

# CONNECTING WITH THE COMMUNITY: TO THE BEACH & BEYOND



CITY OF VIRGINIA BEACH

**Public  
Library**

**ANNUAL REPORT  
FY 2023**

# MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Greetings,  
It's been another amazing year at Virginia Beach Public Library, thanks to our staff members and their hard work, dedication and passion for serving the community. Over the last year, our team has continued to increase residents' access to library buildings and services, added new partnerships to extend the library's reach beyond branch walls, and launched new and innovative collections and programs to meet residents' needs.



## **Increasing Service Hours**

Accessible Resources & Services for residents who are unable to read regular print due to low vision or physical disability, formerly known as Special Services, moved from the Bayside branch to Central Library, allowing VBPL to add six more hours of the service each week. VBPL also extended operating hours at most branches, returning to near pre-pandemic hours.

## **Out in the Community**

VBPL continued outreach visits to schools and other organizations to bring books and programs to residents who may not otherwise be able to visit a library. New this year, VBPL partnered with Atlantis Apartments Community Center and Marian Manor Retirement Community to create on-site library collections for their residents.

VBPL also partnered with City of Virginia Beach departments to reach residents out in the community. Participants in the “History Comes Alive” book club, a partnership with Virginia Beach History Museums, read a historical title and then learned about the history while visiting a Virginia Beach historic home. Kayak Book Talks, a partnership with Parks & Recreation, saw residents reading and discussing adventure titles and kayaking in local waters.

In the summer, VBPL staff deliver Books on the Beach, riding bikes from the Oceanfront branch to points at the oceanfront, placing books and library information in the hands of residents (and visitors, too).

## **The First to Lend Surfboards**

Like libraries around the country, VBPL has long offered unique items, from telescopes to coding robots, for residents to borrow and try out at home. With the launch of its Explore Outdoors collection in June 2023, VBPL became the first library in the U.S. to lend surfboards. Funded by a \$4,000 grant from the Virginia Beach Library Foundation, the collection includes surfboards, pickleball sets, kites and a variety of other items that residents can borrow to try a new hobby or sport before making a purchase.

I hope you enjoy reading about these and other initiatives in this report, just a few of many achievements during the last fiscal year. I also hope you get a sense of the passion and creativity that VBPL staff invest in providing high quality library services for everyone in our community – and the positive impacts these services make in residents' lives.

Sincerely,  
Kimberly B. Knight



# OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

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DIGITAL  
SERVICES

YOUTH  
SUCCESS

INCLUSION  
& ACCESS

## OUR VISION

Virginia Beach Public Library fosters an innovative, inclusive and engaged community.

## OUR MISSION

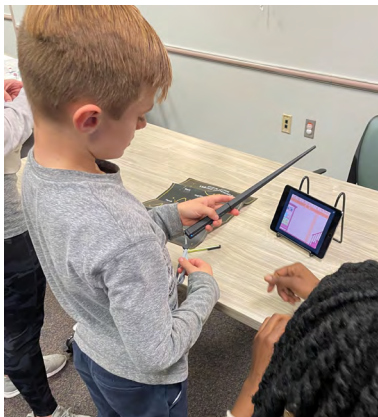
We meet the lifelong needs of our diverse community by providing access to quality resources, engaging programs and welcoming spaces.



# DIGITAL SERVICES

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We provide access to a broad range of digital content, resources, services and tools that meet the needs of our diverse community.



## Computer Science Education Week Programs

Virginia Beach Public Library (VBPL) celebrated Computer Science Education Week (Dec. 5 – 10) to highlight the opportunities residents have to explore computer programming and technology resources at their local public library. During the week, 127 people attended programs on topics ranging from maintaining a secure online presence to proper drone operation. VBPL offers year-round technology programming, including coding, to spark curiosity and foster an interest in 21st century job skills.



