

# BLACKWATER REGIONAL LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

Franklin Branch

Wednesday

April 16, 2025

Board of Trustees Meeting—3:00 pm

**Budget and Finance Committee** will *not* meet



**Blackwater Regional Library  
Franklin Branch**

**280 N. College Dr.  
Franklin, Virginia 23851**



**Please notify Amy at 757-653-0298 x 304 if you are unable to attend or need directions.**

# Personnel and Policy Committee Packet Contents

**April 16, 2025**

- Agenda – April 2025
- Minutes – March 2025
- Library Director's Report
- Library Bills
- Monthly Statistics Report
- Staffing and Workshop Report

**Blackwater Regional Library  
Board Meeting  
April 16, 2025**

**Amended Agenda**

Franklin Branch

Call to Order

Adoption of Agenda – April 2025

Presentation by Scott Carr, Wells Fargo Advisors

Approval of Minutes – March 2025

Public Comment

Correspondence

Director's Report

Committee Reports

- Budget and Finance
- Personnel and Policy
- Long Range Planning

Review of Approval of Accounts Payable and File for Annual Audit

Unfinished Business

New Business

Board Member Comments/Announcements

Announcement of Next Meeting

- May 21, 2025

Adjournment

**BLACKWATER REGIONAL LIBRARY  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES  
March 19, 2025**

**Present**

Sylvia Claggett – Isle of Wight County  
Deborah Dawson – Surry County  
Terri Hedgepeth – City of Franklin  
Charlene Herrala – Isle of Wight County  
Pam Lease – City of Franklin  
Kathy Lippard – Isle of Wight County  
Jessica Moore – Sussex County  
Judge Alfreda Talton-Harris – City of Franklin  
Pam Vaughan – Isle of Wight County  
Johanna Wiggins – Isle of Wight County  
Bill Worsham – Southampton County  
Ben Neal – Library Director  
Bonnie Lauver – Assistant Library Director  
Debbie Carter – Budget & Finance Manager

**Remote (via Zoom)**

**Absent**

Ora Briggs – Sussex County  
MeChelle Blunt – Southampton County  
Jennifer Cuthbertson – Southampton County

Chair, Deborah Dawson called the meeting of the Blackwater Regional Library Board of Trustees to order at 3:00 p.m. at the Franklin Branch.

**Consideration of Remote Meeting Participation Requests**

None

**Agenda**

Ms. Moore moved, and Ms. Lease seconded that the agenda be approved as amended. The vote was unanimous.

**Minutes**

Ms. Vaughan moved, and Ms. Lease seconded the minutes be approved as presented. The vote was unanimous.

**Public Comment**

None

**Correspondence**

None

**Library Director's Report**

Please review the Strategic Planning Survey results in your handouts, and contact Mr. Neal with questions.

Ms. Lauver reported on the very successful Winter Reading Program. It ended the first Saturday in March, with over 450 participants, including 16 classrooms. BRL expanded the program to include adults in 2025. Participants checked out more than 8,000 books, which was a huge increase over last year's program. Stay tuned for the next big adventure! Summer Reading kicks off the last week in June.

Virginia Legislation update – Mr. Neal – The Virginia budget will not be finalized for a bit. Two bills directly affecting public libraries were presented, but neither passed. The minimum wage bill (HB1925) advanced again, but is widely viewed to be a likely veto candidate. Virginia minimum wage is currently \$12.41/hour. BRL's minimum salary will increase to \$13.75 (from \$13.50) in July.

**Committee Reports**

*Budget & Finance* – Ms. Moore – Our Wells Fargo Advisor, Scott Carr, will make his annual presentation to the Board at the April meeting. Please send any questions for Mr. Carr regarding the Trust, or monthly reports, to Mr. Neal by April 1.

*Personnel & Policy* – Ms. Vaughan – The committee consulted with Budget & Finance to refine the current Reserve Fund Policy. The proposed policy was sent out in the March packet. Mr. Neal stated that the changes will tie up loose ends of the current policy. Ms. Dawson called for discussion/questions, then a vote. The vote was unanimous.

*Director's Evaluation* – Ms. Vaughan distributed Director's evaluation forms, and asked that Trustees complete and return them by the April Board meeting. Forms may be returned to Amy at the Central office, or brought to the April meeting.

*Long Range Planning* – Ms. Hedgepeth – The committee met prior to the Board meeting. Planning meetings will be held in different localities to address questions from the Strategic Planning survey.

### **Accounts Payable**

Ms. Vaughan moved, and Ms. Hedgepeth seconded that the January and February accounts payable be filed for the Annual Audit. The vote was unanimous.

### **Unfinished Business**

*Nominating Committee* – Ms. Dawson – The Nominating Committee for 2025: Pam Lease, Chair; Ora Briggs, and Kathy Lippard. They will bring a slate of officers for next fiscal year to the May Board meeting.

### **New Business**

None

### **Board Member Comments/Announcements**

Ms. Hedgepeth – Rawls Museum Arts – great quilt show and staff show up now; fabulous gift shop!

Ms. Wiggins – inquired about the executive order regarding the IMLS reduction. Mr. Neal said there should be more clarity in the coming days, and would send out information as it comes in. LSTA covers things like databases, websites, etc. No direct funding to BRL.

Ms. Claggett – Sorority will be donating African-American books to IOW and Surry branches.

Ms. Lippard – Smithfield Branch Manager, Terry Andrews, was the Grand Marshall of the St. Patrick's Day parade! Winter Reading was very successful in Smithfield.

Mr. Worsham – inquired about dates for locality budget meetings. Mr. Neal will send information.

Ms. Vaughan – Mr. Neal's goals and self-evaluation are attached to evaluation forms to assist. Personnel & Policy will meet on April 2<sup>nd</sup> at 3:00 p.m.

Ms. Moore – Please check to see if your locality Zooms/streams budget meetings. Wakefield's book club just read *The Librarian of Burned Books*, definitely worth the read! Mr. Neal will send catalog link.

### **Announcement of Next Meeting**

The next Blackwater Regional Library Board of Trustees meeting will be on April 16, 2025 at 3:00 p.m. at the Franklin Branch.

