



A YEAR IN THE LIFE OF THE LIBRARY

2024 Annual Report



Cecil County Public
LIBRARY

A MESSAGE FROM OUR DIRECTOR

A year is made up of 12 months...52 weeks...365 days. It is made up of moments and memories and exactly 525,600 minutes. This year's annual report, "A Year in the Life of the Library" highlights a year well spent by showcasing the library as a community destination for inspiration, for information, for connection, and for a wide variety of programs, services, and spaces.

This year, we welcomed 288,046 visitors; we gathered as a community to view the Great American Solar Eclipse and again when we celebrated the annual Children's Book Festival. We reopened new spaces at the renovated Perryville Branch Library to better meet the needs of the community and refreshed other ones, as we transformed the Children's Room at the Elkton Branch Library into a space where families can read, play, and explore together.

We launched new take-home kits, so learning and exploration can continue long after you've left the library, and new programs, like Reading Buddies, where trained community volunteers helped students strengthen their reading skills. Whether attending a library program, logging onto a computer, searching for your next great read, joining a community meeting, or collaborating with colleagues in one of our study rooms, we are glad you chose to spend some of your 525,600 minutes with us this year.

Emily Dickinson said, "Forever is composed of nows." I invite you to make now the time to visit your library, to discover all that is waiting for you there.

Rachel Wright,
Executive Director

ANNUAL LIBRARY IMPACT

246,518

Materials Owned

833,767

Materials
Borrowed

320,215

Children's Materials
Borrowed

345,667

Adult Materials
Borrowed

460,207

Virtual Visits

58,567

Questions
Answered

4,135

New Library
Cards issued

167,885

Digital Items
Borrowed

288,046

Library Visits

656

Outreach
Programs

32,597

Outreach
Attendance

138,751

Computer and
WiFi Sessions

1,184

Programs

26,501

Program
Attendees

507

Community
Meetings

5,652

Community
Meeting Attendees

ORGANIZATIONAL REACH



Library
Branches



Outreach
Bookmobile



Full-Time
Equivalent Staff



Access to
Online Learning



JANUARY

Our librarians developed **Reading Buddies**, an innovative approach to helping children develop literacy skills. With assistance from trained community volunteers, local students practiced their reading skills while building confidence and a love of reading.



Kids, teens, and adults learned the basics of healthy eating and culinary arts during hands-on cooking programs with **Kitchen a la Cart**, a fully-equipped mobile kitchen cart.

Growing fresh vegetables and herbs was easy and fun with our **hydroponic tower garden** and provide the freshest ingredients for our hands-on cooking programs.

52 Reading Buddy volunteers helped **62** children gain confidence in their reading skills this year.



FEBRUARY

The community explored **In Freedom's Name**, an exhibit celebrating the selfless contributions of African-American men and women to national defense and the expansion of freedom over the past 400 years.

Members of **CCPL's Youth Board** hosted a Mental Health Night for Teens and shared tips for maintaining healthy relationships, staying safe online, and managing self-care. Highlights of the after-hours event included fun arts and crafts, delicious pizza, and a visit from our favorite therapy dogs.

Love was in the air when local romance authors signed books and chatted with readers during the **Once Upon a Romance** event.



MARCH

Programs for all ages

were popular in the Spring – from Free Headshots for the business community to a Paint Night for adults and StoryTime Yoga for kids and families, our libraries had something for everyone!

The **Longwood Community Read** returned for 2024. In support of *The Last Garden in England* and *The Secret Garden*, a wide variety of programs had the community appreciating, reading, and talking about nature.

26,501

People attended Library programs in 2024.



APRIL

With the Perryville Branch closed for renovations, **our librarians** went into the community and connected more than 600 kids and teens to Library programs, materials, and services!

On April 9th, hundreds of people gathered at libraries across Cecil County to safely watch **The Great American Eclipse**. With special viewing glasses, educational activities and crafts, this unique celestial event was enjoyed by all.



StoryTimes promoting kindergarten readiness and an early love of reading were a hit! Babies, toddlers, and preschoolers enjoyed listening to stories, moving to the music, and playing with one another at the library.



MAY

It was all about the **Books, Bourbon, and BBQ** for the sell-out crowd at the Friends Foundation's festive event to benefit the Library's many literacy initiatives.

It's never too early to read to your baby. Our **Books for Babies** partnership with ChristianaCare Union Hospital delivers books, library resources, and a book tote to new parents.

1,038 6th grade students selected 3,114 books to add to their home libraries during **SPARK**. Having access to books at home keeps students reading throughout the summer so they are ready for learning when they go back to school.



