

BLACKWATER REGIONAL LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

Franklin Branch
Wednesday
May 20, 2026

Search Committee Meeting - 1:30 pm
Board of Trustees Meeting - 3:00 pm

Budget & Finance Committee *will not* meet



**Blackwater Regional Library
Franklin Branch**

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



Franklin, Isle of Wight, Southampton, Surry, and Sussex
www.blackwaterlib.org

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

Board Packet Contents

May 20, 2026

- Agenda – May 2026
- Minutes – April 2026
- Library Director's Report
- Library Bills
- Schedule of Meetings FY26-27
- Monthly Statistics Report – April 2026
- Staffing Report

**Blackwater Regional Library
Board Meeting
May 20, 2026**

Agenda

Franklin Branch

Call to Order

Adoption of Agenda – May 2026

Approval of Minutes – April 2026

Public Comment

Correspondence

Director’s Report

Committee Reports

- Budget and Finance
- Personnel and Policy
- Search Committee

Review of Approval of Accounts Payable and File for Annual Audit

Unfinished Business

New Business

- Nominating Committee
- Schedule of Meetings FY26-27

Board Member Comments/Announcements

Announcement of Next Meeting

- June 17, 2026

Adjournment

**BLACKWATER REGIONAL LIBRARY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES**

April 15, 2026

Present

Ora Briggs – Sussex County
Jacqueline Carr – Isle of Wight County
Sylvia Claggett – Isle of Wight County
Deborah Dawson – Surry County
Charlene Herrala – Isle of Wight County
Pam Lease – City of Franklin
Kathy Lippard – Isle of Wight County
Karen Richardson – Sussex County
Judge Alfreda Talton-Harris – City of Franklin
Kisha Watford – Southampton County
Johanna Wiggins – Isle of Wight County
Ben Neal – Library Director
Bonnie Lauver – Assistant Library Director
Debbie Carter – Budget & Finance Manager

Remote (via Zoom)

Absent

MeChelle Blunt – Southampton County
Margie McClenny – Southampton County

Chair, Deborah Dawson called the meeting of the Blackwater Regional Library Board of Trustees to order at 3:02 p.m. at the Franklin Branch.

Agenda

Ms. Briggs moved, and Judge Harris seconded that the agenda be approved as amended. The vote was unanimous.

Consideration of Remote Meeting Participation Requests

None

Minutes

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

Public Comment

None

Correspondence

None

Library Director's Report

BRL is fully funded in proposed budgets for Isle of Wight and Southampton. Sussex is scheduled to present its proposed budget at its April 16, 2026, meeting.

Governor Spanberger signed legislation (HB1/SB1) on April 9, 2026, increasing the state minimum wage to \$13.75 on January 1, 2027, and \$15.00 per hour on January 1, 2028, with inflation-adjusted increases returning in 2029.

It could be another month before we have final information on state aid.

Committee Reports

Budget & Finance – Ms. Lease & Mr. Neal – As directed in the Board's March actions, \$100,000 was put into a CD from the reserve fund. BRL's financial advisor, Scott Carr, purchased the 12-month CD, that will mature on 4/14/2027, at a rate of 3.9%.

Personnel & Policy – Ms. Briggs – no report

Search – Ms. Dawson – The committee drafted a job announcement and updated the Library Director’s job description. Copies of both documents are in today’s handouts. The vacancy will be posted on both ALA and VLA Joblines, as well as other job boards. Ms. Lauver has been appointed Interim Library Director. Mr. Neal – Ms. Fisk is in the process of posting the vacancy to all approved job boards.

Accounts Payable

Ms. Lippard moved, and Ms. Lease seconded that the accounts payable be filed for the Annual Audit. The vote was unanimous.

Unfinished Business

None

New Business

None

Board Member Comments/Announcements

Ms. Richardson – The Miles B. Carpenter Folk Art Museum is open every second Saturday of the month from 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Announcement of Next Meeting

The next Blackwater Regional Library Board of Trustees meeting will be on May 20, 2026, at 3:00 p.m. at the Franklin Branch.

Adjournment

Ms. Herrala moved, and Ms. Briggs seconded the meeting to be adjourned. The vote was unanimous.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Debbie Carter for
Ora Briggs, Secretary

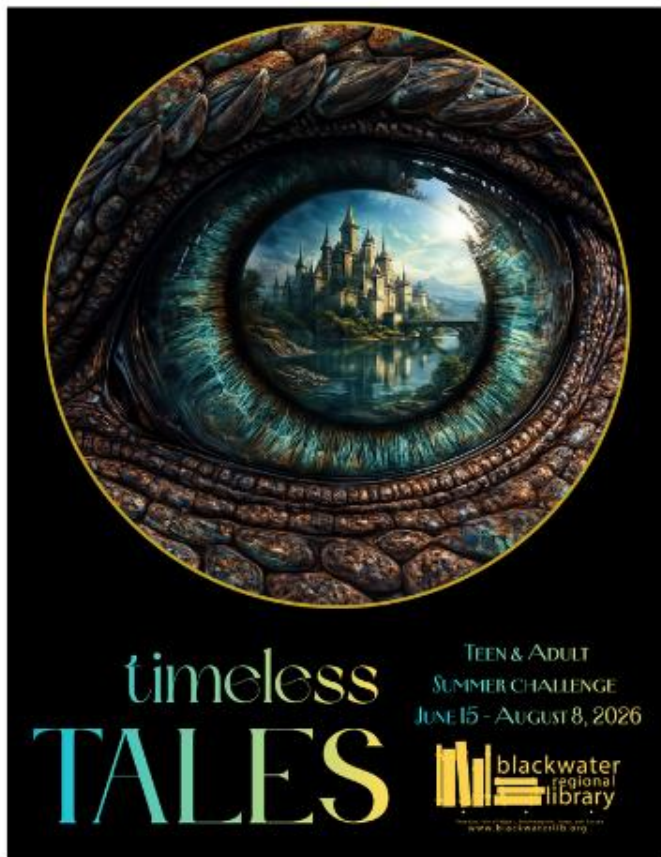


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Director's Report

May 2026

Submitted by: Bonnie Lauver, Interim Director



- Program Dates: June 15 - August 8, 2026
- Open to all ages
- Register for daily challenges @ Beanstack



Summer Reading 2026

BLACKWATER REGIONAL LIBRARY

LITTLE EXPLORERS STORYTIME

BRING YOUR LITTLE ONES, AGES 0-5, FOR
STORIES, CRAFTS, SONGS, AND MORE!