**593,970**  
DIGITAL ARTICLES  
ACCESSED



**2,710,211**  
ONLINE VISITS



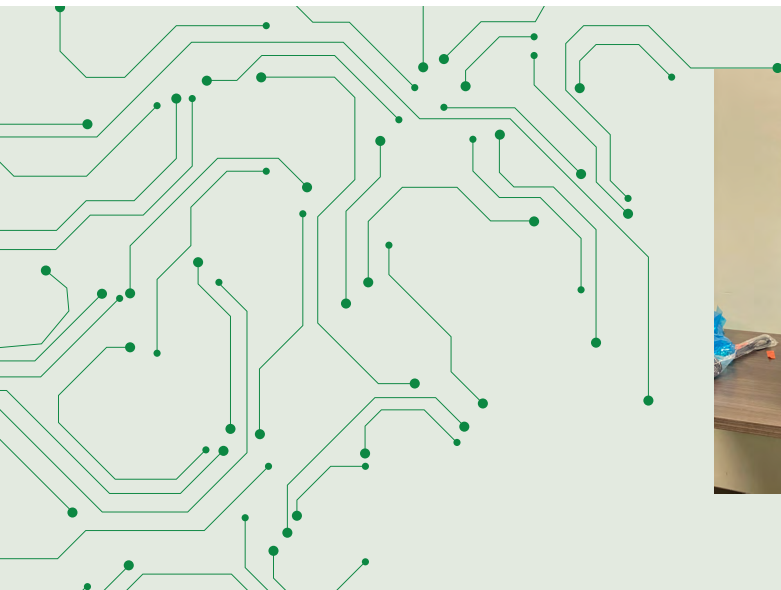
**51,594**  
COMPUTER SESSIONS





More than 100 people headed to Central Library on May 13 for VBPL's Cardboard Carnival Showcase, the grand finale for a VBPL and VBCPS collaboration that began last winter. Attendees played 25 table-top games that were created by students in grades 4-8, using cardboard, craft supplies, motorized elements and other electrical components. Funding for the project was provided by the Virginia Beach Library Foundation.

# CARDBOARD CARNIVAL





# YOUTH SUCCESS

We provide youth with resources and opportunities that inspire a thirst of knowledge, spark creativity, celebrate diversity, bolster self-efficacy, and empower active participation in community life.



## Extended Free Access to VBPL Accounts to VBCPS Teachers and Assistants January 2023

VBPL extended free full-service account access to VBCPS teachers and classroom staff in January of 2023. VBCPS and VBPL's partnership to provide public library access to all VBCPS students and educators is the latest in a long line of successful partnerships in order to maximize learning opportunities and resources for Virginia Beach children.



## 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten Relunched January 2023

VBPL updated the popular reading program with a refreshed design and new incentives to help customers better connect with library resources that grow young readers and to make the challenge more accessible. Participants and families tracked progress on Beanstack, earned digital badges and stickers along the way, plus a free book of their choice and dolphin backpack upon completion.



# SUMMER READING CHALLENGE

JUNE - AUGUST 2023

VBPL encouraged children and families to read this past summer, offering age-specific Summer reading goals and collectible celebration tags as incentives, along with some creative activities.



# 9,898 READERS



## TITLE I PARTNERSHIP WITH VBCPS

During the Summer Reading Challenge, Virginia Beach Public Library visited **72 classrooms at 15 Title I schools**, providing activities and books for over **719 kids in grades K-3**.





# Battle of the Books

== TWO THOUSAND TWENTY THREE ==

5th GRADE

MIDDLE SCHOOL EDITION



This year, 335 fifth grade students from 40 schools across Virginia Beach competed in our preliminary battles during the month of February. All 77 teams demonstrated an amazing level of preparation, teamwork, and good sportsmanship. The Grand Finale was full of suspense and some nail-biting moments as the six teams from Holland ES, John B. Dey ES, Old Donation School, Trantwood ES, Windsor Oaks ES and a homeschool group battled their way through the competition. Congratulations to Knights of the Round Fable from John B. Dey Elementary, our 2023 Battle of the Books champions!

**77** FROM **40**  
TEAMS SCHOOLS



It was a joy to be back in person for our 4th Annual Battle of the Books: Middle School Edition program! After a series of gasp-worthy battles, complete with thrilling tiebreakers, our 2023 Champions are Vikram G., Bennett V., Eeshan D., and Sam S. of the Riptides!



