



HRLS

Director's Report and Highlights

April 2025

Celebrating "National Library Week"

In the mid-1950s, research showed that Americans were spending less on books and more on radios, televisions, and musical instruments. To address the trend, several groups came together and formed a citizens organization called the National Book Committee. By finding ways to encourage people to read more, the group hoped to help expand their horizons, improve their incomes and health, and encourage strong and happy families. To reach these goals a plan for National Library Week was developed.



For over 60 years the focus of the week has been to encourage people to learn about and use the incredible resources available at their local public libraries. At the Handley Regional Library System, the week also includes a focus on the staff members who make that access possible. This year staff members had the opportunity to take part in a free Tai Chi class and enjoy a box lunch provided by the Friends. They were able to learn about the unique items housed in Archives and take a special tour of the dome at the Handley Branch. Or they could just enjoy dressing up as their favorite literary character



to make patrons, especially our young ones, stop and look or encourage a smile by wearing funning sunglasses and knowing that their jobs make a difference in people's lives.



And A Super Busy Month for The Friends

April was a big month for the Friends. Their Spring Used Book Sale at the Bowman Branch raised an amazing \$19,410.50 for the Library. They offered yoga and tai chi classes as well as lunch for library staff during National Library Week and they sponsored “A Little Noon Music” at the Handley Library featuring DuoRomano, a flute and clarinet duo with musician and library/Friends employee John Romano and his wife Charlene.



Family Place Library Milestone

The Handley Youth Services Department successfully completed the first 5-week Grow a Reader Playgroup as part of the **Family Place Library** Initiative. Twenty kids and their grown-ups gathered to learn and play each week as they focused on a different early childhood theme with a community professional.



Families learned from **Healthy Families NSV** on *Healthy Parenting* **SOUNDStart Pediatric Therapy** on *Speech/Language and Hearing*, **Shenandoah Valley Discovery Museum** on *Child Development*, **VA Cooperative Extension** on *Nutrition*, and **Melodic Journeys Music Therapy** on *Music and Movement*.

Each week also featured a different sensory Art Exploration activity and book bundles with Parent-Teacher and Juvenile items that related to the week's theme. Pre-and post-surveys were completed by caregivers that included parents, nannies, and grandparents. Another 5-week session will be offered in August, with hopes of doing it quarterly, including a bilingual series.

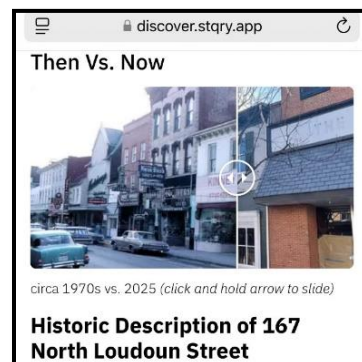


Poetry Slam at Bowman*

A Poetry Slam for teens took place at the Bowman Branch during April “Poetry Month”. The event brought in sixteen teens from public, private and the homeschool community presenting their original works, including Julia, pictured here. * *A poetry slam is a performance-based poetry competition where poets read their own original works before a live audience. The audience then judges the performances, and the top poets are awarded. It is a dynamic and engaging art form that combines performance, writing, and audience participation.*

History In Your Hand

The Friends of Old Town has officially launched its “History of Us” app. This app allows people to learn about buildings on the Old Town Mall by using their cell phones to scan a QR code located in a window of a building. The information might include construction, and reconstructions dates, architectural style and details, the building’s various uses and businesses over the years and even information about the families of the owners. The group has been working with the Archives for the past several months to explore its extensive collections of newspaper articles, photos and memorabilia to use in the app.



Technology Upgrades

Unfortunately, the technologies that libraries depend upon to provide their patrons with up-to date services have a very brief lifespan, approximately five years. For the Library’s Technology Department that means continuously monitoring existing equipment, being aware of new opportunities and replacing outdated equipment when needed, like the new self-checkout kiosk shown here at the Handley Branch.

Contributors:

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The Handley Regional Library ... handleyregional.org