

FY 21 Community Impact Report

ENRICHING LIVES FOR 100 YEARS- A Letter from Library CEO Skip Auld

On January 8, 1921, a small group of committed citizens recognized a community need and opened the first public library in what is now Annapolis' City Hall. Opened for three days a week for two hours a day, the original collection was completely donated and totaled about 2,000 books. Since then, Anne Arundel County Public Library (AACPL) has grown to 16 branches boasting more than one million items, including books, movies and music. Eliza Suydam, our first librarian, surely couldn't have imagined what modern libraries have become – community hubs for education, enrichment and inspiration.

As we mark our centennial, we are celebrating throughout 2021 with special events, programs and surprises. Already this year, through generous funding from the library foundation, the library has marked the occasion with special birthday storytimes, videos of personal library stories from customers and supporters, educational programs for all ages, giveaways, banners in downtown Annapolis and more. Stay tuned for more fun in FY 22.

You can count on your library to adapt to changing times, deliver top-notch service and provide innovative resources that meet the needs of the next 100 years.

PROVIDING ACCESS TO TECHNOLOGY, INFORMATION AND RECREATION

Chromebook and Wi-Fi Hotspot Kits for Checkout

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to worsen the long-standing digital divide in our county. The library is attempting to shrink that gap with the introduction of a new resource. In November 2020, the system began offering Chromebook and Wi-Fi hotspot bundles for check out. The initiative marks the first time customers can borrow a computer to use at home.

The Wi-Fi hotspots, featuring unlimited high-speed data, can support up to 10 phones, tablets, laptops or other mobile devices. These devices, funded by generous donations to the library foundation, have been extremely popular with customers since their initial launch in August 2018.

Local History Items Now Available for Checkout

In April 2021, AACPL began allowing its local history collection to be checked out for in-home use. This action represents the first time the nearly 500 items have been available for borrowing. The collection includes books, articles and other historical and genealogical materials that document the economic, social, political, cultural, religious and military history of our capital city and surrounding areas.

The library also provides a special collection of materials on Anne Arundel County heritage, archaeology, history and preservation at the Anne Arundel Archaeology Lab at Historic London Town in Edgewater and at the Historical Preservation Research Library in Anne Arundel

County's Division of Planning and Zoning. Additionally, the system collaborates with the Kuethe Library: Historical & Genealogical Research Center in Glen Burnie to offer a collection of over 4,000 books, many photographs, maps, CDs and obituary, bible and church record collections specific to Anne Arundel County.

Expanded Fishing Pole Program

Fishing poles are now available to borrow at the Edgewater Library thanks to a memorial gift from the family of Philip F. "Phil" Meyers Jr., to the Library Foundation. The new poles expand a popular partnership with the Department of Natural Resources which provides fishing gear to the Eastport-Annapolis Neck and the Mountain Road libraries. Fishing poles can be checked out for two weeks.

Mailed Library Happenings

For the first time ever, AACPL's quarterly newsletter, Library Happenings! was mailed to every household in the county. Thanks to funding from the Library Foundation, the initiative exposed residents of more than 220,000 homes to the amazing resources and programs the library offers free of charge. One customer was thrilled to receive her copy at home and wrote, "I loved getting my library happenings in the mail so I can highlight all the virtual events Lucy and I will attend. But seeing a family on the cover that looks like mine is what I loved even more."

HELPING WITH BASIC NEEDS

In recent years, Anne Arundel County Public Library has become an advocate for marginalized parts of our community. While the pandemic exacerbated the economic and racial disparities many face, the library is committed to providing educational resources and advancing equity among all residents.

Food Distributions

The library was proud to partner with a number of organizations to host food distributions throughout FY 2021. Together with Blessed in Tech Ministries, Kingdom Celebration Center, Tyler Heights Resources Fair, Brooklyn Park Health Food and the Anne Arundel County Department of Social Services, **nearly 7,300 people received food and resources to address their critical needs.** Additionally, the library is proud to partner with Caring Cupboard to provide Little Free Pantries at the Deale, Glen Burnie, Linthicum, Maryland City at Russett and Odenton libraries. These small boxes allow those in need to get quick access to nonperishable food and household items and offer residents the opportunity to help their neighbors.

Mama and Baby Pantry

This summer, AACPL opened the first of its kind Mama and Baby Community Pantry at Discoveries: The Library at the Mall. Based on feedback from customers and addressing the tremendous need many in our community face, staff at the Discoveries library provide diapers, wipes, menstrual products and other personal hygiene items every Saturday morning for anyone in need. **In the first month of service, nearly 100 children were served along with more than 60 adults.** The pantry is stocked based on donations from customers and was outfitted and professionally organized courtesy of The Container Store.

Humanitarian Relief Fund Outreach

Connecting people to resources is at the core of the library's mission. Over the last year, AACPL was proud to assist the county government by answering calls on its crisis hotline. Three staff were deployed to fill this need and connect people with emergency relief for a variety of needs. Additionally, staff also proactively called residents who could be eligible for the county's Humanitarian Relief Fund. Residents were eligible for the \$500 payment if they lost income or employment because of the pandemic and were making less than \$25 a hour.

Vaccine Clinics

Working with the Anne Arundel County Department of Health and Luminis Health, multiple libraries held COVID-19 vaccine clinics in FY 21. At the 17 events, **nearly 750 people received the vaccine**. AACPL was the first library system in the state to provide this important service. Before the library hosted its own clinics, staff happily helped concerned customers find access to vaccine appointments using their information and investigation skills.