CARROLLTON – MONDAYS AT 10:30AM

14362 NEW TOWNE HAVEN LANE. CARROLLTON. 757-238-2641

COURTLAND – TUESDAYS AT 10AM

22511 MAIN STREET. COURTLAND. 757-653-2821

FRANKLIN – MONDAYS AT 10:30AM

280 N. COLLEGE DRIVE. FRANKLIN. 757-562-4801

SMITHFIELD – TUESDAYS AT 10:30AM

255 JAMES STREET. SMITHFIELD. 757-357-2264

SURRY – THURSDAYS AT 10AM

270 COLONIAL TRAIL EAST. SURRY. 757-294-3949

WINDSOR – FRIDAYS AT 10AM

18 DUKE STREET. WINDSOR. 757-242-3046



Community Impact

In April, BRL's Outreach Services attended the kick-off celebration for the *Dolly Parton Imagination Library* in Surry, Franklin & Southampton. We are pleased to announce all BRL communities now participate in this amazing literacy initiative!



Outreach

Community Events/Engagement:

- DP Imagination Library Kick-off (FR/SoCo)
- IOW Parks and Rec Spring Break Camp (IoW)
- RISE Program (IoW)
- Dorchester Square Spring Eggstravaganza (FR)
- Bacon's Castle Spring Faire (Surry)
- Library2GO (Sussex)
- Visitors: 574



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City of Franklin

- Exciting news! The Friends of the Library have installed a new outdoor digital sign that should be operational soon to assist with marketing library events.
- Local DAR hosted a special VA250 storytime with activities and a fun Yankee Doodle parade!
- Through a partnership with Family4Eternity, there is now a seed library available for patrons
- Visitors: 3225



Isle of Wight County



- **Poet Sebastian Wellons visited the Smithfield Branch to share his book of poetry**
- **VA Legal Aid Society hosted a free Estate Planning Presentation at the Carrollton Branch**
- **WES PreK enjoyed a fieldtrip to the Windsor Branch for storytime!**
- **Visitors: 7917**



Southampton County

- Local DAR hosted a special VA250 storytime with activities and a fun Yankee Doodle parade!
- Through a partnership with Family4Eternity, there is now a seed library available for patrons
- Patrons celebrated Earth Day by planting flowers!
- Visitors: 1472



Surry County



- **April Highlights: Mother/Daughter Tea, Garden themed crafts, Bubble Storytime and a special friend completing the 1000 Books Before Kindergarten!**
- **Upcoming Program: May 27 @ 4pm VA250 Stories of the Revolution in Surry - Presented by the Library of Virginia**
- **Visitors: 886**



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Sussex County



- **The Sussex Poetry contest has returned! For the first time since 2023, the Wakefield and Waverly Branches held a poetry contest for students during “Poetry Month” in April. A total of 32 entries were received from Sussex Central High School and Tidewater Academy; two students were awarded gift cards for their winning submissions.**
- **Waverly PreK students visited the library for storytime and STEAM paper art sculpture crafts**
- **Visitors: 1472**



Upcoming Closure:

Memorial Day

Saturday, May 23 & Monday, May 25

AMERICA
MADE IN
VIRGINIA

VA250

Blackwater Regional Library

Library Bills

April 2026

DATE	TRANSACTION TYPE	MEMO/DESCRIPTION	NUM	AMOUNT
AFLAC				
04/30/2026	Bill Payment (Check)		0CPZ4 4.30.2026	-809.51
04/30/2026	Bill		799561	809.51
Amazon Capital Services				
04/30/2026	Bill Payment (Check)		11871	-451.21
04/30/2026	Bill		1VJC-QMT1-N1CL	451.21
Anthem Blue Cross/Blue Shield				
04/15/2026	Bill Payment (Check)		13550532	-9,280.00
04/15/2026	Bill		000934193F	9,280.00
Cengage Learning, Inc.				
04/30/2026	Bill Payment (Check)		11872	-32.80
04/30/2026	Bill		999102613095	32.80
Dataprise LLC				
04/15/2026	Bill Payment (Check)		4301180064	-7,262.28
04/15/2026	Bill		MSP81753	6,241.78
04/15/2026	Bill		MSP81545	1,020.50
04/30/2026	Bill Payment (Check)		11873	-7,270.53
04/30/2026	Bill		MSP86206	1,028.75
04/30/2026	Bill		MSP86168	6,241.78
Dominion Energy Virginia				
04/30/2026	Bill Payment (Check)		4939751868	-1,464.22
04/30/2026	Bill		3233130008 4.30.2026	1,464.22
Ingram Library Services				
04/15/2026	Bill Payment (Check)		0074261504	-3,063.62
04/15/2026	Bill		20BB962 4.15.2026	3,063.62
04/15/2026	Bill Payment (Check)		0076261504	-2,844.49
04/15/2026	Bill		20AZ032 4.15.2026	2,844.49
04/30/2026	Bill Payment (Check)		0152260505	-4,429.94
04/30/2026	Bill		20AZ032 4.30.2026	4,429.94
04/30/2026	Bill Payment (Check)		0154260505	-4,673.92
04/30/2026	Bill		20BB962 4.30.2026	4,673.92
Jonathan Austin				
04/30/2026	Bill Payment (Check)		11870	-700.00
04/30/2026	Bill		RL 5.1.2026	700.00

Midwest Tape

Blackwater Regional Library

Library Bills

April 2026

DATE	TRANSACTION TYPE	MEMO/DESCRIPTION	NUM	AMOUNT
04/30/2026	Bill Payment (Check)		11874	-2,190.68
04/30/2026	Bill		508690672	2,190.68
04/15/2026	Bill Payment (Check)		1101017149215801590	-881.75
04/15/2026	Bill		508662107	881.75
OCLC Inc				
04/30/2026	Bill Payment (Check)		125117254461	-892.71
04/30/2026	Bill		1000489506	892.71
Overdrive, Inc				
04/15/2026	Bill Payment (Check)		2dzvy16n	-6,092.36
04/15/2026	Bill		03100CO26120489	6,092.36
04/30/2026	Bill Payment (Check)		k7d3kk03	-330.91
04/30/2026	Bill		03100CO26133519	104.93
04/30/2026	Bill		03100DA26125151	165.98
04/30/2026	Bill		03100DA26132639	60.00
Petty Cash				
04/30/2026	Bill Payment (Check)		11875	-943.41
04/30/2026	Bill		April 2026 Petty Cash	943.41
Quadient Postage				
04/30/2026	Bill Payment (Check)		BH3814322178	-308.29
04/30/2026	Bill		8140 0461 4.22.2026	308.29
Queen B's Cleaning Service				
04/30/2026	Bill Payment (Check)		11876	-877.20
04/30/2026	Bill		2034	877.20
Sentara Health Plans				
04/30/2026	Bill Payment (Check)		3143920443	-17,264.00
04/30/2026	Bill		11260208	17,264.00
Smithfield News				
04/15/2026	Bill Payment (Check)		11864	-33.00
04/15/2026	Bill		253395 (SM) 4.22.2026	33.00
Southampton County				
04/30/2026	Bill Payment (Check)		45720	-65.00
04/30/2026	Bill		Acct 46 4.15.2026	65.00
Southampton County (1)				
04/15/2026	Bill Payment (Check)		11865	-439.16