**43**  
TEAMS

**165**  
MIDDLE  
SCHOOLERS

## Teen Readers Night Out March 2023

The Teen Readers Society (TRS) provides teen book-lovers with opportunities to connect with each other while engaging in book-related activities. Thirty-seven teens attended the first TRS after-hours event, enjoying crafts, a hot cocoa bar, an escape room, game, book trivia and “book tastings,” where they sampled a variety of books. Door prizes included Barnes & Noble gift cards and copies of books autographed by the authors. The event was funded by the Friends of Virginia Beach Public Library.



## Holiday Toy Drive November 2023

During November and December Teen Advisory Group members collected, sorted and delivered 600 toys to Human Services to provide holiday toys for families here in Virginia Beach. Human Services served 800-1000 families with toys and meals.







## **Career Exploration Series for VBCPS 7th Graders**

### November 2022 - April 2023

Virginia Beach Public Library (VBPL) has partnered with Virginia Beach City Public Schools (VBCPS) to host a series of five career exploration programs for 7th grade students. The students identified career paths they are interested in learning about, and VBPL staff planned the programming. The series launched on Nov. 17, with 45 students from six VBCPS middle schools visiting the Virginia Beach Central Library to learn about the career experiences from individuals working in the fields of journalism and graphic design. In addition to Q&A sessions with the presenters, students participated in hands-on learning activities related to the career paths to help them identify their own strengths and interests and practice networking. After participating in the program, 90% of the students said the program helped them

explore future career options, and 75% reported feeling optimistic about their futures. VBPL will host an additional four career exploration programs in the 2023-2024 school year, highlighting another eight careers that students have expressed interest in exploring. The VBPL/VBCPS partnership is initiative 4.3C in the City of Virginia Beach's FY22-23 Strategic Plan and is funded through a \$18,000 grant from the Virginia Beach Public Library Foundation.





# INCLUSION & ACCESS

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We remove barriers to access and create an environment where everyone feels welcome, accepted and included, regardless of how they self-identify.

## 47,749

**ITEMS CIRCULATED**

for those who are blind or print disabled



## Accessible Resources & Services

In March 2023, VBPL's Accessible Resources & Services (ARS) unit, formerly Special Services, relocated from Bayside Area Library to the Central Library to provide customers a more central location and an additional six service hours each week. ARS is a National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled sub-regional library, lending audiobooks and players, electronic braille displays, large print books and descriptive DVDs. Staff provide residents with one-on-one assistance and host programs for learning and fellowship opportunities.





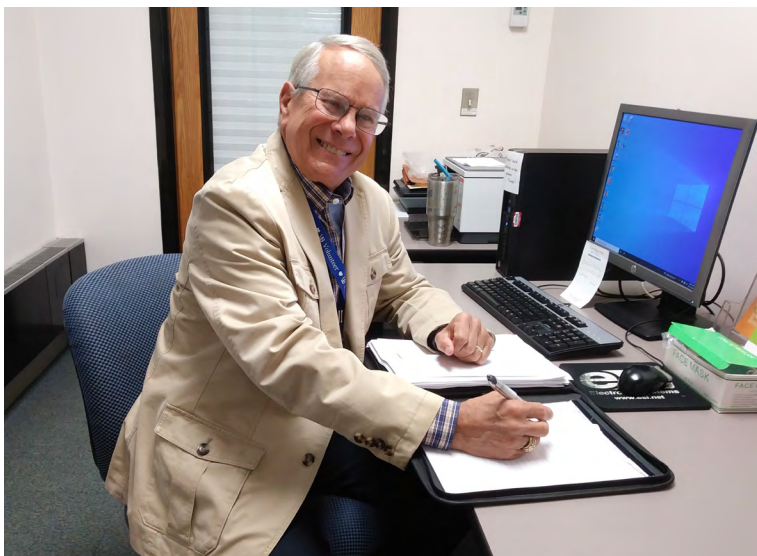
## Adult Readers Night Out

“Readers’ Night Out: Summer Edition” attracted 54 adults to Central Library on June 9 where they enjoyed literary-themed trivia and crafts, scavenger hunts, a workshop with local “Book Artist” Maggie Kerrigan, reading recommendation activities and more. The event is funded by the Virginia Beach Library Foundation.