### **Adjournment**

Ms. Lease moved, and Judge Harris seconded the meeting be adjourned. The vote was unanimous.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Debbie Carter for  
Sylvia Claggett, Secretary



Franklin, Isle of Wight, Southampton, Surry, and Sussex  
[www.blackwaterlib.org](http://www.blackwaterlib.org)

# Director's Report

## March 2025

# Central/System-wide Updates

- BRL celebrated National Library Week in early April; with special programs and promotions.
- A single vacancy system-wide (PT-Outreach services)
- Checkout of materials was almost 30,000 in March (highest March since 2017)
- Heading into final quarter of FY, circulation +8%, new users +13%, and attendees per program +4% over same period in FY24



National Library Week  
April 6-12th



# Community Impact



Read Across America Week  
Events throughout community  
including Surry Marketplace,  
Sussex Central Elementary, and  
Smithfield Main Street Baptist



St. Patrick's Day Parade in  
Smithfield



Spring Fling event at  
S.P. Morton  
Elementary in Franklin

15 Outreach programs and activities in the  
community in March reaching over 1000 people



# City of Franklin

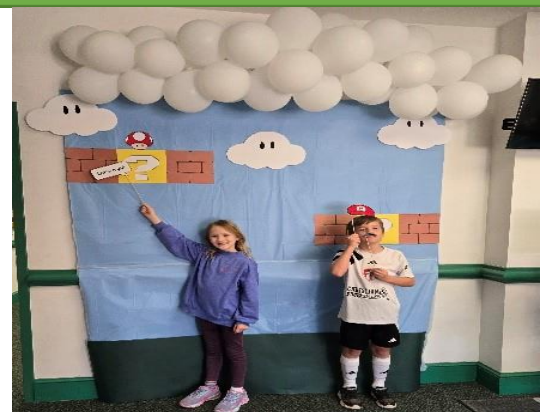
- Franklin Library had a great month for its weekly story times, where the children and their parents had the opportunity to engage in some morning music and movement to get their wiggles out!
- Library staff provided Pop-Up Libraries and Deposit Collections to East Pavilion and The Village at Woods Edge
- Popular adult programs, including Craftsy where Franklin patrons made Gourd Birdhouses



# Isle of Wight County

- Carrollton branch hosted their first Mario Party, which was very popular!
- Smithfield branch hosted a variety of programs for youth and adults alike, including the popular Mahjong program
- Windsor introduced a new teen program, “Switch It On”; as well as the all ages “Family Game Day”
- A special thanks to Delta Sigma Theta sorority for their African-American Book Drive donations to our libraries in Isle of Wight and Surry.

Between Outreach and In-House programming, 60 programs reaching over 1600 members of the community were delivered in IOW County in March





# Southampton County

- Fun and educational programs for all ages, including Story Times, Book Clubs, and crafts programs
- In addition to the usual variety of programs, Courtland Branch was fortunate to host Smokey Bear and VA Department of Forestry for a special fire prevention program
- Judge Harris led an engaging presentation for Women's History Month



# Surry County

- Staff had a blast at Surry Marketplace for Read Across America Week!
- A busy month of fun programs for all ages—over 40 programs offered in March and over 2000 books & materials circulated in the community
- A special thank you to Surry County for repairing the sidewalk at the Surry Branch Library



# Sussex County

- Staff went to Sussex Central Elementary School for Read Across America Week to read to kindergarten and first grade classes.
- Waverly Branch hosted a super-fun Squishmallow program at the Waverly Branch. Attendees made friendship bracelets, built marshmallow towers, had a dance party and had a blast!



# Blackwater Regional Library

## Library Bills

March 2025

DATE	TRANSACTION TYPE	MEMO/DESCRIPTION	NUM	AMOUNT
360IT Partners				
03/19/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11520	-6,213.18
03/19/2025	Bill		CW270873	90.00
03/19/2025	Bill		MSP271203	6,123.18
03/31/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11542	-817.40
03/31/2025	Bill		MSP272435	817.40
AFLAC				
03/31/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11543	-903.05
03/31/2025	Bill		650085	903.05
Amazon Capital Services				
03/31/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11544	-1,143.92
03/31/2025	Bill		1J3K-FTQV-14GG	1,043.51
03/31/2025	Bill		14WK-CW4N-MHLQ	100.41
Anthem Blue Cross/Blue Shield				
03/19/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11521	-8,744.00
03/19/2025	Bill		000856847F	8,744.00
AT&T				
03/31/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11545	-3.43
03/31/2025	Bill		1181079658	3.43
Baker & Taylor				
03/19/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11522	-4,159.59
03/19/2025	Bill		5019388346	4,159.59
03/31/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11546	-6,732.20
03/31/2025	Bill		5019408941	6,732.20
Baker & Taylor - Laminate				
03/19/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11523	-275.62
03/19/2025	Bill		5019403062	275.62
03/31/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11547	-653.32
03/31/2025	Bill		5019424742	653.32
Cengage Learning, Inc./Gale				
03/19/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11524	-65.58
03/19/2025	Bill		86974342	65.58
03/31/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11548	-422.62
03/31/2025	Bill		87057903	32.79
03/31/2025	Bill		87020345	389.83



# Blackwater Regional Library

## Library Bills

March 2025

DATE	TRANSACTION TYPE	MEMO/DESCRIPTION	NUM	AMOUNT
Document Systems, Inc.				
03/31/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11549	-2,676.74
03/31/2025	Bill		144466	2,676.74
Dodson Pest Control				
03/19/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11525	-50.00
03/19/2025	Bill		30-098807-0224 25	50.00
03/31/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11550	-50.00
03/31/2025	Bill		300988070324 25	50.00
Dominion Energy Virginia				
03/31/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11551	-1,198.47
03/31/2025	Bill		3233130008 3.31.2025	1,198.47
EBSCO				
03/31/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11552	-19,239.00
03/31/2025	Bill		91011017599	19,239.00
H2O To Go				
03/31/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11553	-54.50
03/31/2025	Bill		7825 3.31.2025	54.50
Marlin Leasing Corporation				
03/19/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11526	-1,598.72
03/19/2025	Bill		4115753	1,598.72
MidAmerica Books				
03/19/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11527	-285.50
03/19/2025	Bill		0062862	285.50
Midwest Tape				
03/19/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11528	-1,241.77
03/19/2025	Bill		506844314	1,241.77
03/31/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11554	-2,475.32
03/31/2025	Bill		506910926	2,475.32
NewsBank, Inc.				
03/31/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11555	-8,594.00
03/31/2025	Bill		RT2003668	8,594.00
Overdrive, Inc				
03/19/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11529	-2,233.25
03/19/2025	Bill		03100DA25078426	735.72