Blackwater Regional Library

Library Bills

April 2026

DATE	TRANSACTION TYPE	MEMO/DESCRIPTION	NUM	AMOUNT
04/15/2026	Bill		2026-03 (March gas)	439.16
04/30/2026	Bill Payment (Check)		11877	-589.22
04/30/2026	Bill		2026-04 (April gas)	589.22
Southside Gas Service, Inc.				
04/15/2026	Bill Payment (Check)		11866	-747.40
04/15/2026	Bill		25061	747.40
Spectrum Enterprise				
04/15/2026	Bill Payment (Check)		O1047743876	-28.50
04/15/2026	Bill		089740301040126	28.50
T & A Repairs, LLC.				
04/15/2026	Bill Payment (Check)		11867	-138.62
04/15/2026	Bill		41216	138.62
TowneBank/Card Services				
04/15/2026	Bill Payment (Check)		C05C7F22E4	-15,370.34
04/15/2026	Bill		6457 0001 4.15.2026	15,370.34
Travelers				
04/30/2026	Bill Payment (Check)		063327411451521	-1,451.00
04/30/2026	Bill		A4044831 FY27 deposit	1,451.00
Unique Management Services, Inc.				
04/15/2026	Bill Payment (Check)		4100012949214104290	-198.05
04/15/2026	Bill		6157427	198.05
Verizon Wireless				
04/15/2026	Bill Payment (Check)		4712952761	-2,840.90
04/15/2026	Bill		6140612457	2,840.90
WT Cox				
04/30/2026	Bill Payment (Check)		11878	-1,983.72
04/30/2026	Bill		3164430	1,983.72

Blackwater Regional Library

Board of Trustees

Schedule of Meetings

July 2026 - June 2027

July 15, 2026	Board Orientation - 1:00 p.m. Meeting to follow	Franklin Branch
*August 2026 - No Meeting		
September 16, 2026	Board Retreat 1:00 - p.m. Meeting to follow	Franklin Branch
October 21, 2026	3:00 p.m.	Franklin Branch
November 18, 2026	Budget Workshop 2:00 p.m. Meeting to follow	Franklin Branch
*December 2026 - No Meeting		
January 20, 2027	3:00 p.m.	Franklin Branch
February 17, 2027	3:00 p.m.	Franklin Branch
March 17, 2027	3:00 p.m.	Franklin Branch
April 21, 2027	3:00 p.m.	Franklin Branch
May 19, 2027	3:00 p.m.	Franklin Branch
June 16, 2027	3:00 p.m.	Franklin Branch