JUNE

June 1st marked the start of the annual **Summer Reading and Learning program** at the Library. 3,000 kids and teens participated in this year's *Adventure @ Your Library* – there really is no place like the Library in the summertime.

1,200 kids, teens, and families streamed into the backyard at the North East Branch Library for the annual **Children's Book Festival**. Meeting authors and illustrators, eating ice cream, and jumping through giant bubbles were just a few of the activities on this fun-filled day.

Those looking for the perfect way to spend a sunny day found their way to one of our **Story Trails**. Located at Brantwood, Calvert, Conowingo, and Perryville parks, Story Trails combine a walk in the great outdoors with a fun story to enjoy along the way.

1,187,550

minutes spent reading by kids & teens during the summer.



JULY

Teens learned the basics of launching a business and developed a business plan to present to community and business leaders at **Start-Up Cecil**, a week-long workshop for teens. Creativity and community inspiration combined for a number of winning ideas. This year's winners were *Feather Feeds* (1st place), *Galactic Prints* (2nd place), and *Custom Colorful Clothes* (3rd place).

Following its closure for a much-needed renovation, **the Perryville Branch Library** reopened to an excited community! New features include: 4 study rooms, a JobTech Tower, and a dedicated space for teens that is perfect for the after-school hours.

The Bookmobile was on the road and at the park! Whether summer, spring, winter, or fall, the Bookmobile connected the community to library program, materials, and services beyond the four walls of our branches.



AUGUST

The Children's Room at the Elkton Branch Library got a refresh! The new interactive play area features toys and play structures to spark the imagination and inspire curiosity in all who visit. This is just the beginning of what is in store for Elkton, as plans are underway for an upcoming renovation and expansion. Stay tuned...

New take-home kits were developed and made available to the community. **Creator Studio Kits** include everything content creators and tech enthusiasts need to take high-quality photos and videos with their smartphone. **Nature Explorer Backpacks** have activities, tools, and games making it easy for kids and families to explore the world around them. Be sure to check one out today!

In partnership with Cecil County Public Schools, we served 1,171 **free Summer Lunches** to kids and teens in Elkton and North East.



SEPTEMBER

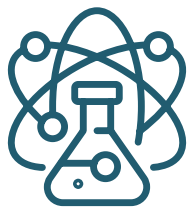
The Friends Foundation's **11th annual Crab Crawl** was a great success! 300 "crawlers" strolled down Main Street in North East enjoying crab dishes from local restaurants to raise funds in support of the Library's youth literacy initiatives.

Back-to-school and CCPL go hand in hand. Students of all ages rely on our robust collections, educational programs, and online resources for everything they need to support their academic needs. CCPS students have the added benefit of a Student Virtual Library Card providing access to digital resources from home, school, or the library.

The much anticipated release of the **Fall Book Buzz**, a quarterly newsletter highlighting buzzworthy new releases, gave readers plenty of titles to add to their TBR (To-Be-Read) list! A new Book Buzz is released each season – pick up the latest edition at any branch or on our website!



OCTOBER



Kids and teens enjoyed, fun, interactive Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics learning opportunities during the **Maryland STEM Festival**, a month-long celebration with events hosted at each of our branches.

Readers of horror were in for a treat when they met with local authors at **Reading in the Dark: A Horror Genre Celebration** at our North East Branch.

Children ages birth-5 were busy pursuing their goal to read **1,000 Books Before Kindergarten**. What a fun way to encourage a lifelong love of reading in our earliest readers. Congratulations to all of our readers who met their goal this year!

364

People attended this year's STEM Festival programs!



NOVEMBER

The annual **Book Lover's Market** returned to the Elkton Branch Library. Avid readers flocked to the event to connect with local authors and artisans and to buy books from the fan-favorite used book sale!

450

People attended this year's Book Lover's Market.



DECEMBER

Adult Winter Reading
participants completed

816

reading challenges!

Taking inspiration from delightfully delicious desserts, participants in the **Adult Winter Reading** program completed a variety of sweets themed challenges. Those who read 2 challenges earned a special edition library mug.



**Music came
to the library!**

From children's musicians to rock bands and harpists, our lineup of concerts had everyone moving and grooving all year long.



Cecil County Public
LIBRARY



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North east, MD 21901



www.cecilcountylibrary.org



(410) 996-1055

MISSION

**Champion Reading.
Build Knowledge.
Inspire Curiosity.
Connect Community.**

VISION

**The Library is the heart of
a thriving Cecil County.**

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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Shirley McCrary-Simmons, *Vice Chair*
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