# Blackwater Regional Library

## Library Bills

March 2025

DATE	TRANSACTION TYPE	MEMO/DESCRIPTION	NUM	AMOUNT
03/19/2025	Bill		03100DA25080661	30.64
03/19/2025	Bill		03100CO25069848	1,466.89
03/31/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11556	-5,223.08
03/31/2025	Bill		03100DA25083724	140.00
03/31/2025	Bill		03100DA25086353	905.46
03/31/2025	Bill		03100CO25088037	3,465.19
03/31/2025	Bill		03100DA25093881	712.43
Petersburg Alarm Company				
03/31/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11557	-435.00
03/31/2025	Bill		212487	435.00
Queen B's Cleaning Service				
03/31/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11558	-1,096.50
03/31/2025	Bill		1772	1,096.50
Sentara Health Plans				
03/31/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11559	-15,218.00
03/31/2025	Bill		9691115	15,218.00
Smithfield News				
03/31/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11560	-30.00
03/31/2025	Bill		317996 3.31.2025	30.00
Southampton County				
03/31/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11561	-60.00
03/31/2025	Bill		Acct 46 3.5.2025	60.00
Southampton County (1)				
03/31/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11562	-428.69
03/31/2025	Bill		2025-03 (March gas)	428.69
Southside Gas Service, Inc.				
03/19/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11530	-964.20
03/19/2025	Bill		26187	964.20
03/31/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11563	-311.05
03/31/2025	Bill		26724	311.05
Spectrum Enterprise				
03/19/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11531	-105.75
03/19/2025	Bill		089740301030125	105.75

T & A Repairs, LLC.

# Blackwater Regional Library

## Library Bills

March 2025

DATE	TRANSACTION TYPE	MEMO/DESCRIPTION	NUM	AMOUNT
03/19/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11532	-128.92
03/19/2025	Bill		Inv. 37377	128.92
The Library Corporation				
03/19/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11533	-5,410.24
03/19/2025	Bill		INV11003164	5,410.24
The Tidewater News				
03/19/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11534	-49.00
03/19/2025	Bill		Acct 21237 3.12.2025	49.00
The Virginian Pilot				
03/31/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11564	-552.73
03/31/2025	Bill		596384600 3.20.2025	552.73
Total Business Solutions				
03/31/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11565	-519.90
03/31/2025	Bill		295094-0	519.90
TowneBank/Card Services				
03/19/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11535	-6,531.71
03/19/2025	Bill		6457 0001 3.19.2025	6,531.71
ULINE				
03/19/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11536	-3,143.29
03/19/2025	Bill		189927213	1,568.29
03/19/2025	Bill		189927214	1,575.00
Unique Management Services, Inc.				
03/19/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11537	-244.65
03/19/2025	Bill		6136534	244.65
Verizon (1)				
03/19/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11538	-163.08
03/19/2025	Bill		961660704 3.9.2025	163.08
03/31/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11566	-63.18
03/31/2025	Bill		624106825 3.22.2025	63.18
Verizon Wireless				
03/19/2025	Bill Payment (Check)		11539	-2,840.71
03/19/2025	Bill		6108056605	2,840.71

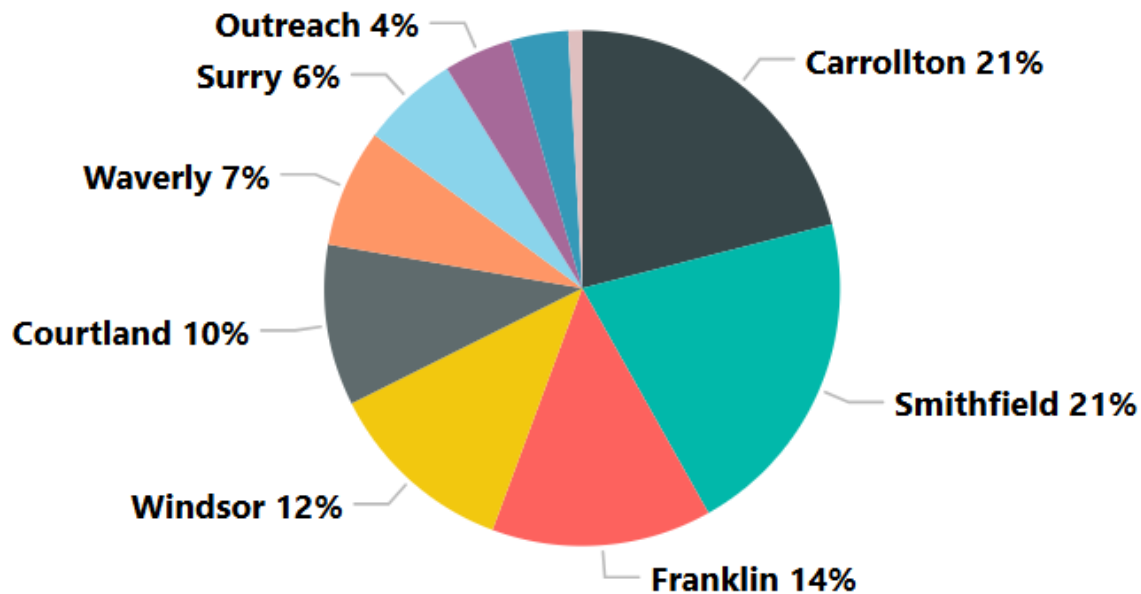


Franklin, Isle of Wight, Southampton, Surry, and Sussex  
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# March 2025