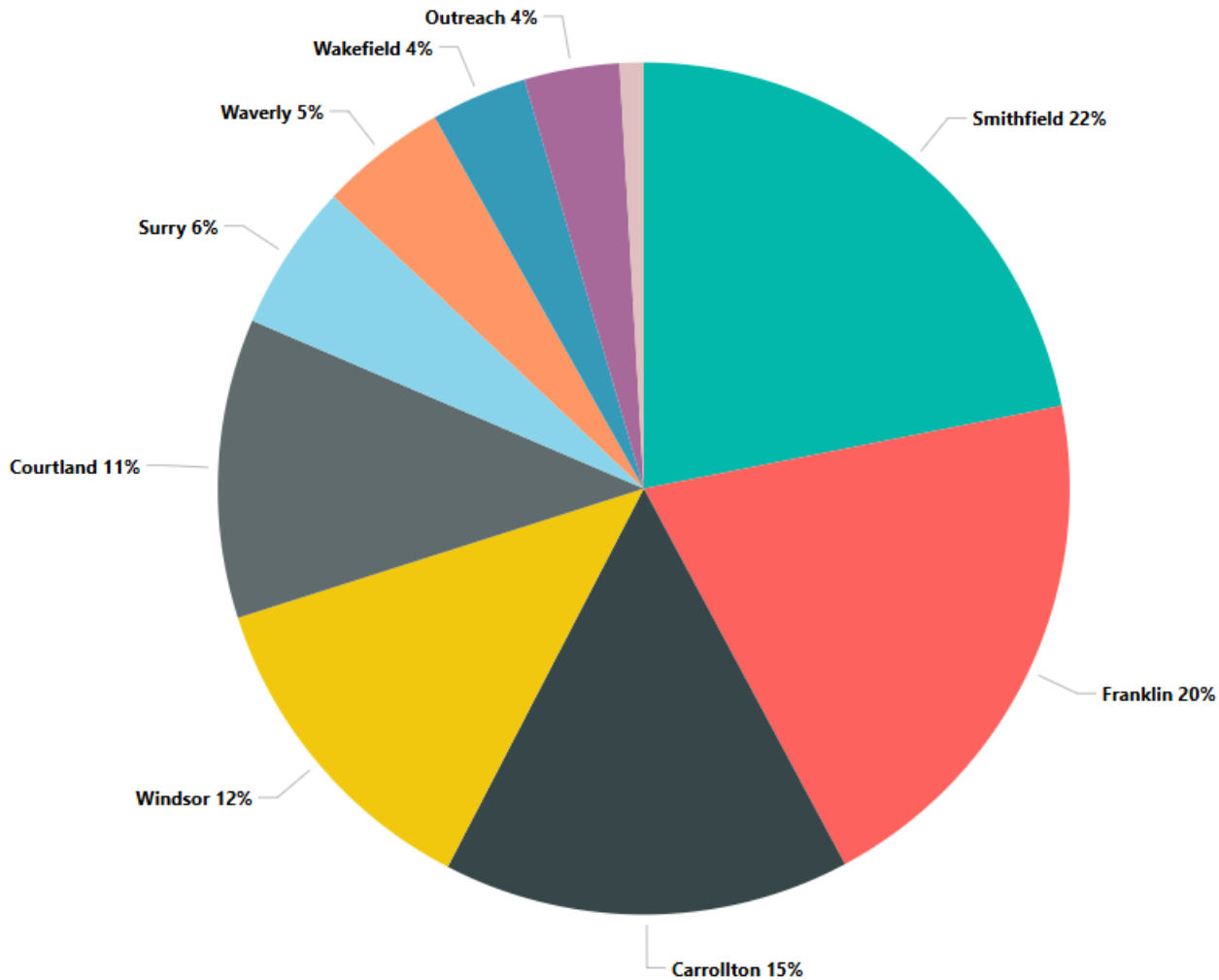


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April 2026

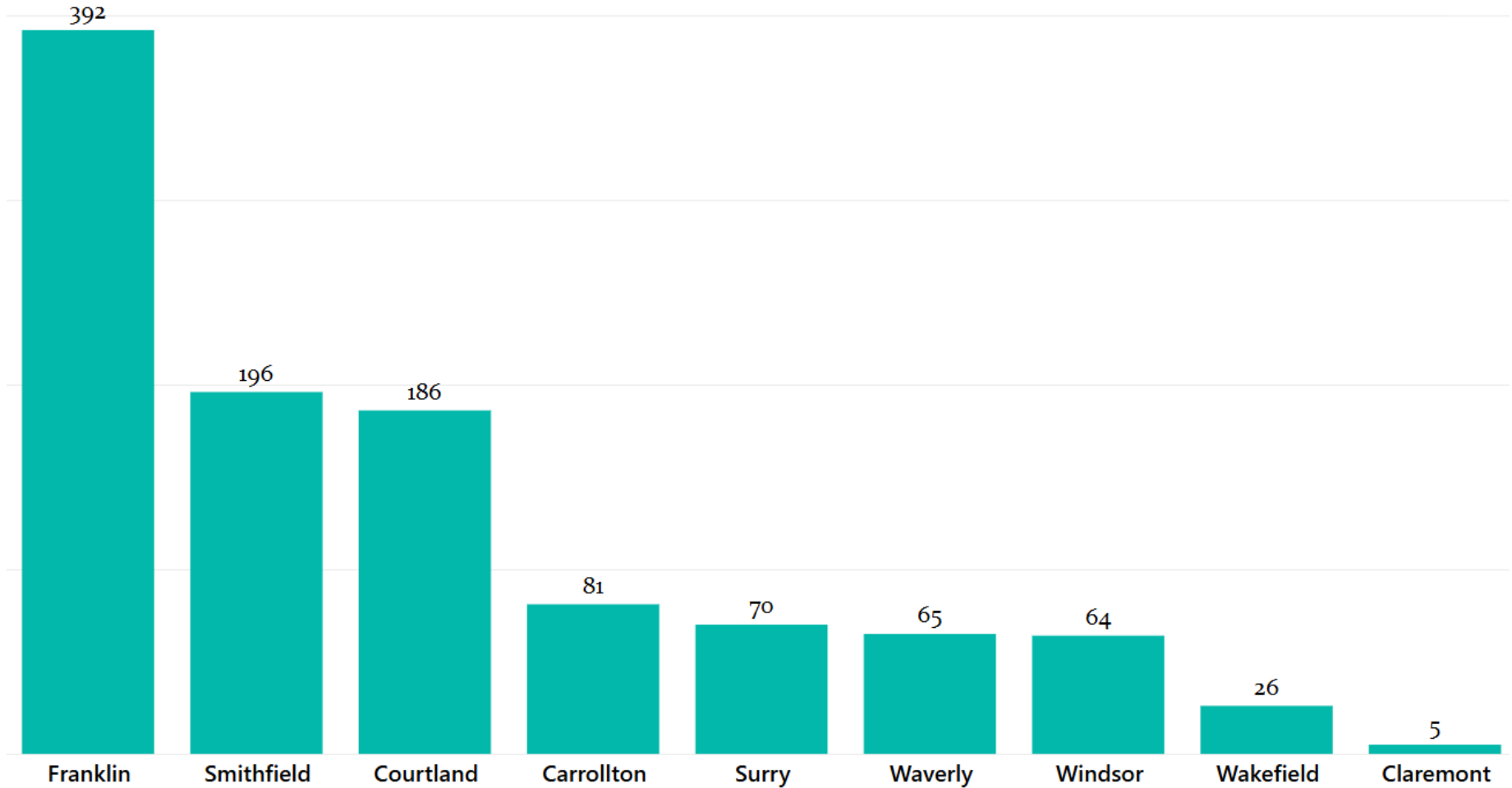
Statistics

Monthly Report: Patron Count

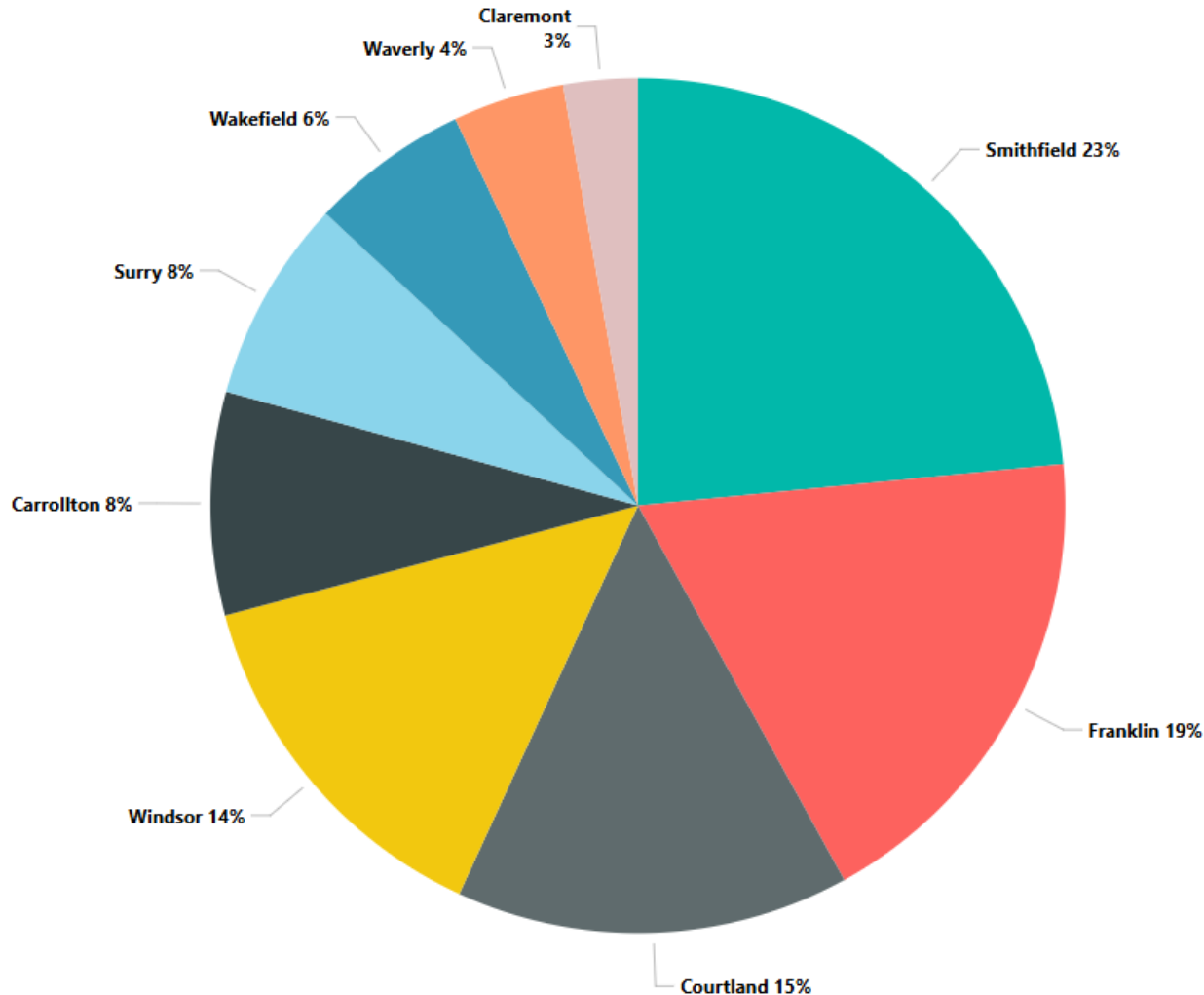


Branch	Patron Count
Carrollton	2590
Claremont	151
Courtland	1451
Franklin	3171
Outreach	587
Smithfield	3102
Surry	795
