



HRLS

Director's Report and Highlights

April 2024

Spotlight on Clarke County Library

To celebrate the solar eclipse on April 8th, the staff at Clarke County Library prepared and distributed 30 “*Take Home Activity Kits*” for kids. Each kit included a backpack, solar eclipse learning activity book, eclipse viewing glasses, a bookmark, and a DIY star chart. In addition to the kits, the staff distributed just over 100 pairs of eclipse viewing glasses to adults and families in the community.



April also saw the completion of the *Spring StoryWalk* installation for the Blandy Experimental Farm at the State Arboretum in Boyce. Illustrations of April's book selection, “*Bugs for Lunch*” were prepared and made ready for installation by staff with the help of volunteers. The bilingual display will remain at Blandy's Native Plant Walking Trail throughout the Spring.

To fulfill a project requirement for school, a group of local Clarke County high school students (Jacob Calmet, Claire Quijadas, and Matthew Strickland) prepared and presented a free financial literacy course for young people at the Clarke library. Their “*Money 101*” class came with a slideshow presentation as well as hands-on activities to teach children (ages 5-10 years) about money.



BOOK CLUB



In hopes of encouraging the return of its **Book Club**, Clarke County Library hosted a meet & greet in April as the first potential gathering of a new group. The response was very positive and attendees discussed the latest books they had all read, and talked about how future meetings and book selections would take place.

WINREADY AND THE LIBRARY

With the assistance of Orlando Lopez, Chief Information Officer for the City of Winchester, and Kenneth Johnson, Transit Operations Manager, (pictured in the photo) a new help station for Winchester's "WinReady" public transit service has been created at Handley's Information Services Desk. WinReady is a point-to-point service that will pickup customers and take them where they need to go in the City within 30 minutes. Scheduling does require an app and a bit of the savvy, and the Information Services staff is there to help. Patrons can learn how the system works, and even schedule a pickup at the library using an iPad. The Library's goal is to assist patrons who may not be able to visit the library and/or attend programs due to transportation issues by removing barriers and helping to connect patrons with community resources.



Spring Graduates



This year's Spring celebration of graduates of the ***1000 Books before Kindergarten*** program was held at Bowman Library. The excited graduates who achieved the goal of listening to and reading over 1000 books before they begin kindergarten were joined by family members and those that had helped them on their journey to celebrate their achievement. Graduates received a "Super Reader Cape", a free book and a certificate.

Images From the Past

A new display installed outside of the Archives, in the lower level of Handley Library, focuses on the long history photographers, and photographic studios in Winchester. The numerous images on display, primarily portraits of local individuals, reflect the various types of photographic processes in use from the early 1800s. Of particular interest is the famous photo of General Thomas J. "Stonewall Jackson" taken by Nathaniel Rutzahn of Winchester, in November of 1862, (lower right hand corner of the display). The General personally replaced a missing button on his uniform and, unfortunately, sewed it slightly out of line.



A Big Month for Friends



With the help of volunteers, who provided 310 hours of their time from start to finish, the Spring Used Book Sale at the Bowman Library raised \$18,980.37 over a period of 6 days. After the sale, the Friends invited other non-profit community organizations to make selections from the remaining books. These groups included The Auxiliary Attic, the children's ward at the Winchester Medical Center, ARE, The Little Free Libraries, CCAP, Clarke County Parks and Recreation, and Belle Grove Garden Club. Remaining items were donated to Blue Ridge Hospice.

In addition to hosting the Shenandoah University Jazz for "A Little Noon Music" at the Handley Library, the Friends initiated a new self-service feature at their "Second Glance" kiosk at the Bowman Library. By adding a cash box to the kiosk, patrons can now browse items and pay for purchases

without the need for assistance from staff or volunteers. It also makes kiosk items available for sale during all the hours the library is open.

Support For "Handley 100"

Handley Library continued to partner with the "Handley 100" Committee to help celebrate the Handley High School centenary anniversary. On April 18th, the Library welcomed Former Ambassador William A Eaton, class of 1971, (seated on the left) for a Fireside Chat event. The following week a panel of Handley High School teachers and alumni spoke about their experiences as students then and educators now.



Welcome to the Library

The Handley Youth Services Department had a banner month in April hosting families for special events at the library. From the Winchester Public Schools Virginia Preschool Initiative Book Fiesta Spirit Nights to the annual Spring Carnival, families were connected, entertained and informed of all the great library resources and services available to them. But maybe best of all were the Grade School field trips that filled the library with childrens' voices, their curiosity, and enthusiasm.

A Way to Connect

Noting the incredible popularity of mobile “Hot Spots”, which have circulated over 2,700 times since the Library made them available for circulation, the Technical Services Department is ordering more. The devices allow free internet connection on the go and anywhere T-Mobile service is available: on a smartphone, laptop, tablet or other mobile device. The goal of circulating mobile hotspots is to lessen the gap of the digital divide by providing patrons with greater access to the internet beyond the walls of the library. In addition to general internet usage, patrons can access our digital library, download eBooks, reserve books and manage their library account.



National Library Week



For the second year in a row, the Handley Regional Library System branch managers coordinated a week-long “Thank You” to library staff as part of National Library Week. Staff members were able to visit and learn about other branches. At Handley, everyone had the opportunity to go down into Archives (pictured left) for a behind-the-scenes look at materials and up into the Handley Dome for a beautiful view of the city. The Friends provided delicious, box-lunches and even a singing telegram delivered by the Windsong Community Choir.

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The Handley Regional Library System ... handleyregional.org