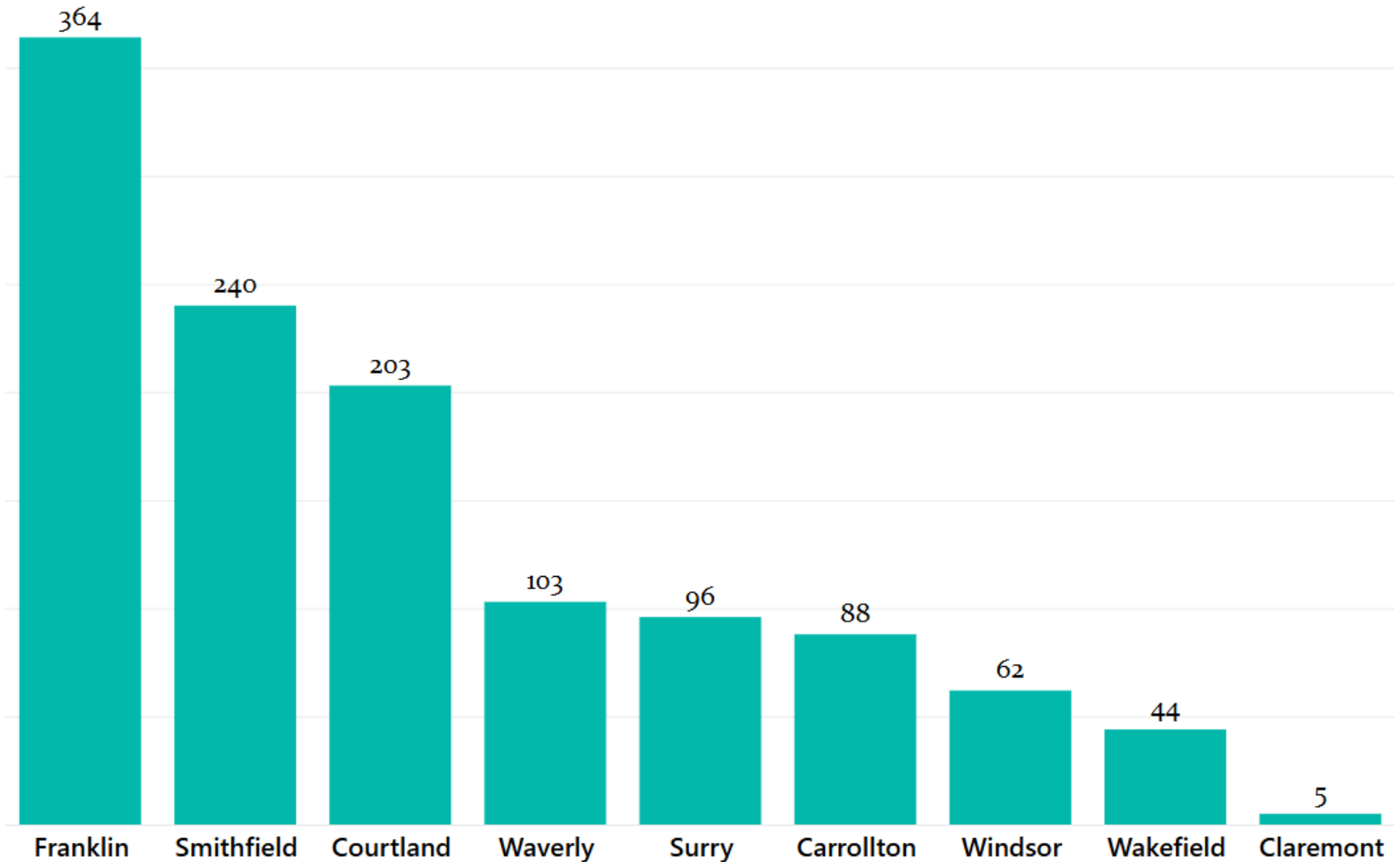
## Statistics

# Monthly Report: Patron Count



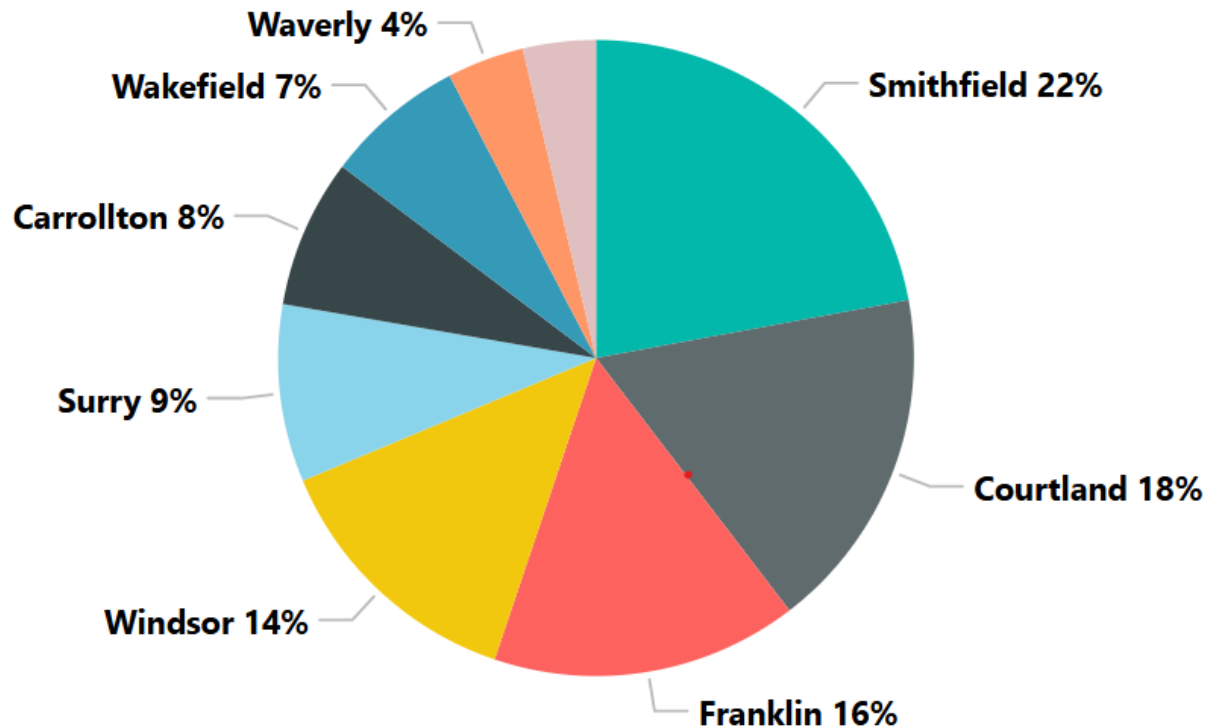
Branch	Patron Count
Carrollton	3371
Claremont	140
Courtland	1620
Franklin	2215
Outreach	686
Smithfield	3346
Surry	979
Wakefield	583
Waverly	1188
Windsor	1921
Total	16049