Wakefield	641
Waverly	857
Windsor	1946
Total	15291

Monthly Report: In-House Internet



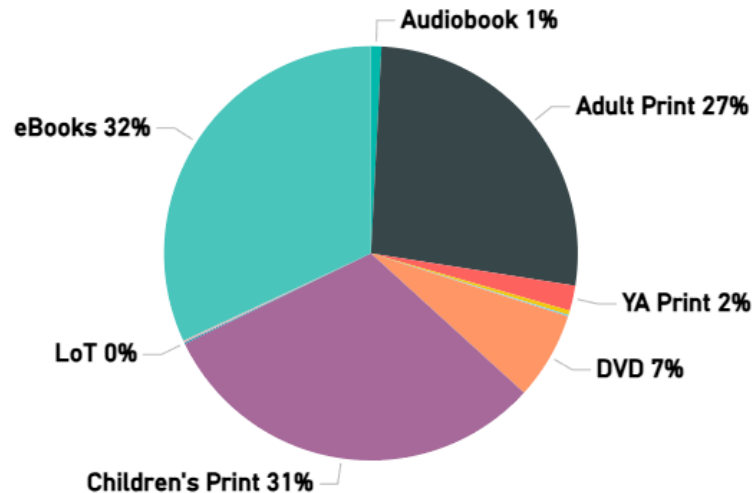
Monthly Report: WiFi Use



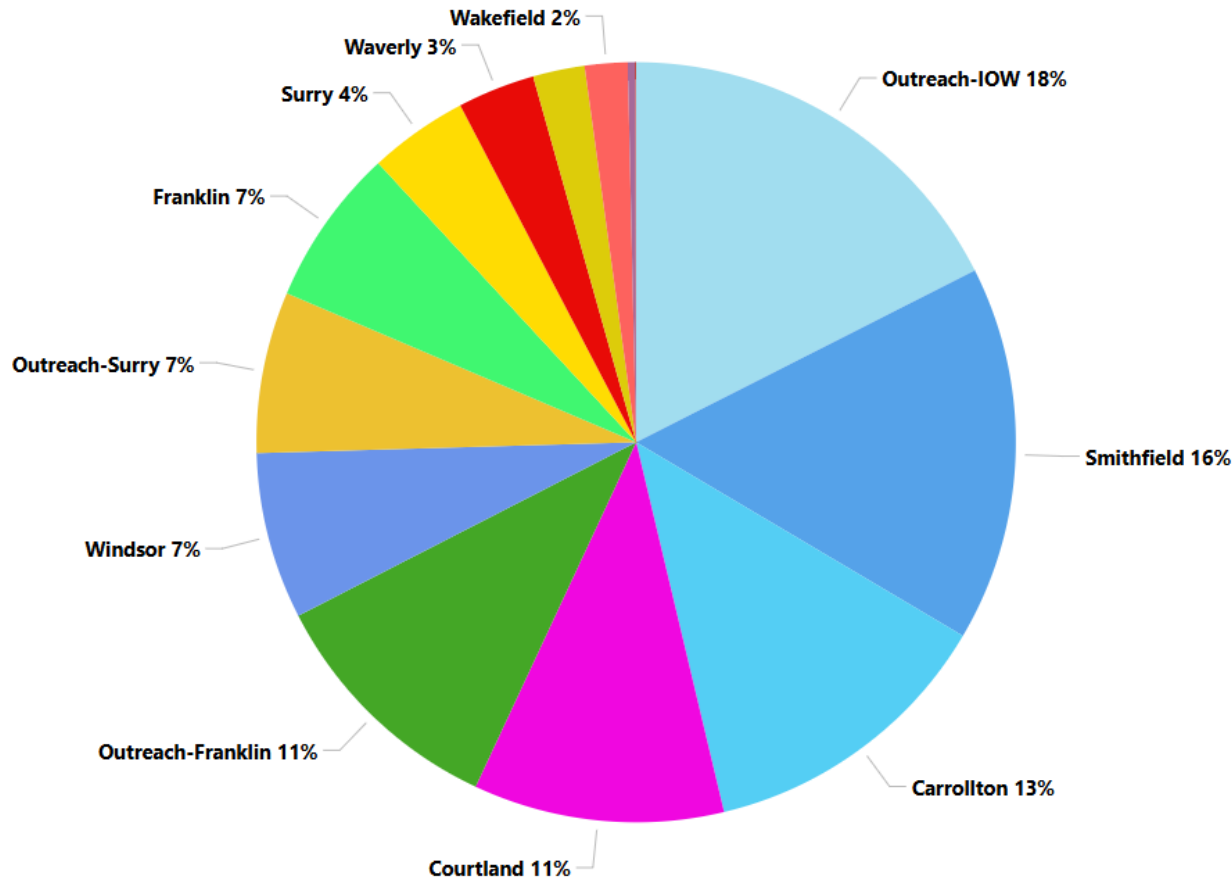
Branch	Wireless Internet Usage
Carrollton	132
Claremont	44
Courtland	233
Franklin	290
Smithfield	367
Surry	120
Wakefield	94
Waverly	66
Windsor	219
Total	1565