SPEAKING OUT

The library continues to work toward the elimination of racial and social equity barriers; create and to maintain an environment of diversity, inclusion and respect; ensure that we are reaching and engaging disenfranchised people and serve as convener of conversations and to be forthright on tough issues.

Last year, with funding from the library foundation, the library has hosted numerous racial equity workshops, book studies and brought back the ever-popular Human Library where participants can "check out" a human book to learn his/her/their story. Additionally, with incidents of racially motivated violence increasing in FY 21, the library condemned these attacks.

Community Book Discussions

Throughout March 2021, the library hosted virtual community book discussions of *Stamped: Racism, Anti-Racism and You* by Jason Reynolds and Ibram X. Kendi. In partnership with students and faculty from Arundel and South River high schools. Both AACPL and the nonprofit group Kindness Grows Here purchased books so as many participants as possible would have access to free copies. Participation in the Stamped community read averaged 90 participants for each of the four virtual sessions.

Before President Biden mandated the action, the library and its board were proud to designate Juneteenth a systemwide holiday and even unveiled a historical marker located outside the Severna Park Library. The monument sheds light on lynching in our nation, state and county. The initiative is a partnership between the library, the Equal Justice Initiative and Connecting the Dots Anne Arundel County. At least five racial terror lynchings took place in Anne Arundel County, traumatizing the black community. Educational programs were also held to further explore the history of these monuments and of lynching in Maryland.

WHAT CUSTOMERS ARE SAYING

"My 11-year-old and five of his friends tried to go to [a video game venue] across the hall [from Discoveries] for his birthday party but they said they were full and turned them away. Jonathan

whose birthday it is, regularly comes to play the Nintendo Switch. So, six 11-year-old boys spent two hours in the teen room playing and reading together. The library really saved the day!"

"The library is just a peaceful oasis in the midst of the craziness of daily life -- I love coming by & just enjoying the books and wonderful people behind the counters."

"This service [Library by Mail] has improved my life. It helped me cope with cancer."

"Thanks @aacpl for helping to fill yet another summer with adventure, inspiration, tails & tales!"

"As I am adding audiobooks to enjoy during my commute this year, I'm struck by the thought, thank the gods, old and new, for public libraries and all the good they do. I'm especially grateful because as school starts, I struggle heavily with traditional reading (time constraints! exhaustion!) but still really wanna enjoy books. So you're a real one, @aacpl...for providing new and exciting audiobooks!"

"Our librarians are always professional, knowledgeable and courteous. Can't do without them!!!"

NEW FACILITIES

In March 2021, Anne Arundel Public Library CEO Skip Auld joined by County Executive Steuart Pittman, House Minority Leader Nic Kipke, Councilman Nathan Volke and others to break ground on the \$15.9 million Riviera Beach Library in Pasadena.

The 20,000-square-foot building will double the size of the old facility at 1130 Duvall Highway and is expected to open this summer. The new library will be at the same location and feature a larger meeting room, outdoor space, expanded children's area, individual study rooms and more. The Riviera Beach Library is currently operating out of a temporary site at the Riviera Beach Shopping Center.

Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees is the governing body of the Anne Arundel County Public Library. It is comprised of volunteers representing all areas of our county. Trustees come to their volunteer roles with a range of experiences and backgrounds, and a strong desire to ensure the long-term vitality of our public libraries. In FY 2021, the body included:

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Library Foundation

The Anne Arundel County Public Library Foundation, **recently recognized with the Guidestar Platinum Transparency Seal**, is an independent, non-profit organization that raises critical funds not normally met by public funding. Contributions enhance services at each of the library's 16 branches and headquarters and come from individuals, businesses, grant-making foundations and organizations.

The foundation was founded in 2006, and through FY21 **has raised over \$3.8 million** from generous community donations to help make the library better. The all-volunteer board oversees fundraising for the library, along with a staff of three development professionals. Gifts to the library foundation make the branches more welcoming, better equipped, more convenient and improved spaces to learn and grow in every phase of life. Contributions build a brighter future so the library can continue to transform and expand to meet the needs of a growing community.

The foundation granted over \$330,000 in FY21 which allowed the library to pivot their service model to provide virtual programs, homeschooling resources and access to technology and enhancements that connected loved ones and helped the library serve as a beacon of hope. Some examples of foundation funding included:

- 100 anniversary celebration banners, ads, video recording services for library stories, bookmarks, pins and history walks at every branch;
- supplies and incentives for the annual Summer @ Your Library program;
- Zoom accounts so the library could provide virtual programming; supplies and performer fees for 1,475 virtual and in-person programs;
- PPE and supplies for staff to be able to provide curbside service;
- more than 40,000 Take & Make kits;

- book giveaways; website migration, video transcription services, laptop lab supplies and more.

The community's philanthropic support allows the library foundation to respond to the many critical and evolving needs of our community and makes possible library services and opportunities that couldn't happen without this commitment. In April 2021, the foundation participated in its first **Library Giving Day and raised over \$28,000** in support of the Summer @ Your Library program. Gifts create life-long readers and provide everyone – in person or virtually – with endless possibilities, opportunities and resources for growth and enrichment. Every dollar makes a difference and makes the library better.

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