## Books on the Beach

VBPL staff braved the summer heat, pedaling bikes loaded with books to the boardwalk during weekdays in June and July of 2023. Staff chatted with more than 1,300 residents and visitors during the summer, promoting library services, sharing information and gifting books for all ages. Bike stops included Grommet Island Park, the pier area, the Old Coast Guard Station, the 17th Street park and more.



## Career Coaching

VBPL’s volunteer career coaches like Ralph Volk to help customers write resumes, complete online job applications, prepare for interviews and more. A career coach since 2016, Ralph has 35 years of hiring manager experience and has helped countless residents advance in their careers.

Library customer Leah S. credits Ralph with helping her land her dream job and making a difference in her life. “This is the first job I have ever landed with a company where I didn’t know anyone and had to rely on the strength of my resume and interview,” she said. “I believe I would not have been considered for this position without your help!”



# LIBRARIES SUPPORT LIFELONG LEARNING

## Career Online High School

VBPL offers Career Online High School (COHS) for residents who wish to earn an accredited high school diploma or acquire certification in one of 10 career areas. Since COHS began in 2016, 45 students have earned their high school diploma and career certification.

This year, five graduates finished the program and earned their high school diploma and career certification.

VBPL launched a strategic marketing campaign to build awareness of the program, resulting in 46 prospective student inquiries.



# 46

**GRADUATES**  
SINCE PROGRAM START

# 7

**GRADUATES**  
IN 2022

I didn't have a high school diploma, so my choices were limited...I would like to have a career in the medical field...

-Tomoyo E.



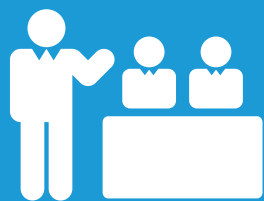
Career Online High School Graduation Ceremony, March 2023





## Embedded Libraries

Building on the successful embedded library for children launched in 2021 at Soap-N-Suds laundromat, VBPL's Programming & Community Outreach (PCO) team liaised with more community partners to add embedded library sites. On May 12, 2023 an embedded library for all ages launched at Atlantis Apartments Community Center, including books for children, teens and adults, early-learning games, and information about VBPL resources. The first embedded library for adults launched at Marian Manor Retirement Community in June 2023.



**822**  
MEETING ROOM  
BOOKINGS



**614,393**  
CUSTOMER  
QUESTIONS  
ANSWERED

*(approximation based on quarterly tallies)*



**669**  
HOURS  
RESEARCHING  
(32 FOR HOURS  
NOSTALGIC VB)







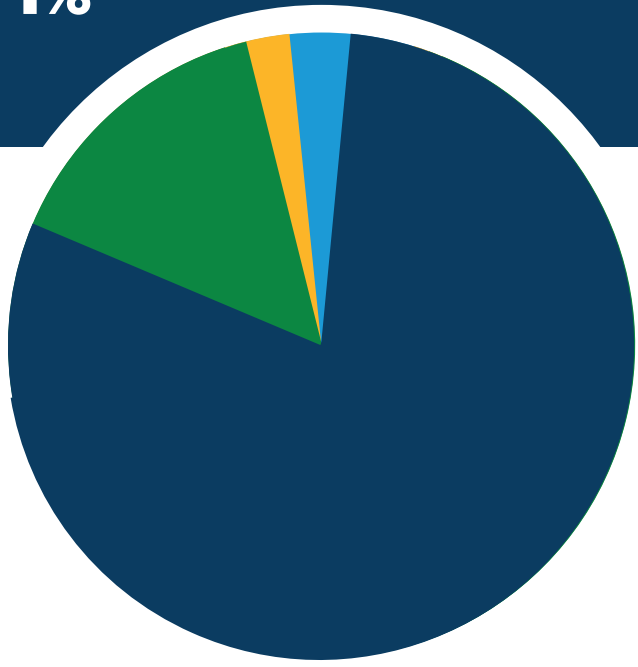
# BEHIND THE SCENES

## Did You Know?

**VBPL's budget is less than 1% of the City's budget.**

## VBPL's Budget \$20,313,126

	Salaries & Benefits <b>\$16,268,148</b>		Donations <b>\$112,000</b>
	Operating Budget <b>\$3,669,263</b>		Law Library <b>\$263,715</b>