Circulation Report: Type by Branch

Location	Adult Print	Children's Print	DVD	Audiobook	Kits	YA Print	Music	LoT	Magazines	eBooks	Streaming Devices/ Hotspots
Carrollton	1502	2139	299	28	3	96	0	5	0	2174	18
Claremont	214	88	77	0	1	4	0	2	0	84	1
Courtland	1046	1098	379	69	2	38	0	5	4	1188	24
Franklin	1393	1325	365	93	1	94	0	5	4	1742	15
Outreach	106	97	15	1	0	5	0	1	0	155	0
Smithfield	2192	2631	409	41	8	265	0	8	44	2732	9
Surry	573	502	210	2	3	13	0	2	0	601	20
Wakefield	284	194	46	2	0	4	0	1	0	227	1
Waverly	302	295	66	0	8	15	0	1	0	266	6
Windsor	729	1339	265	19	11	79	0	1	0	812	14
Total	8341	9708	2131	255	37	613	0	31	52	9981	108

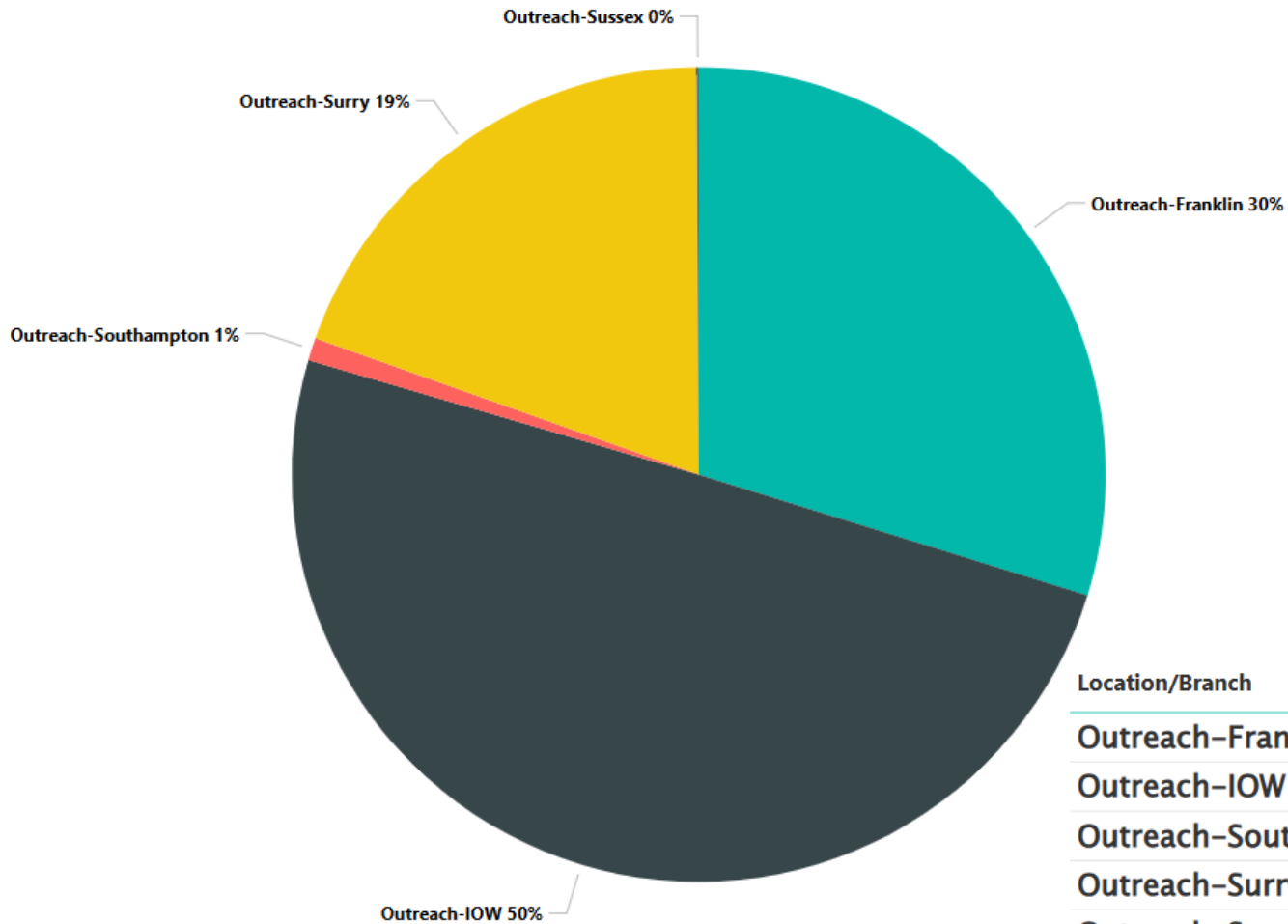


Program Report: Total Participation



Location/Branch	Count
Carrollton	400
Claremont	69
Courtland	334
Franklin	210
Outreach-Franklin	329
Outreach-IOW	549
Outreach-Southampton	10
Outreach-Surry	215
Outreach-Sussex	1
Smithfield	500
Surry	132
Wakefield	57
Waverly	103
Windsor	222
Total	3131

Outreach Report: Programs



Location/Branch	Outreach Programs	Attendance
Outreach-Franklin	2	329
Outreach-IOW	8	549
Outreach-Southampton	2	10
Outreach-Surry	2	215
Outreach-Sussex	1	1
Total	15	1104

STAFFING AND WORKSHOP REPORT

Staffing Update May 2026 Blackwater Regional Library

New Hires

- Tabitha Fessler, Library Assistant – Sussex branches
- Chloe Britt, Senior Library Assistant – Courtland branch

Promotions

Transfers

Separations

Vacancies

- Library Director

STAFFING AND WORKSHOP REPORT

Training Sessions – April 2026

Isle of Wight County staff completed a total of 7 trainings

Surry County staff completed a total of 1 training

Sussex County staff completed a total of 1 training

Central office staff completed a total of 7 trainings

4/1/2026 – Active Shooter - Proceed with extreme caution when handling an active shooter situation. An individual that enters a building with the intent to harm or kill others with a firearm in an occupied building is considered an active shooter. If it is an option, evacuate the building and warn others. If evacuating is not an option, find a space to conceal yourself, or a spot that is appropriate for cover from gunfire. Be sure that your hiding spot does not restrict your movement. Call police when you are out of danger remembering to follow instructions of any police officers. With hands up, exit the building and tell officers the location of the shooter, number of shooters, the shooter's weapons, and potential victims.

