



ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT



2022-23



Young artists at work in our children's area, led by Richmond muralist Hamilton Glass.

YOUR LIBRARY BY THE NUMBERS



29,471
Library Visits



27,796
Item Circulations



1,246
Program Attendance



251
Meeting Room Reservations



7,375
WiFi Sessions



5,357
Public Computer Uses



8,222
Library Card Holders

58,856



Items in Collection

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.

HIGHLIGHTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- We migrated to a **new, user-friendly online library catalog** that offers more browsability. Our new system includes a **mobile app** called **Librista** where patrons can easily search for materials, place holds on items, and manage their library accounts.
- Library **usage was up** over the previous fiscal year but has not yet returned to pre-COVID levels. Visits, materials circulation, computer use, and Wi-Fi use all increased.
- You'll now find **live virtual author talks** on our website made available through a partnership with the Library Speakers Consortium.
- As part of our **1000 Books Before Kindergarten** program, families read 5,266 books during the year.
- Through support from the Virginia Museum of Fine Art's Statewide Programs, we added a colorful **new mural in the children's area**.
- Want to try pickleball? We can help! We added new items to our **Library of Things** including yard games and pickleball paddles.
- We distributed **free COVID-19 tests** to the public through a partnership with the Virginia Department of Health.
- A **blood pressure machine** available for public use was provided by the Three Rivers Health District.
- Available editions of *The Rappahannock Times* from the 1960s have been added to our **online newspaper archive**.
- We offered two seasonal **Storywalks** at Rappahannock River Valley National Wildlife Refuge.



LITTLE LIBRARY BOXES

At Little Library Box locations across the county, we distribute free books to help boost literacy in our community. Last year, two new boxes were installed in the Town of Tappahannock: one next to the Bay Transit bus stop on Airport Road in front of the Essex Mobile Home Park and one at Wakefield Park in the Wakefield neighborhood. The recently added boxes were built and installed by students from the Northern Neck Technical Center and painted by local artist Emily Crews. Books for the Airport Road box were collected by the Order of the Eastern Star Pride of Essex Chapter. Some wonderful community volunteers help maintain and stock the boxes.



SPOTLIGHT ON PROGRAMS & EVENTS

Through programs and events, we engage our community in high-quality learning experiences that connect them to ideas and to each other. Here are a few of our favorites from the year.



- **Kids' Bookfest**, featuring local and regional children's book writers
- **Community Helper's Day**, where kids got up close and personal with a recycling truck, ambulance, REC bucket truck, and more!
- **Welcome to the School Bus**, a special storytime where students new to the bus learn safety tips and get a bus tour
- **Vibing Voices**, a music writing and recording workshop for 6th through 12th graders
- **Annual Seed & Plant Exchange**
- **Riley's Book Club**, where new readers ages 5 - 8 have fun while developing strong reading skills
- **Printmaking Workshop** with a VMFA artist
- **Moon Magic**, a night sky viewing event for families offered in partnership with the Rappahannock River Valley National Wildlife Refuge
- **Family History Day**, a celebration for genealogy researchers featuring experts from The Library of Virginia

GETTING STRATEGIC

Every five years, the Essex Public Library Board of Directors initiates a long-range strategic plan that helps guide the Library's activities. The Library Board approved a new 5-year plan in 2023 with five strategic goals based on the Library's mission, vision, values, feedback from community stakeholders, and trends observed in our community. Our five strategic goals, which will guide programs and services through 2028:

- 1 Access, Innovation & Exceptional Service**
Essex Public Library is a hub for the entire community, offering an environment that is inviting and welcoming for all. We provide convenient access to services, resources, and technology that are relevant, high-quality, and diverse.
- 2 Empowering our Community**
Essex Public Library is focused on offering excellent services that make an impactful difference in the lives of our patrons and in our community.
- 3 Sparking Curiosity**
Essex Public Library sparks curiosity in patrons of all ages by providing experiences that encourage and celebrate lifelong learning. We enrich lives by providing entertainment, access to the arts, and opportunities for creativity.
- 4 Communication & Engagement**
Essex Public Library engages our community through outreach, marketing, and communication to share information about our programs and services, build connections with other local organizations, and highlight the incredible value of our public library.
- 5 Services for Children & Teens**
Essex Public Library fosters the love of reading among children and teens, from early literacy through young adulthood. We help young people develop into lifelong learners by offering services and programs that nurture and build young minds.

LIBRARY LEADERSHIP

Board of Directors

Melissa Ware, Chair
Rev. Cornelius Holmes,
Vice Chair
Chris Bowden, Treasurer
Dana Wells, Secretary
Elizabeth Fowler
Dr. Gene Quarles
Latanya Weeden

Friends of the Library Board

Betty Ann Garrett, Chair
Victor Burrell
Becky Hundley
Vickie LaFollette
Andrea Mitman
Julie Strock

Library Director

Dana Smook

Youth Services Specialist

Beth Rohne

Technical Services Specialist

Melanie Sisson