# Monthly Report: In-House Internet



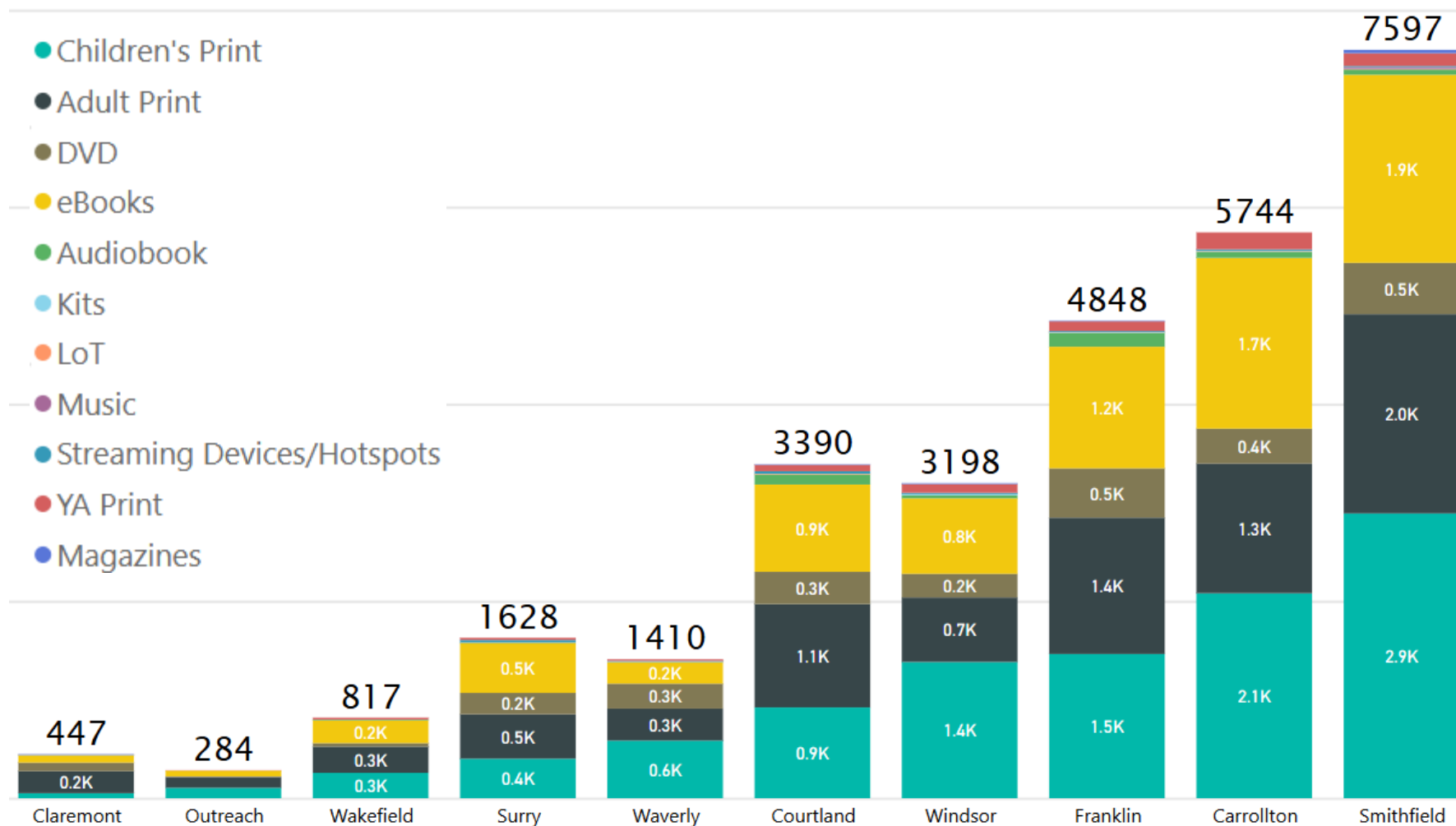


# Monthly Report: WiFi Use



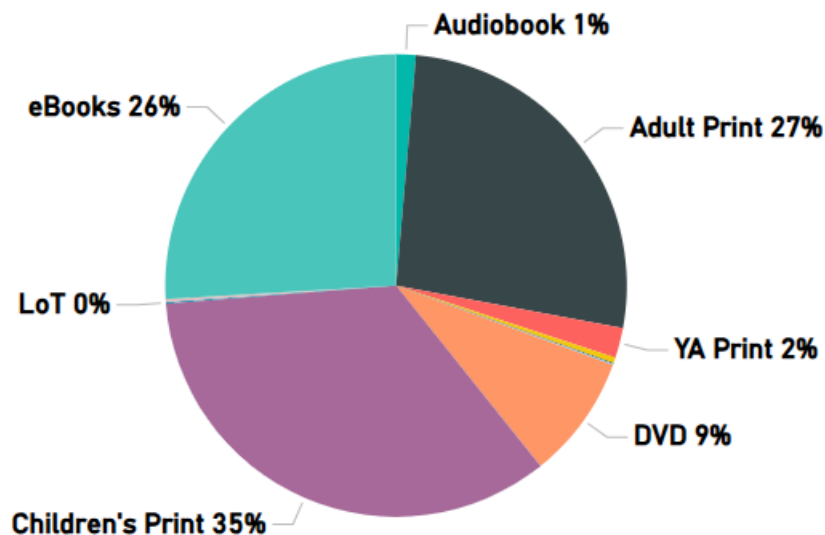
Branch	Wireless Internet Usage
Carrollton	114
Claremont	56
Courtland	264
Franklin	235
Smithfield	333
Surry	136
Wakefield	107
Waverly	59
Windsor	204
Total	1508