4/1/2026 – Opening Session with Bruan Stevenson - Keynote speaker: Bryan Stevenson is one of the most inspiring voices in the fight for justice today.

As the founder and executive director of the Equal Justice Initiative (EJI) in Montgomery, Alabama, he has dedicated his career to challenging inequality, overturning wrongful convictions, and protecting the most vulnerable in the criminal justice system. He has argued and won landmark cases before the U.S. Supreme Court, including the historic ruling that banned mandatory life sentences without parole for children.

Stevenson is also the visionary behind EJI's highly acclaimed Legacy Sites—the Legacy Museum, the National Memorial for Peace and Justice, and the Freedom Monument Sculpture Park—which powerfully trace the history of slavery, lynching, and mass incarceration in America. A MacArthur "Genius" Fellow and recipient of the National Humanities Medal, Stevenson's influence spans law, culture, and conscience. His bestselling memoir *Just Mercy*—adapted into an acclaimed feature film starring Michael B. Jordan and Jamie Foxx—has inspired millions around the world. He is also the subject of the Emmy Award-winning HBO documentary *True Justice*.

Stevenson and his staff have won reversals, relief, or release from prison for over 140 wrongly condemned prisoners on death row.

Bryan's goal was to explore 4 things to inspire us as public librarians to do what we can for opening minds to information. He has seen first hand the consequences of not being informed.

First, understand the power of proximity. The public library is in proximity to where people live and as a result, can respond to the needs of the community. Since the conference was located in Minneapolis, he used the public libraries in Hennepin County as an example of how they became food banks, clothes closets, and places to get information in the aftermath of the I.C.E. invasion in January 2026.

STAFFING AND WORKSHOP REPORT

Public librarians are in the middle of the community – policy makers create policies at a distance.

2nd – challenge narratives that feed hatred. Show the right way, provide good, reliable information, redirect the hatred.

3rd – Stay hopeful. He said that hope is our superpower.

4th – do uncomfortable and inconvenient things. Sometimes doing the right thing is not easy. It can be inconvenient and messy, but as public librarians, we are called to do those messy and inconvenient things.

4/1/2026 – Supporting Indie and Self-Published Authors Through Library Submissions - A local author requests to have their book added to your library collection—immediately! How do you uphold collection standards while championing indie/self-published voices? Join the Ocean County Library to explore a groundbreaking solution that bridges the gap between inclusivity and quality. Discover how libraries can embrace diverse, local storytellers while maintaining strong collection criteria—ensuring equitable access to a richer, more representative literary backdrop.

4/1/2026 – AI Book Clubs and Digital Literacy for Older Adults - Discover how a small public library-built community, sparked curiosity, and bridged the digital divide with an AI-powered book club designed for older adults. This hybrid program uses generative AI tools to enrich book discussions, increase digital confidence, and explore timely issues like banned books and intellectual freedom. Attendees will leave with a replicable framework, practical tech tips, and inspiration to engage older adults in meaningful, future-focused learning.

4/3/2026 – Extreme Customer Service, Every Time - Providing an atmosphere for patrons to feel comfortable and welcomed, delivering quality services and trust, are just a few aspects of what it takes to provide extreme customer service. As representatives of our library, we have a duty to provide hospitality that is unmatched; treating all that walk into our facilities as their opinions and needs matter most. Going above and beyond for extreme customer service really doesn't take as much effort as you would think. It is all about the delivery of the service that really goes the extra mile. For example, being sincere, listening closely, taking initiative, and speaking to others in a “down-to-earth” nature will bring you, and the patron desired results.

4/3/2026 – AI with Heart: Serving People in a Digital Age - In a world flooded with emerging AI tools, how can libraries stay grounded in human-centered service? This interactive session explores how to ethically approach AI, build community digital literacy, and practically integrate tools like ChatGPT. We'll focus on using AI to enhance, not replace, the personal touch libraries

STAFFING AND WORKSHOP REPORT

are known for—supporting staff, seniors, parents, and patrons of all comfort levels with responsible, approachable tech use.

4/3/2026 – Adult Publishers (Book Buzz Stage) - HarperCollins, Soho Press, Hachette Book Group, Ingram Publisher Services, Chronicle Books, and Grove Atlantic.

Another great session with a publishers discussion about forthcoming titles.

All of the publishers had handouts, and they are attached.

Again, great selections for the collection as well as a list of titles I want to read!

4/3/2026 – Memory Cafes in Libraries: Creating Meaningful Connections - Memory Cafés invite people living with dementia meaningful, joyful programming in a stigma-free setting. A year-long, grant-funded planning process has produced a Plan to scale Memory Cafés from the current 900 to 9,000 in ten years. The leaders of this planning process, called EMC2 (Expanding Memory Cafés/Enhancing Meaningful Connection), surveyed over 150 current Memory Café leaders and revealed that their top choice for a Memory Café is the local library.

4/4/2026 – Library Customer Service and Adult Programs for People Living with Dementia -

This was a very good webinar on different services and ideas the library can have and use for people who have dementia. It gave warning signs of the disease to look for and how to work with people who have it. It spoke about the legal, medical and emotional issues that the person and family must deal with and how the library can help. It gave many good resources to go to and wonderful program suggestions.