**2,079,065**  
ITEMS IN COLLECTION



**259,868**  
HOLDS PLACED

**2,044,706** TOTAL ITEMS CIRCULATED

**1,450,736**  
PHYSICAL ITEMS CIRCULATED

**593,970**  
ITEMS DOWNLOADED



**54**

ITEMS CHECKED  
OUT EVERY HOUR  
WE'RE OPEN!



AN AVERAGE OF **30**  
PEOPLE WALK IN EVERY HOUR WE ARE OPEN

**10**  
BRANCHES

**26,884**  
HOURS OPEN



**799,323**  
VISITS





## Explore Outdoors Collection Makes Big Waves

VBPL became the first library in the country to lend surfboards with the launch of the Explore Outdoors collection on June 15 at the Princess Anne Area Library. In addition to surfboards, customers were excited to be able to borrow more than 20 unique items to use for outdoor fun including kites, giant lawn games, a picnic basket and a pickleball set. Most items were checked out within a few days of the launch. VBPL saw record-setting engagement on social media related to the collection and received media inquiries and coverage from WAVY, WTKR, The Virginian-Pilot, WHRO and the Princess Anne Independent. The collection was funded by the Virginia Beach Library Foundation.



## Expanded Branch Hours

VBPL increased residents' library access by extending closing time from 6 to 7 p.m., Monday through Thursday, at six branches and changing opening time from 9:30 to 9 a.m. at the three drive-up windows Monday through Saturday. The changes brought VBPL's operations closer to pre-pandemic hours.



## VB Thrive Partnership

VBPL partnered with United Way of South Hampton Roads and provided space at Central Library to host VBThrive. Through resources and support, VBThrive helps residents who struggle to make ends meet but do not qualify for state or government assistance, and moves them on the path to self-sufficiency.



## Making Improvements

Great Neck Area Library reopened March 20, 2023 after being closed seven months for renovations. Customers enjoy accessing the updated meeting and study rooms, refreshed program spaces and restrooms, and new carpeting. Great Neck is the final of eight VBPL branch renovations funded by a \$5.8 million Capital Improvement Program (CIP) awarded in 2016. Renovations were completed at Princess Anne, Bayside, Kempsville and Central libraries in 2019, at Pungo-Blackwater in 2020, at Windsor Woods in 2021 and at Oceanfront in 2022.



## Winning Awards

VBPL's Marketing & Communication team received Honorable Mention in the "Library Journal" national Marketer of the Year award in October 2022 for a data-driven marketing campaign promoting Career Online High School in March 2022. For the same campaign, the team received a Pinnacle Award of Excellence from the Public Relations Society of America, Hampton Roads Chapter, in the "Most Effective Campaign on a Shoestring Budget" category, November 2022.







“It’s not every day that your kids have the opportunity to read a book by your childhood classmate...”

@msaarijarvi via Instagram

**Library lovers visit and connect with VBPL on social media, too.**

**1,712,706**

IMPRESSIONS *(potential views)*

**103,483**

ENGAGEMENTS *(people who liked, shared, clicked or commented)*

**9,800**

CLICKS ON LINKS TO PROGRAMS, SERVICES & MORE



“My son is thoroughly enjoying his use of the 3-D printers to make fidget spinners!”

- Natalia via Facebook



# THE GREAT GATSBY GALA

*The Great Gatsby Gala, April 2023, raised more than \$12,000 for Accessible Resources & Services*

## \$75,511 FUNDED IN FY 23

Foundation grants funded VBPL's Summer Reading Challenge and several programs for customers and staff alike.



