

# FY 20 Community Impact Report

[Online presentation site](#)

## FISCAL YEAR 2020

Fiscal Year 2020 can be divided into two distinct parts – before COVID-19 and during COVID-19. The former saw great strides in providing innovative library service including a new, larger Discoveries: The Library at the Mall, a significantly renovated Severn Library and going fine free on children and teen materials. The latter demonstrated a dedication to our community that looks different from ever before.

When the library closed its doors on March 13, we had no idea what the future held. Surely no one imagined our buildings wouldn't be safe to reopen for nearly three months. When the COVID-19 pandemic rippled through our world, library staff quickly started asking, "how can we help?" Staff were eager to begin working in new ways to provide critical services to our customers.

Increasing digital content for stuck at home customers immediately became a top priority. Staff purchased more than 35,000 new eBooks and eAudiobooks during the closure. The constant additions to our digital library ensured decreased wait times and allowed the library to provide a broader range of materials such as more children's books, Spanish language options or titles needed by students or professionals working from home.

Beyond our books, library educational resources took on a new level of importance when schools and businesses closed. Learning and professional development resources were added and existing services increased access from home. Dedicated staff were also ready to personally answer individual's questions via social media or our Email a Librarian service.

Within days of the libraries closing, staff began offering virtual programs for the first time. Adults enjoyed discussion groups, workshops, eBook help and more. Children took advantage of daily live storytimes, including bilingual programs, through Facebook.

While staff were serving customers remotely, they were also planning ahead for how to safely begin in-person service. For the first time ever, customers can now take advantage of curbside pickup (thanks to support from the Library Foundation and County) outdoor Wi-Fi and webchat. Customers can also make an appointment to browse the stacks, use a library computer or get one-on-one help from staff.

While we are eager for it to be safe enough to fully re-open, we will continue to add digital and physical resources, support and promote organizations serving our community and serve our customers to the best of our abilities.

*Skip Auld, Chief Executive Officer, Anne Arundel County Public Library*

## **FINE FREE FOR CHILDREN AND TEENS**

On January 6, AACPL stopped charging fines on all children and teen books, movies and music. Additionally, the library also waived \$754,637 in old fines and fees for customers under 18 and outstanding late charges on children and teen materials for adult accounts. More than 33,000 people received the New Year's surprise saving on average \$22.

*"As a public institution, we have a responsibility to make our items available to as many people as possible. Removing these fines will allow more people to enjoy our materials for education, enrichment and inspiration,"* said CEO Skip Auld.

## **COMBATTING RACISM AND SPEAKING OUT FOR THE MARGINALIZED**

In recent years, Anne Arundel County Public Library has become an advocate for the marginalized people of our society. 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.

AACPL has reaffirmed its commitment to eliminate racial and social equity barriers; create and maintain an environment of diversity, inclusion and respect; ensure that we are reaching and engaging disenfranchised people; serve as a convener of conversations and be forthright on tough issues.

In FY 20, the library rededicated itself to providing programs and materials that address systemic racism and provide tangible suggestions on how to build a more equitable society. We recognize that libraries have a role to play as trusted partners and pillars of democracy.

Thanks to funding from the Library Foundation, customers were able to receive special structural racism training from the Racial Equity Institute.

## **HEALING LIBRARY**

In an effort to help children and families dealing with a significant loss, AACPL began offering Healing Library Kits. The kits, created with input from grief and education professionals, include

books, resources and activities selected to help explain death to young children and navigate the journey of healing.

The kit is suitable for a range of ages 2-10 years old and may be checked out fine free for three weeks. Simply place a hold and pick up at any branch.

## **WHAT CUSTOMERS ARE SAYING**

Customers have been sharing how library service is helping them get through the pandemic and how much they appreciate the staff's efforts to keep them safe.

Since the shutdown, the thing that I missed the most was the library. I felt without school for my child and without many kids books, it made me realize how much I depend on your wonderful service! I cannot thank you enough for being there!

Curbside service has been fantastic. I also appreciate how returned materials are quarantined.

The library system is a huge asset to the area, and a welcome resource for me, in person or remotely. My gratitude to all who have coped with this crisis so well, and to those who continue to be available to assist.

