



Harford County
Public Library

HCPLonline.org

Stories Without End

FY25 Annual Report

About the Library

Harford County Public Library comprises 11 branches, an administrative headquarters, six outreach vehicles, and an impressive collection, including books, audiobooks, DVDs, video games, databases, STEM kits, American Girl dolls, musical instruments, balance bikes, mobile internet hot spots, and more. The Harford County Public Library borrower's card is free and available to residents of any age. In addition to materials for checkout, the Library offers access to 3D printers, Cricuts, copiers, meeting rooms, Wi-Fi, study spaces, and computers in all branches. Further, the Abingdon Library offers a public sensory room, and the Bel Air Library offers a U.S. Passport Office.

Our Mission

Harford County Public Library's mission is to connect the community with excellent library experiences that promote the love of reading and learning, empower and enrich the lives of Harford County citizens, and strengthen our community. We engage and empower every member of our community through access to outstanding library resources and services. The library is an integral part of the daily lives of our community members. These values are supported by the Harford County Public Library (HCPL) Strategic Plan, which prioritizes our commitment to exceptional customer service, inclusivity, and expanding our reach beyond library walls.

A letter from THE LIBRARY CEO

Dear Friends,

Fiscal Year 2025 was a landmark year for Harford County Public Library. With 804,820 in-person visits, 161,610 registered borrowers, and over 12 million interactions across our services, HCPL continues to reaffirm its status as one of Harford County's most trusted and treasured community institutions.

Our mission, to enrich lives through lifelong learning, literacy, workforce readiness, and cultural engagement, was realized in every corner of the Library.

From story times that sparked children's imaginations to workforce workshops bridging vital skill gaps, our dedicated staff delivered programs and services that truly inspire growth and connection.

The Cultural Arts Board continued to support and distribute Maryland State Arts Council funds that help enrich our community. Their investment in local arts and culture makes a lasting impact and allows creative initiatives to thrive.

While our numbers illustrate broad impact, the stories behind them reveal HCPL's heart. In this report, you will meet teen filmmakers beaming as their shorts premiere at Film This!, families and individuals preserving legacies through genealogy programs, community members connecting over Chesapeake Bay culinary traditions with chef John Shields, and the dedicated staff and volunteers whose commitment makes all of this possible. Together, these stories affirm that the Library is a thriving community, a lifeline, and a gift shared by every resident.

Looking ahead to Fiscal Year 2026, we will build on this momentum with clear goals:

- Expanding early literacy and STEM initiatives with targeted outreach to underserved neighborhoods
- Deepening partnerships to support workforce development for adults, job seekers, and entrepreneurs
- Growing inclusive programs that serve seniors, veterans, and our county's diverse multicultural communities
- Investing further in staff development and cutting-edge technologies to keep pace with evolving community needs

Our public library is a bridge between the wisdom of yesterday and the possibilities of tomorrow, a welcoming place where everyone can learn, connect, and be inspired. As we celebrate 80 years of exceptional library service, HCPL remains steadfast as a cornerstone of opportunity, discovery, and connection for all Harford County residents. Your ongoing support is vital to this mission, and on behalf of the Board of Trustees, the Foundation, and our entire team, I extend my heartfelt thanks.

With gratitude,

Mary L. Hastler, CEO



Financial Statement for Harford County Public Library

OPERATING REVENUE

County – 80.2%	\$26,048,476
State – 14.1%	\$20,885,407
Library – 4.7%	\$3,682,932
MSAC Cultural Arts Grant – 0.9%	\$1,225,495
Other Grants – 0.1%	\$225,726
	\$28,916

OPERATING EXPENDITURES

Personnel – 74.6%	\$24,575,112
Materials – 12.3%	\$18,324,804
Equipment – 0.8%	\$3,029,596
MSAC Cultural Arts Grant – 0.9%	\$188,023
Other – 11.4%	\$225,726
	\$2,806,963

OPERATING BUDGET

County	\$25,250,000
State	\$20,885,407
Library	\$2,176,428
	\$2,188,165

GRANTS BUDGET

\$254,642

CAPITAL BUDGET

\$200,000

Annual Statistics for Harford County Public Library

Visits to Local Branches	804,820
Circulation	3,143,704
Adult Circulation	1,840,495
Children Circulation	1,303,209
Website, App, & Catalog Visits	7,798,333
Questions Answered by Staff	383,529
Programs Offered	9,924
Program Attendance	540,615
Online Classes	59,031
Collection Size	911,412
Digital Collection Circulation	875,006
Interlibrary Loan – Borrowed	18,914
Interlibrary Loan – Loaned	19,405
Meeting Room Groups	179
Wi-Fi Users	377,918
Personnel – FTE	213.74
Registered Borrowers	161,610
Branches	11
Headquarters	1
Outreach Vehicles	6

Behind Every Library Success is Our Incredible Team!