4/8/2026 – A Better Approach to Movie Programming - This webinar was presented by Swank, library movie licensing company. The focus was on summer reading options, USA250, and their new streaming platform. The main takeaways were as follows:

- An additional fee is required for their streaming platform (between \$400-600/ year)
 - New titles are available for each month
 - Upcoming titles are released 6mo before
- All legal copies of movies can be shown, which includes:
 - DVD/ BluRay
 - Digital copies that are rented or purchased using a personal account (Apple Store, Amazon, etc.)
- There are free resources to create promo materials, which include the use of the movie poster.
- Sensory friendly resources and accessibility options available for all titles under license
- All library sponsored movie events must be shown in the library building
- Outside partners may use our license in our buildings, as long as they are private events not open to the public

STAFFING AND WORKSHOP REPORT

- Swank offers a program calendar resource that will help us plan movie programs

4/14/2026 – Sunny Summer Reading - There were 4 panelists. Amy Beaudoin - Senior manager from Simon and Schuster Children's Publishing, Colette Parry - marketing design associate from Charlesbridge, Annie Garnish - Senior marketing at Highlight and Andrea Silen - Editor at highlight. Julia Pohl-Miranda - Co-owner & VP of marketing and sales at Drawn and Quarterly and Peggy Burns - Co-owner at Drawn and Quarterly

Amy talked about different resources they provided. She also talked about some books they are releasing such as 'Juneteenth', 'Brat Summer' by Katie Vernon, 'Little Ghost Summerween' by Maggie Edkins Willis, 'Just Try It - Someplace New' by Phil Rosenthal and Lily Rosenthal, 'The Long Hike - The True Story of the First Appalachian Thru Hike' by Megan McCarthy. And many more books. They also are releasing books for children that are in between the phases of 'not quite ready for chapter books' but also "are ready for smaller chapter books". They are also releasing a new series of chapter books called 'Fairies Welcome'. Some of the middle grade books publishing this summer are "No Way Never Sisters" by Chantel Acevedo and Natalia Sylvester and 'Really Rubie' by Maddie frost. New this summer for some teen reads such as 'Until Next Summer' by Allison Ashley, 'The Summer I Turned Pretty' by Jenny Han, 'Change of Plans' by Sarah Dessen (released may 5th).

Colette talked about new releases such as picture books ~ 'Luna Picks a Lucky Dumpling' by Natasha yim, (on sale May 19th), 'Ways Papi says I Love You' By Delia Ruiz (On Sale March 24th), 'Napesni Renegade' by Marcie Rendon (On sale July 21), 'Sunrise Sail' by Charles Trevino (On sale May 12th), 'At The Summer Lake' by Daniela Kulot (on sale April 21) and much more. Some YA books releasing are Footeprint by Lindsay Metcalf (on sale now), 'Onward' by Norway carpenter (on sale now) and much more.

Annie and Andrea talked about titles for this summer keeping kids engaged. Books such as 'Can You Find Steve', (which come with tiny ducks, perfect for kids who love 'where's waldo' and books like that), 'Why how and wow! Space', a nonfiction book for kids 7 and up with that space curiosity, this book starts a series, next summer there releasing 'why how and wow! Dinosaurs'. Another book is 'spot the imposter puzzles', allows kids to slow down and focus on what doesn't belong. 'What Kinds of Sandwich Are You' designed for kids 7 and up, this is the first book of a series designed for personality quizzes. And many more books are to be released.

Julia and Peggy Talked about book releases such as 'Charity and Sylvia' by Tille Walden (In stores June 16th), 'Declaration Illustrated' and 'Emancipation illustrated' by R Sikoryak, these books are explaining US documents and political stuff turned into graphic novels and other books.

4/22/2026 – Help! I Have Too Much Empathy! How to Manage Staff When You Feel Too Much - This webinar was not at all what I thought it would be. Instead of using professional strategies for setting your own empathy aside, the presenter suggested crystals, salt lamps, and saging/

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cleansing your office from negative energy. The biggest takeaway I had from this webinar was the following:

- Get comfortable with being uncomfortable
- Prep for difficult conversations and be prepared to end the conversation quickly
- Allow staff to bring problems to you to process their way through it, but make them do the work to figure it out on their own
 - I am a verbal processor, so this was particularly helpful for me

4/23/2026 – Sustaining a Seed Library: Borrowing Procedures and Community Donations -

The purpose of this webinar is to learn how to establish a seed library and create borrowing guidelines. Seed libraries are created to enhance library offerings to promote community resilience, foster sustainability and encourage biodiversity by providing free access to seeds. The initiatives support food security, educate patrons on gardening and seed saving, and assist in preserving local pollinated plant varieties.

4/28/2026 – Recovering From Burnout - Recovering from burnout, as described in the video, begins with understanding how deeply burnout affects your energy, identity, and confidence the video explains that burnout often creeps in during periods of intense pressure, long hours, and emotional overload.

The video also covers unexpected changes that signaled real healing. Some outlets include painting, knitting, and reading—Also it spoke of how burnout can drain motivation and joy Lastly Recovery can bring a stronger sense of self-awareness it also can make one realize how overextending themselves and learning how to set healthier boundaries. This includes valuing alone time, creating a peaceful home environment, and shifting priorities toward meaningful work library progress, relationships with patrons and coworkers.

4/28/2026 – PCI Book Display Basics for Every Library Worker - PCI's Book Display Basics for Every Library Worker teaches library staff **how to use creative, well-designed book displays** to highlight hidden gems in the collection and connect materials to programs, services, and community interests.

The webinar emphasizes that any library worker can successfully create engaging displays, regardless of experience or library size. The presenter Ms. Lila Denning explains that strong displays share several core features: clear themes, intentional selection of materials, and visual appeal that draws patrons in. She highlights how displays function as a form of passive readers' advisory, helping patrons discover overlooked titles while also promoting library programs, partnerships, and seasonal events. The session also covers how displays can be strategically placed throughout the building—even in small libraries—to maximize visibility and circulation impact.

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Participants also learn practical techniques for improving their display-building skills. Ms. Denning outlines how to choose themes, incorporate signage, and maintain displays so they stay fresh and relevant. She encourages staff to think creatively, experiment with new ideas, and use displays as a low-cost, high-impact marketing tool. By the end of the video training, attendees gain a clearer understanding of how thoughtful displays can strengthen community engagement, support library goals, and make collections more discoverable for all patrons.

4/29/2026 – Library of Virginia (PCI Book Display Basics for Every Library Worker) - Presenter, Lila Denning demonstrated that there are many ways to attract patrons to library book displays. She also offers solutions to promote “back-list” authors and titles for better circulation in our systems. Patrons experience book displays as “reader’s advisory”, this has either a passive or active emphasis. Showing off covers of books, not just the spines, will draw more attention for the intended readers. To help find ideas for book displays, pull inspiration from holidays, upcoming library programs, pop culture, and hobbies. Adding DVDs, and audiobooks to your themed display may also reach a broader audience. Plug different back-list authors and titles as “read-a-likes” to our best-selling authors and titles. This method will captivate readers to branch out of their routine reads. Overall, the training was helpful in determining how library book displays are developed and utilized.