I used the curbside and it was seamless (they even gave me 2 free masks!); I've also put books on hold and come in to pick up since they reopened. I use the app to checkout and don't have to get close to anyone. As far as I'm concerned, AACPL went above and beyond to serve their customers, and I truly appreciate it.

Thank you to all of the librarians and staff who kept on working, ensuring patrons had access to a wide array of materials and programs throughout.

Very impressed by the steps AACPL took to ensure the safety of its patrons in order for the library to open.

## **DEMENTIA FRIENDLY LIBRARIES**

One of the roles of the library is to be a safe place for people of all ages. Customers with dementia and their caregivers face unique challenges when engaging in their communities.

In an effort to serve these customers, AACPL has committed to make all its branches Dementia Friendly Libraries.

Earlier this year, library staff have begun receiving training to increase their awareness of the issues that customers with dementia and their caregivers may face and how best to serve those customers. We will also be providing booklists, programs for the public and sharing handouts and resources for support in our community, such as the Department of Aging and Disabilities, Hospice of the Chesapeake and the Alzheimer's Association of Maryland.

"The staff is wonderful working in a stressful time. They are extremely conscious about maintaining a safe environment," -- Library customer

## **NEW FACILITIES**

### **Busch Annapolis**

The new Michael E. Busch Annapolis Library opened to the public on July 22. The 32,500-square-foot-building is named after long-time Annapolis resident and public servant Michael Busch. The new library features 85,000 books and materials; a large community meeting room; six collaboration spaces for studying and meetings; an expanded children's area and outdoor space; teen area; tech zone; Makerspace; The Library Foundation Vending Café and the Samuel J. and Donna L. Brown Family Community Living Room; and over 1500 engraved brick walkway providing inspiration for all.

There are 21 named spaces in the new building honoring those in our community who cumulatively gave \$825,000 to support the library.

### **Riviera Beach**

Demolition and construction are slated to begin in late 2020 on the old facility and library staff recently moved operations to a temporary location at 8485A Ft. Smallwood Rd. The new improved library is scheduled to be opened in 2022.

### **Severn**

The Severn Library underwent a major renovation over the last 18 months thanks to nearly \$1.2 million in funding from the county's Local Development Council. Features include: a new lobby and café; improved community room, more welcoming furniture and shelves, chromebooks for checkout and more. The improved library opened March 13.

## **Discoveries: The Library at the Mall**

A new larger mall library opened in mid-February to much fanfare. The branch features more than 12,000 square feet of space including a teen area, expanded Discovery Dock play area, separate program room, more books and materials.

*"We love the new Discoveries! It's so big and offers even more things for everyone in my family,"*  
-- Library customer

## **ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY 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 2020, the body included:

William J. Colquhoun – Chairman  
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## **LIBRARY FOUNDATION**

The Anne Arundel County Public Library Foundation is an independent, non-profit organization that raises funds not normally met by public funding. These contributions enhance services at each of the library's 16 branches and headquarters and come from individuals, businesses, grant-making foundations and organizations. A body of twenty volunteer board members oversees the operation of the library foundation, along with a staff of three development professionals.

Since its founding in 2006, the library foundation has raised over \$3.5 million from private sources. Some of the initiatives funded in FY20 included hundreds of programs at the library's branches and virtually featuring authors, musical and dance performances, demonstrations, storytelling and much more; thousands of incentives and prizes including books, earbuds and journals for children, teens and adults; augmented welcoming spaces such as better signage, book displays, couches and other seating and charging stations; amplified access to technology such as hotspots with unlimited data, Chromebooks and 3D pens; and the needed flexibility to respond to a different service model: curbside plus and providing resources, greater access and expanded programs to those most impacted by COVID's reach.

The community's philanthropic support allows the library foundation to respond to the many evolving and changing needs of the library and our community and makes possible services and opportunities that couldn't happen without this commitment. Gifts may be made to the annual fund for greatest need or designated to a specific branch, project or to the endowment. Our planned gift program includes The Anna E. Greenberg Legacy Society and The Legacy of Learning Society.

### **FY20 Library Foundation Board of Directors:**

- Samuel J. Brown, President
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"Anne Arundel County Public Library is a great asset. Keep up the good work," --Library customer