Library of Things: Explore Outdoors Collection

For more information about VBLF, visit [www.VBLibraryFoundation.org](http://www.VBLibraryFoundation.org)



## VIRGINIA BEACH LIBRARY FOUNDATION

In FY 2023, Virginia Beach Library Foundation (VBLF) funded the following library programs and initiatives:

- Cardboard Carnival, **\$2,080**
- Middle School Career Exploration, **\$2,845**
- Older Adult Services, **\$11,194**
- Summer Reading Challenge, **\$35,298**
- Teen Services Support, **\$3,421**
- Library of Things: Explore Outdoors, **\$4,003**
- Special Services Workstation, **\$1,136**
- Central Library Teen Space furniture and electronics, **\$7,389**
- Moving Compact Shelving from Bayside Area Library to Central Library, **\$8,145**





# FRIENDS



Friends Board Member Bob Gilson found a rare gem while sorting book donations at the Central Library. It was a dusty first edition of “Reports of Cases Determined in the General Court of Virginia from 1730 to 1740 and from 1769 to 1772,” printed in 1829 in Charlottesville by Thomas Jefferson. An estimated 82 copies are known to exist. Bob and fellow Friends board members knew just the right place for such a special book. On July 22, 2022, in a ceremony at Central Library, they donated the book to a representative of the Jefferson Library at Monticello.



The Friends of Virginia Beach Public Library has been raising funds and supporting Virginia Beach Public Library since 1976. Members volunteer precious time to run the Friends Book Shop, sort and sell books, and much more. In the last decade, they’ve granted nearly \$1 million to support the library, including the Summer Reading Challenge, early literacy outreach and programs for all ages.

For more information about the Friends of VBPL, visit [www.FriendsVBLibrary.org](http://www.FriendsVBLibrary.org)

# \$91,400

GRANTED IN FY 23

Supporting creation of VBPL’s Summer Reading Challenge and thousands of programs for children, teens and adults.



# WE OUR VOLUNTEERS



**11,601**  
HOURS

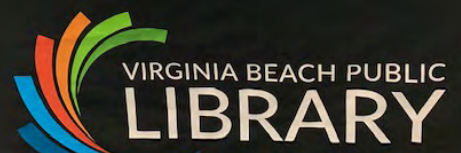


**492**  
VOLUNTEERS



## **We Love Our Volunteers**

Volunteers of all ages work alongside VBPL staff (in branches and behind the scenes) to plan and implement programs, process new materials, help with Summer Reading Challenge, assist with displays, archives and more.





# GROWING LEADERS

## All Staff Training Day May 4, 2023

VBPL held All-Staff Training Day on May 4, bringing 216 staff members together for learning, sharing and connecting in person as one library system for the first time since the pandemic. VBPL board member Lisa Varga was one of 16 subject matter experts who led sessions on topics such as customer service, technology, safety and more, all designed to help staff enhance skills and knowledge to continue providing top-notch library services.



## Scholarship Winners

Jordan Fowler and Kelly Pecora each received \$1,000 scholarships from the Friends of VBPL to invest in their library-related master's degree programs.

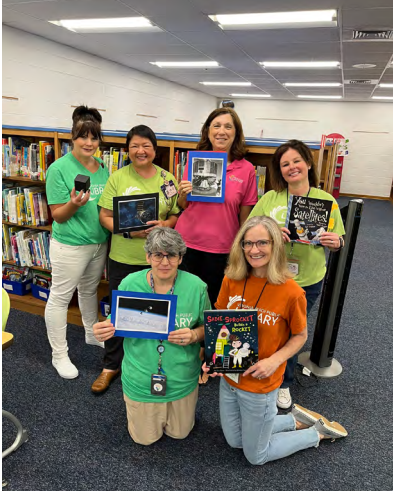
## WE RECOGNIZE AND AWARD OUR STAFF FOR THEIR **SERVICE AND DEDICATION**



VIRGINIA BEACH PUBLIC LIBRARY  
**SERVICE AWARDS**  
AND RECOGNITION







CITY OF VIRGINIA BEACH  
**Public  
Library**

