



HRLS

Director's Report and Highlights

January 2022

Virginia Minimum Wage Changes

Effective January 1, 2022, the Virginia minimum wage increased to \$11.00 per hour. This change affected approximately 20% of library staff. The next change to Virginia's minimum wage is scheduled for January 1, 2023, when it increases to \$12.00 per hour. The 2023 change will affect approximately 30% of library staff.

COVID Test Kit Distribution

As part of a federal program, Valley Health System has received 150,000 COVID test kits to distribute in our community. As part of this distribution effort, HRL received 2,250 test kits in late January. All kits were given out within one and a half weeks. Thanks to this program we have been able to receive more kits as needed and have been able to maintain a steady distribution since then.

Telecom Contract Renewed

The library's current contract for internet telecommunications services expires June 30, 2022. With assistance from E-rate Central, the library administration solicited and reviewed bids for the next contract period. The current provider, Shentel, was selected for a three-year contract beginning July 1, 2022. The new contract resulted in an approximate 8% reduction in cost and an increase in internet connection speeds of 1,000%. Internet connectivity speeds will increase from 100 Mbps to 1Gbps.

Staff Changes

With the departure of two beloved Circulation Services staff members at the Handley Library, Circulation Services Coordinator Rachael Hirsch turned the challenge of filling two vacancies into an opportunity to increase hours for existing staff member. Two Circulation Aides are now classified staff at 25 hours, up from 18 or less.

While at the Bowman Library, new staff members were welcomed to fill the positions of Information Services Coordinator and Youth Services Assistant.

Staff Training

With the second phased increase in the minimum wage, all circulation staff at Bowman Library are now sharing responsibilities at the desk and on the floor. Rachelle Long, the Circulation Services Coordinator, has been training former pages and new aides for the past several months so that all staff become thoroughly familiar with all tasks and duties.

The entire Information Services team at the Handley Library completed the “Conducting the Reference Interview” webinar that outlined a six-step process and offered tips for being more effective when helping patrons search for information.

Community Partnerships

All three branches of the Handley Regional Library System are constantly working to forge new partnerships with community organizations and to strengthen existing ones. This month alone, the libraries worked with the following: Diversify Our Narrative Student Group, Frederick County Public Schools, Frederick County Park and Recreation, Northern Shenandoah Master Gardeners, Stephens City Chess Club, Friends of Handley Library, Shenandoah Chess Club, The Metrics Program of Winchester Public Schools, The Museum of the Shenandoah Valley, and the Shenandoah Valley Discovery Museum.

“HiyaBaby” A Very Special Partnership



The Handley Library Youth Services Department has begun a new partnership with an outside non-profit group called HiyaBaby, which provides mothers and babies living in low-income and homeless situations with essentials, like diapers and more. A collection bin is located on the 2nd floor where any patron can donate NEW, unopened packages of diapers and baby wipes. This collection drive will be ongoing and will help initiate the library’s own stock of diapers to provide in the Youth Services bathrooms in addition to providing supplies for area families most in need through the efforts of HiyaBaby. Sometimes you really just need a diaper, and you shouldn’t have to look far!

The Winter Reading Challenge 2022

“Read for a Better World” the 2022 Winter Reading Challenge encouraged readers of all ages to explore diversity, empathy and action through literature. With readers earning incentive prizes at different age-based milestones, everyone was challenged to read more. Participation grew by almost 28% system-wide in 2021, with Handley Library noting that 2,057 books were read at the branch as part of the challenge.

Tell a Book by the Sticker on Its Spine

Circulation Services Coordinator Rachael Hirsch has completed a months-long project to add genre labels to books in Handley's Paperback collection making it much easier for patrons to quickly find the type of books they enjoy reading. The stickers include Mystery, Western, Suspense, Adventure, Fantasy, Romance, Historical Romance, Paranormal Romance and Science Fiction.



Going Virtual



Each week Elyse DeQuoy at Bowman Library selects, presents and records 6 books for Middle Grade readers and 6 Books for Teen readers. These highly energetic book talks are posted each Monday with Middle Grade readers at 12 and Teen reader at 1:00p.m.

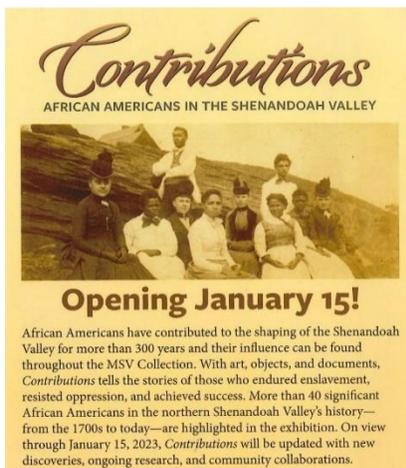
Teens also went virtual with January's Game Night by hosting it on Discord. All game play was planned and monitored by the Teen Advisory Board at Bowman Library.

And "Old School" Winter Fun

With the development of new housing subdivisions in and around Berryville, the Clarke County Library continues to enjoy increasing numbers of new patrons and growing circulation figures. With a nod to winter-time traditions the library began a new puzzle sharing program. From simple, wooden, toddler puzzles to the 1,000 pieces and up variety, the "all donation" and "honor system" program has become a great favorite of patrons.



Historic Partnership



It is well known that this part of Virginia is steeped in history. Fortunately for area residents and visitors alike, it is blessed with organizations that work to preserve and promote it. One such example is the "Contributions" exhibit at the Museum of the Shenandoah Valley. The exhibit is a documentation of over 300 years of African American life, influence and contributions to this area of Virginia. In addition to providing research support, the Stewart Bell Jr, Archives generously shared unique, historic, photos from its extensive collection to bring the exhibit to life.

Installation of the AWE Computers is Complete

Kylie Feiring Technical Services Manager has installed the last four AWE computers in the Youth Department at Handley. All three branches are now equipped with these computers that are designed to provide literacy-focused digital learning solutions for early learners and are found in public library settings throughout the United States and Canada.



Name Change for Genealogy Group

The Genealogy Lunch Bunch is now “The Family History Hunters”. Working with Cheryl Nakagawa and Gina Byrd of the Public Relations and Outreach Department, the group has updated its name and created a new logo to better reflect the group's interests and activities.



Contributors:

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