



# HRLS

## *Director's Report and Highlights*

*November / December 2021*

### ***Top Checkouts of 2021***

As a way to promote library collections, statistics were gathered to create Top 10 most checked out titles lists for various types of materials, i.e. DVDs, Fiction, Non-fiction, and numerous juvenile collections. These lists were shared to social media and through email newsletter to patrons. Have you read our most popular titles? Here are the number one titles; Fiction: “The Four Winds” by Kristin Hannah, Non-fiction: “Caste: the origins of our discontent” by Isabel Wilkerson, Young Adult Fiction: “The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes”. Juvenile Fiction: “Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Dog Days” by Jeff Kinney, Juvenile Picture Book: “My Friend is Sad” by Mo Willems. See more at: <https://www.handleyregional.org/top2021checkouts>

### ***Responding to COVID***

- As part of a program initiated by the Virginia Department of Health, HRLS libraries began distributing rapid COVID test kits to the public. The job involved labeling, packaging, scheduling pickup times, and providing curbside delivery. Demand far outpaced supply, resulting in a significant increase in calls to the Information Services desks.
- In-person programming has been suspended in response to the current community spread of COVID. The situation will be reevaluated in February and Staff is prepared to resume programming if the library administration deems it appropriate.
- Staff returned to some earlier safety protocols near the end of December. Once again furniture was moved, rearranged or removed to provide more space between patron activities

### ***Improving Access to Materials and Resources***

Library managers through various committees are all working to make using the library and its resources easier for patrons. Two recent improvements that are in the process of being implemented are instituting digital access to library cards and enabling hold to be placed on materials as soon as they are ordered.

### ***Annual Assessments***

2021 annual assessments are nearly complete. Annual assessments are the final step in managing employee performance. Throughout the year employees and supervisors work towards accomplishing goals and initiatives set the prior year as a roadmap for success. The annual assessment provides an opportunity to review prior goals, successes, and challenges, as well as offer positive reinforcement, discuss training opportunities and set new goals for the coming year.

## *Finances*

- In November, the full Board approved the FY2023 budget as presented by the Finance Committee. Subsequently, funding requests were submitted to Winchester City and Frederick County in November and December respectively. The Clarke County funding request is due in January.
- In November the auditors present the FY2021 audit report to the Finance Committee and as required a statement of the library's financial condition was posted in the Winchester Star newspaper.
- Endowment Fund year end 990 tax form was filed
- Donations in 2021: Prior to November 1, \$2,651 (excluding \$100K from Bowman Trust)  
Since November 1, \$31,113  
Total Year to Date \$33,764

The total included \$12, 320.00 of donations that were restricted to specific purposes

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## *“Friends” Programing*

The long-running music series, “A Little Noon Music” began its new season in November with John Kovack. John is a Front Royal resident, harpist, harp maker, teacher, recording artist and inventor. He plays the Paraguayan folk harp, similar to the Celtic folk harp but smaller and lighter in weight.



In early December, to offer a little Holiday Cheer, the Friends presented the Apple Valley Ringers, lead by Stephens City resident, Jacquetta Owen.



## *Girls Who Code*

The Handley Youth Services Department celebrated graduates from the 6-week “Girls Who Code Club” who learned the ins and outs of the world of coding and computer science. This unique program taught the girls to code things from abstract art and a path to the moon using directive function with Ozobots.

The Department continues to focus on right-sizing collections, specifically weeding and withdrawing materials in the Juvenile Fiction Collection. The goal is to weed outdated and worn materials in order to further promote newer, popular titles. The next step is to shift the collection to create more front-facing shelves that appeal to patrons of all ages and to provide space for everyone to easily find something new to read.

The Department's monthly “DataBase Spotlight” for November and December focused on *Learning Express & Just for Kids Access Video* providing digital demonstrations for youth and families and included a blog post and a promotional bookmark.

## ***Collection HQ, A \$10,000 Sign of Appreciation and “Smart Gaming”***

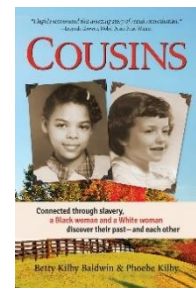
Technical Services has begun the process for setting up for the Collection HQ subscription. Collection HQ is a subscription program that will assist library selectors and weeder with optimizing collections based on various collection attributes such as size, usage, and age.

To show her appreciation for the Library’s digital resources available to her while the library was closed due to Covid, a patron has donated \$10,000 to support additional digital resources.

The department is working to provide children’s gaming computers for all three branches from AWE Learning. These computers come with a large number of educational games preinstalled, targeting ages from 2 to teen. Computers have been installed at Clarke County and Bowman libraries and are scheduled for installation at Handley Library in the later part of January 2022.

## ***“Cousins”***

On November 4<sup>th</sup>, the Stewart Bell Jr. Archives cohosted a Zoom program with the Museum of the Shenandoah Valley to discuss the book entitled “Cousins” coauthored by Dr. Betty Kilby Fisher Baldwin and Phoebe Kilby. The book explores what happens when a white woman, Phoebe, contacts a black woman, Betty, saying she suspects they are connected through slavery. The book explores each woman’s dramatic story and how they came together on a path toward reconciliation. Becky Ebert worked with Betty in 1999 when she began researching the writing her story.



## ***National Story Walk Week***

National Story Walk Week was celebrated at the Bowman Library in partnership with the Frederick County Parks and Recreation Department. The featured story was “**Pumpkin Soup**” by Helen Cooper. Kits containing aprons, chef hats, stirring spoons and a pumpkin soup recipe were assembled and handed out to those who completed the walk.

Handley Library celebrated with its 3 Story Walk locations: “**Fall in the Country**” by Sue Tarsky at the Mike Foreman Rotary Reading Garden at Handley Library, “**I Wish You Knew**” by Jackie Azua at the Rooftop at Shenandoah Valley Discovery Museum, and “**Our Favorite**

**Day of the Year**” by A.E. Ali at Rose Hill Park.

## ***Successful Year-End Campaign***

Public Relations staff sent out over 750 support request letters along with an eblast newsletter and a webpage banner on the library’s homepage that raised in excess of \$30,000. The department also created a fun “I Got Carded” sticker to give out to new card holders along with a new logo polo shirt for all staff members, especially for community and promotional events.

## *“Happy Holidays 2021”*



The Community Readers’ Theater troupe at the Bowman Library performed two Christmas stories for the community, “A Christmas Carol”, pictured here, and “How the Grinch Stole Christmas”. These were among the many holiday activities sponsored by the library prior to the resurgence of Covid. Other activities included a Hanukkah celebration, and an Ugly Festive Party with ugly sweaters and holiday socks.



At Handley, 85 people enjoyed a hybrid of the popular Gingerbread Jamboree. In partnership with Old Town Winchester’s Holiday Celebration event, patrons were directed to the library for family, holiday fun. The first 50 kids also received a special holiday Grab-and-Go Kit to expand their curiosity and learning at home. Families explored numerous station activities from crafts and games to coding adventures.

### **Contributors:**

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**Donna Hughes, Youth Services Division Head**  
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