# Circulation Report: By Branch

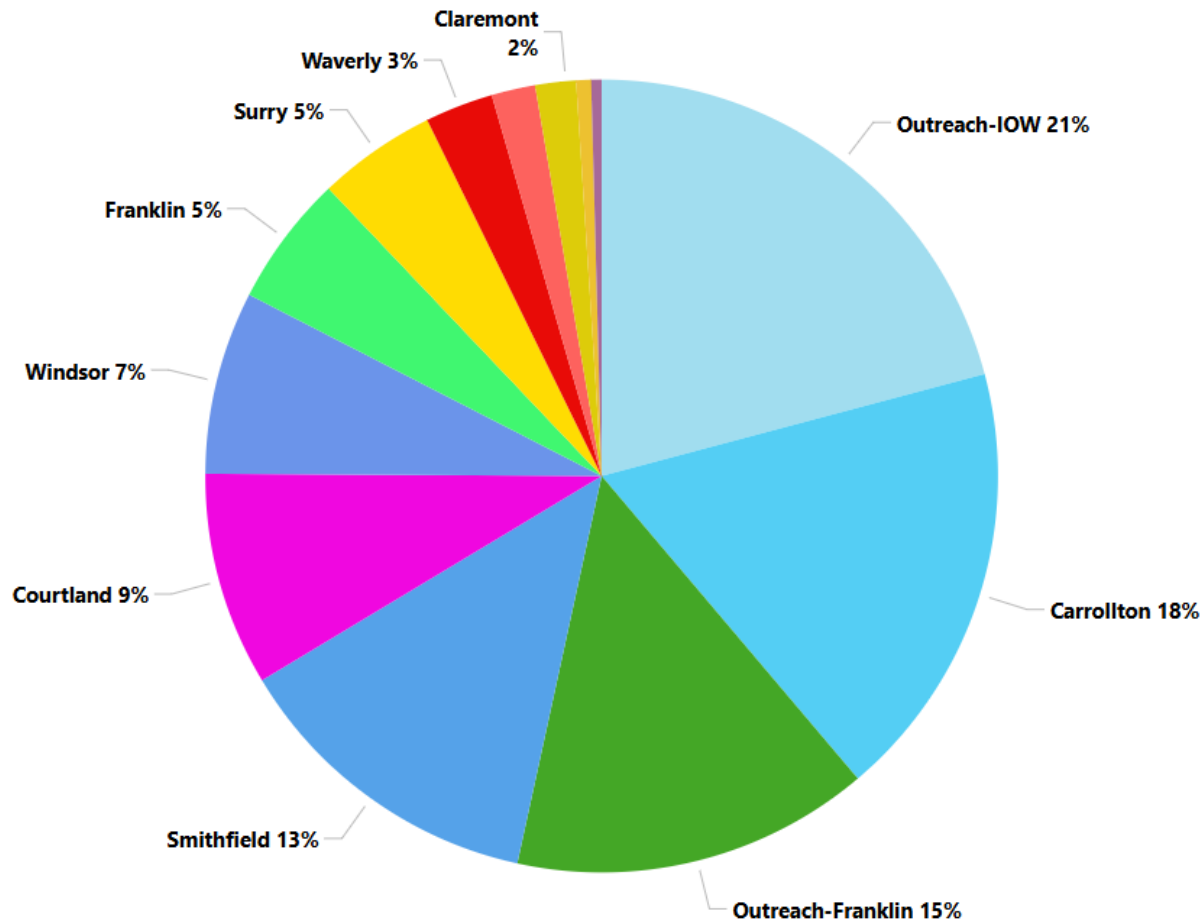


# Circulation Report: Type by Branch

Location	Adult Print	Children's Print	DVD	Audiobook	Kits	YA Print	Music	LoT	Magazines	eBooks	Streaming Devices/ Hotspots
Carrollton	1257	1783	359	88	7	225	0	4	0	1557	10
Claremont	242	61	83	0	0	3	0	0	6	57	5
Courtland	935	1089	317	143	4	85	2	8	2	795	20
Franklin	1325	1451	478	119	1	53	0	2	11	1391	11
Outreach	87	40	7	0	1	3	0	0	0	52	0
Smithfield	1713	2543	461	51	1	97	19	5	17	1841	11
Surry	433	461	258	1	3	25	0	2	1	504	17
Wakefield	278	274	71	4	0	7	0	0		230	1
Waverly	360	504	216	3	1	27	0	1	0	165	9
Windsor	622	1055	237	27	13	83	0	2	0	730	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>7252</b>	<b>9261</b>	<b>2487</b>	<b>436</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>608</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>7322</b>	<b>96</b>

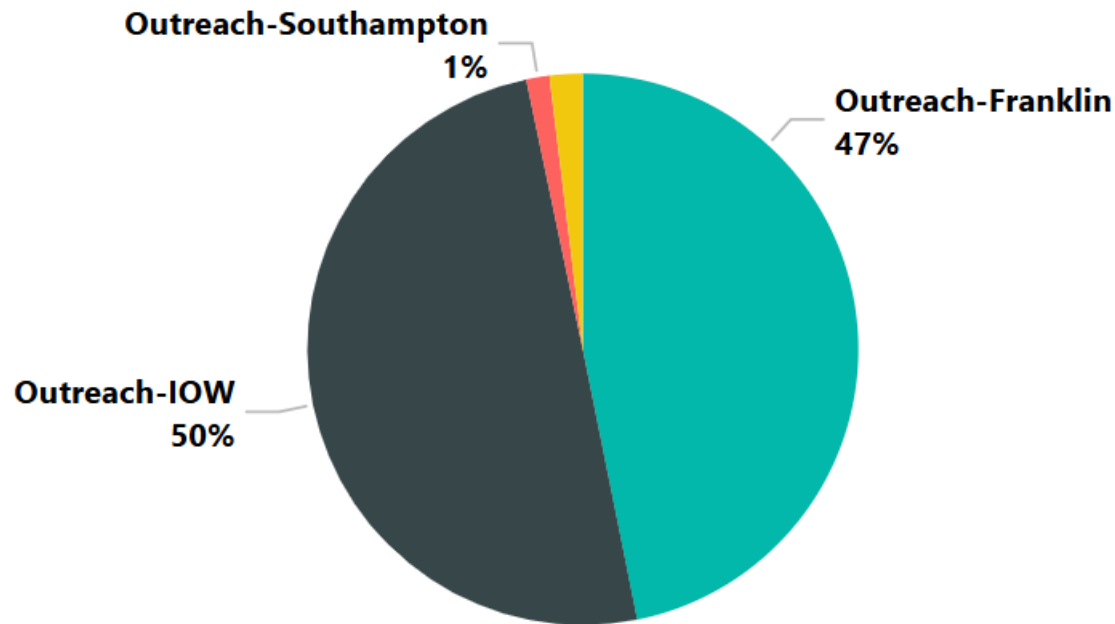


# Program Report: Total Participation



Location/Branch	Count
Carrollton	594
Claremont	55
Courtland	288
Franklin	177
Outreach-Franklin	483
Outreach-IOW	690
Outreach-Southampton	14
Outreach-Surry	20
Smithfield	429
Surry	160
Wakefield	59
Waverly	92
Windsor	247
<b>Total</b>	<b>3308</b>

# Outreach Report: Programs



Location/Branch	Outreach Programs	Attendance
Outreach-Franklin	2	483
Outreach-IOW	5	514
Outreach-Southampton	1	14
Outreach-Surry	1	20
Total	9	1031

# STAFFING AND WORKSHOP REPORT

## **Staffing Update April 2024 Blackwater Regional Library**

### **New Hires**

### **Promotions**

### **Transfers**

### **Separations**

### **Vacancies**

- Senior Library Assistant – Outreach Services



## STAFFING AND WORKSHOP REPORT

### Training Sessions – March 2025

**Isle of Wight County** staff completed a total of 1 training

**Surry County** staff completed a total of 8 trainings

**Central Office** staff completed a total of 1 training

**3/5/2025 – CSLP Summer Reading Champion Kick-off** - CSLP Summer Reading Champion Kickoff was a workshop that focused on the summer reading program and the CSLP manual. They didn't go too deep into all the manual has to offer but they did touch on a few of the activities in the manual and how you could use them in your library. The best thing about this meeting was the author Katherine Applegate who spoke and gave some words of encouragement. Overall, I think the meeting was a little short but a nice way to kick off the summer reading planning.

**3/10/2025 – Explore and Discover: Nature-Based and Activities at Your Library** - When children have regular contact with nature, they learn and grow better. Children who play, build, climb, grow, splash and read are developing their observation, visual-spatial, social, and literacy skills. Nature Explorium, a nature-based program at Middle Country Public Library (NY), encourages children to explore, discover and connect with nature. This webinar shared best practices and resources that can be used at the library to create outdoor spaces, along with indoor and outdoor nature activities. It's a unique way to connect literacy, learning and appreciation for nature as a regular part of the library visit.

