.
- As part of our VolunTEEN program, **teen volunteers logged more than 123 hours** assisting with the Summer Learning Program. These hours help students reach their community service goals and learn practical workplace skills.
- Library staff **participated in regular outreach events at Essex County Schools**, including Pre-K storytimes, library book "tastings", and Accelerated Reader celebrations.
- The Library hosted a **special parenting workshop focused on positive discipline** techniques.
- We offer **regular self-directed activities** in our children's space, from crafts to building projects to a puppet stage--all to engage young minds in learning and creativity.



OUR MISSION

We connect people to ideas and information to improve lives and strengthen our community.

OUR VISION

A strong, inclusive community where lifelong learning is celebrated and all citizens have access to ideas, information, and technology.

2018-19 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Julie Strock, *Chair*

Kevin Dolan, *Vice Chair*

Suzanne Derieux, *Treasurer*

Ellen Copeland, *Secretary*

Robert LaFollette

Joanne C. Moore

Isobel Swinson, *Friends*

of the Library President

FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY BOARD

Isobel Swinson, *President*

Cynthia Carter, *Treasurer*

Betty Anne Garrett, *Secretary*

Hannah Tiffany, *Programs Chair*

Bess Haile

Cyanne Yates



ESSEX PUBLIC LIBRARY

117 N. Church Ln. Tappahannock, VA 22560

(804) 443-4945 EPLVA.org