**3/11/2025 – Catching Joy with Mychal Threets** - Catching Library Joy with Mychal Threets was an inspiring presentation by Mychal Threets, a well-known librarian and social media advocate for libraries. Here's a summary of what the session covered:

1. **Library Joy:** Mychal Threets emphasized the concept of "library joy," which is the happiness, wonder, and sense of community that libraries bring to people of all ages. He shared personal stories and experiences from his work as a librarian that highlight the transformative power of libraries.
2. **Community Impact:** Threets discussed how libraries serve as inclusive, welcoming spaces that foster connection, learning, and creativity. He highlighted the importance of libraries as places where everyone, regardless of background, can find belonging and support.
3. **Advocacy Through Social Media:** As a viral social media personality, Threets shared how he uses platforms like Instagram and TikTok to promote libraries, advocate for their value, and spread positivity about the work librarians do. His engaging and heartfelt content has helped bring attention to the vital role libraries play in communities.
4. **Empathy and Inclusion:** Threets spoke about the importance of empathy in library services, ensuring that libraries are accessible and welcoming to all, including marginalized or underserved populations.

## STAFFING AND WORKSHOP REPORT

5. **Inspiring the Next Generation:** He shared strategies for encouraging children and teens to discover the joy of reading and learning through libraries, emphasizing the role of librarians as mentors and cheerleaders for young readers.

The session was a celebration of libraries as spaces of joy, learning, and community, with Mychal Threats' infectious enthusiasm and passion shining through.

### **3/11/2025 – Using Data to Inform Library Services** - Using Data to Inform Library

Services focused on the importance of leveraging data to make informed decisions, improve services, and demonstrate the value of libraries to stakeholders. Here are some of the points that were covered:

1. **Data Collection Methods:** The session discussed various ways libraries can collect data, such as surveys, focus groups, usage statistics (e.g., circulation numbers, program attendance), and digital analytics (e.g., website traffic, database usage).
2. **Identifying Community Needs:** By analyzing demographic data, patron feedback, and community trends, libraries can better understand the needs and preferences of their communities. This helps tailor services, collections, and programs to meet those needs effectively.
3. **Measuring Impact:** Libraries can use data to measure the impact of their services, such as literacy programs, technology access, or community outreach initiatives. Metrics like patron satisfaction, program outcomes, and community engagement can help demonstrate the library's value.
4. **Evidence-Based Decision Making:** The session emphasized using data to guide strategic planning, resource allocation, and service improvements. For example, data might reveal which programs are most popular, which collections are underutilized, or where gaps in services exist.
5. **Advocacy and Funding:** Data is a powerful tool for advocacy. Libraries can use statistics and success stories to make a compelling case for funding, partnerships, and community support. Demonstrating measurable outcomes helps stakeholders see the tangible benefits of library services.
6. **Challenges and Ethical Considerations:** The session addressed challenges in data collection, such as ensuring privacy, avoiding bias, and interpreting data accurately. Ethical considerations, like transparency and patron consent, were discussed as well.
7. **Tools and Technologies:** Learned about tools and software for data analysis, such as LibInsight, Tableau, or even Excel, to help libraries organize, visualize, and interpret data effectively.

Overall, the session aimed to empower libraries to use data as a strategic asset, enabling them to make evidence-based decisions, improve services, and advocate for their continued relevance and impact in their communities.

**3/11/2025 – Public Libraries, Literacy and Learning Differences** - Public Libraries, Literacy, and Learning Differences focused on the role of public libraries in supporting individuals with learning differences, such as dyslexia, ADHD, and other neurodivergent conditions. Key points from the session included:

## STAFFING AND WORKSHOP REPORT

1. **Inclusive Programming:** Libraries are increasingly developing programs and resources tailored to individuals with learning differences, such as sensory-friendly storytimes, assistive technology, and specialized collections.
2. **Awareness and Training:** Librarians are being trained to recognize and support the needs of patrons with learning differences, fostering a more inclusive and welcoming environment.
3. **Partnerships:** Collaboration with schools, nonprofits, and advocacy groups helps libraries provide targeted support and resources for literacy and learning.
4. **Accessible Resources:** Libraries are expanding their collections to include audiobooks, large-print materials, and digital tools that cater to diverse learning needs.
5. **Community Impact:** By addressing literacy challenges and learning differences, libraries play a vital role in promoting equity and lifelong learning for all community members.

The session emphasized the importance of public libraries as safe, inclusive spaces that empower individuals with learning differences.

**3/11/2025 – You’re Not Talking to Garth Brooks: An Introduction to Imposter Scams** - You're Not Talking to Garth Brooks: An Introduction to Imposter Scams focused on educating library staff about the growing threat of imposter scams—fraudulent schemes where criminals pose as trusted figures (celebrities, government officials, tech support, family members, etc.) to steal money or personal information.

1. **What Are Imposter Scams?**
  - Scammers impersonate trusted entities (e.g., a famous person like Garth Brooks, a bank, the IRS, or a grandchild in distress) to manipulate victims into sending money or sharing sensitive data.
  - Common tactics include urgency ("Pay now or face arrest!"), emotional manipulation ("I'm stranded—send money!"), and spoofed caller IDs.
2. **Why Libraries?**
  - Libraries are trusted community hubs where patrons (especially seniors and vulnerable populations) may seek help with technology or financial transactions.
  - Staff should be aware of red flags (e.g., patrons withdrawing large sums of cash for "gift cards" or wiring money to strangers).
3. **Common Scams Highlighted:**
  - Celebrity impersonation scams (e.g., fake social media giveaways, fake video calls).
  - Government/business imposters (e.g., fake IRS threats, fake tech support calls).
  - Family emergency scams ("Grandparent scams" where a caller poses as a relative in crisis).
4. **How Libraries Can Help:**
  - Education: Host workshops on digital literacy and scam awareness.
  - Resources: Provide FTC or AARP scam-alert handouts, Surry does have some of these handouts by the computers.
  - Intervention: Train staff to recognize and gently intervene if a patron seems at risk.

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### 5. Prevention Tips Shared:

- Verify identities independently (e.g., call back using an official number).
- Never send money via gift cards, wire transfers, or cryptocurrency.
- Encourage skepticism of unsolicited calls/messages.

### **3/12/2025 – Empowering Community with Digital Navigators – Catawba County Library**

**System** - The Catawba County Library System shared its journey in creating a Digital Navigator program from scratch after receiving a Digital Champions Grant. This session provided a step-by-step guide for libraries looking to launch similar initiatives to bridge the digital divide.

#### **1. Strategic Partnership Development**

- The library emphasized the importance of collaborating with local organizations (nonprofits, schools, government agencies) to identify community needs and expand outreach.
- Examples included partnering with workforce development groups and senior centers to target underserved populations.

#### **2. Resource Utilization & Program Design**

- Conducted a community needs assessment to tailor services (e.g., one-on-one tech help, Wi-Fi hotspot lending, or basic digital literacy workshops).
- Leveraged grant funding to secure tools and supplies, such as devices for loan, training materials, and multilingual resources.

#### **3. Recruitment & Training of Digital Navigators**

- Hired navigators with cultural competency, patience, and adaptability—prioritizing interpersonal skills over technical expertise.
- Developed a training curriculum covering digital literacy basics, trauma-informed communication, and local resource referrals.

#### **4. Implementation & Impact**

- Deployed navigators in high-need areas (libraries, pop-up sites, and partner locations).
- Measured success through patron feedback, increased device/internet access, and participation rates in digital skills programs.

The Catawba County Library System demonstrated how libraries can lead digital equity efforts by combining community trust, strategic partnerships, and well-trained staff.

### **3/13/2025 – Library Workers and Imposter Syndrome** - Library Workers and Imposter Syndrome with Dr. Rebecca Tolley

This session featured Dr. Rebecca Tolley—a librarian, scholar, and expert on workplace well-being—addressing the pervasive issue of imposter syndrome among library workers.

#### **1. Understanding Imposter Syndrome**

- Defined as the persistent belief that one's accomplishments are due to luck or deception, rather than skill, despite evidence of competence.
- Common in libraries due to the profession's service-oriented ethos, evolving roles (e.g., tech demands), and lack of recognition.

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### 2. Why Library Workers Are Vulnerable

- Perfectionism: Pressure to be "always helpful" or know everything.
- Comparison: Seeing peers as more qualified (e.g., "Everyone else has it together").
- Systemic Factors: Underfunding, undervaluation of library work, and gendered/racialized workplace dynamics.

### 3. Dr. Tolley's Strategies for Coping

- Normalize the Feeling: Recognize imposter syndrome as a structural issue, not a personal failing.
- Reframe Self-Talk: Replace "I don't belong" with "I earned my place."
- Community Support: Peer mentoring, sharing stories, and rejecting "toxic positivity."
- Advocacy: Push for institutional changes (e.g., clearer job expectations, professional development funding).

### 4. Library-Specific Takeaways

- Leaders: Foster cultures where vulnerability is safe (e.g., "I don't know—let's find out together").
- Staff: Document successes (e.g., a "kudos file") to combat self-doubt.

Imposter syndrome can lead to burnout and attrition. Dr. Tolley's insights help library workers reclaim confidence and advocate for systemic support.

**3/13/2025 – AI Salons: Low-Cost Conversations, High Impact** - AI Salons: Low-Cost Conversations, High Impact introduced accessible, budget-friendly ways to engage patrons in AI discussions—even with no tech background—using salon-style programming (small, conversational gatherings). The focus was on inclusivity, ethical debates, and community-driven learning.

### 1. Why Salons?

- Low-Cost & Inclusive: No need for expensive tech; just space, curiosity, and diverse voices.
- DEI-Centered: Prioritizes marginalized perspectives often left out of AI conversations (e.g., bias in algorithms, labor impacts).
- Philosophical Approach: Encourages critical thinking over technical jargon (e.g., "*Should AI decide who gets hired?*" vs. "*How do neural networks work?*").

### 2. How to Design AI Salons

- **Pick Relatable Topics:**
  - "*AI & Jobs: Threat or Opportunity?*"
  - "*Can AI Be Racist? Bias in Technology.*"
  - "*ChatGPT & Creativity: Who Owns Ideas?*"
- **Use Everyday Examples:**
  - Discuss facial recognition, chatbots, or social media algorithms.
  - Compare AI to familiar tools (e.g., "*AI is like a very fast, but flawed, research assistant*").
- **Structure the Conversation:**

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- Start with a short video/article (e.g., TED Talk, news clip) to spark debate.
- Use prompts like *"Has AI helped or harmed your community?"*

### 3. Engaging Marginalized Voices

- Partner with community groups (e.g., seniors, disability advocates, immigrant orgs) to co-host.
- Offer multilingual materials and ground rules for respectful dialogue.
- Highlight AI's real-world harms (e.g., policing, hiring discrimination) to validate lived experiences.

### 4. Measuring Impact

- Feedback: Simple surveys (e.g., *"Did this change how you view AI?"*).
- Follow-Up: Share resources (zines, podcasts) to continue learning.
- Community Action: Turn discussions into projects (e.g., advocacy for ethical AI policies).

Libraries can democratize AI literacy by centering ethics over expertise—ensuring everyone, regardless of tech savvy, can join the conversation.

**3/13/2025 – The Joyous Club – Inclusive Programming for Adults with Developmental Disabilities** - This session highlighted The Joyous Club, a library initiative designed to welcome and engage adults with developmental disabilities—a population often excluded from traditional library programs. The session provided practical strategies for creating accessible, joyful, and inclusive programming.

### 1. Tips for Developing Inclusive Programs

- Partner with Experts: Collaborate with local disability organizations, caregivers, and self-advocates to design programs that meet real needs.
- Focus on Abilities, Not Limitations: Offer activities that celebrate participants' strengths (e.g., art, music, storytelling).
- Create a Predictable Structure: Use visual schedules, clear instructions, and consistent routines to reduce anxiety.
- Train Staff: Teach librarians disability etiquette (e.g., using plain language, practicing patience).

### 2. Programming Ideas

- Sensory-Friendly Storytimes: Incorporate tactile books, calming lighting, and movement breaks.
- Creative Arts Workshops: Collaborative painting, drum circles, or adaptive crafts.
- Social Clubs: Game nights, book clubs with simplified texts, or "un-boring exercise" (e.g., chair dancing).
- Life Skills Sessions: Cooking demos, digital literacy, or job-readiness workshops tailored to diverse learning styles.

### 3. Marketing Strategies

- Use Clear, Inclusive Language: Avoid jargon (e.g., "All abilities welcome!" vs. "DD program").
- Visual Outreach: Work with disability orgs to share flyers with easy-to-read fonts and pictograms.



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- Word of Mouth: Engage group homes, day programs, and special education teachers as ambassadors.
- Feedback Loops: Regularly ask participants and caregivers what they'd like to see next.

Adults with developmental disabilities deserve library spaces where they feel valued. The Joyous Club model shows how small adjustments can make libraries more welcoming and equitable.