Fairy Tale & Super Hero Fest | January 17, 2025

THIS YEAR, HCPL CELEBRATED:

- 60 staff anniversaries, including Kristen DeLambo and Lisa Pounds (35 years), Andrea Beichler and Margaret Polischeck (30 years).
- Harvey Dail, Katherine Ellis, Patty Hagan, Rebecca Hillenburg, and the Bel Air Opening the Gift Team as Roenna Fahrney Recognition Award recipients.



Author Events

Harford County Public Library opened its doors to acclaimed authors throughout the year, inviting the community to encounter storytellers whose voices carried across genres, histories, and cultures. Through personal memoirs, sweeping historical narratives, and spirited tales of romance, these gatherings ignited reflection, inspired conversation, and connected readers from every corner of the County.

In August, with generous support from Headlining Sponsors Morris A. and Clarisse B. Morris Mechanic Foundation and APGFCU, and Contributing Sponsor Growing Smiles Pediatric Dentistry, the Library and HCPL Foundation hosted award-winning children's author Lana Button. She visited the Abingdon and Havre de Grace libraries to present her latest book, *See You Later, Alligator!*, a story encouraging resilience during back-to-school transitions. Families participated in interactive readings, crafts, and book signings designed to inspire confidence and joy as the new school year began.

The fall season brought a parade of voices to the Library through the Meet the Author series. In September, local author Jennifer Vido returned with *Serenity by the Sea*, joined in conversation by Judge David E. Carey. Paul Hylenski followed with insights from his books *The Secret Code of Influence* and *Error-Proofing Humans*. Later, Susan Muaddi Darraj introduced her award-winning novel *Behind You Is the Sea*, weaving humor and heartache into the stories of Palestinian immigrant families. October welcomed memoirist F. Kennerly Clay, whose *Letters from East of Nowhere* reflected on her father's struggles as well as his passion for the written word, and the series concluded with J.R. Miller's *Now We Are Orphans*, a World War II tale of family, love, and resilience.

That same season, the Abingdon Library hosted local writer and horseman Josh Pons, who shared from *Letters from Country Life: Adolphe Pons, Man o' War and the Founding of Maryland's Oldest Thoroughbred Farm*. With rare letters and photographs, Pons transported audiences through decades of history, while connecting them to the present-day operations of Country Life Farm.

In February, HCPL hosted its second annual Romance Author Fest. Nearly 100 readers spent the day at our Abingdon Library. They had the opportunity to meet with over 15 Maryland-based romance writers and purchase their books. The Fest ended with an evening panel discussion led by local romance author, Jennifer Vido. Authors Christina Elle, Mona Shroff, and Kristie Wolf shared insights on crafting love stories, connecting with readers, and upcoming next novels.

Also in February, more than 120 customers spent the evening with celebrated chef and author John Shields who was joined in conversation by Library CEO, Mary Hastler for *Culinary Delights: Baltimore Style*. As part of the 2025 Winter Reading Program, Shields shared stories of the region's food traditions, blending history with personal anecdotes and cultural insight. Known as the Culinary Ambassador of the Chesapeake Bay, Shields inspired audiences to view food as both heritage and community.

Meet the Author
with Lana Button
August 28, 2024



Meet the Author with
John Shields
February 27, 2025

Cirque de Magie: Celebrating 20 Years of the Library Gala

On October 26, 2024, Harford County Public Library Foundation hosted its 20th Annual Gala, Cirque de Magie, transforming the Abingdon Library into a whimsical world inspired by Erin Morgenstern's *The Night Circus*. The sold-out evening welcomed 600 guests who enjoyed a night filled with magicians, fortune tellers, live and silent auctions, music by The Klassix, exquisite food from Evolved Catering and Events, and a dazzling jewelry raffle courtesy of Saxon's Diamond Centers.

As the Foundation's largest annual fundraiser, the Gala raised \$80,000 net in critical support for library services, programs, and resources. These contributions directly sustain initiatives such as early literacy programs, STEM opportunities, internet access, school readiness support, and lifelong learning resources that benefit residents throughout Harford County.

The evening's live auction, led by WMAR-2's Kristy Breslin and Harford County Register of Wills Derek Hopkins, featured unforgettable experiences including a locavore dinner with Chef John Shields, a Ravens game package, a brewery tour for 22, and getaways to New York, Myrtle Beach, and Ocean City.

The success of the Gala would not have been possible without the generosity of our sponsors. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to:

Presenting Sponsors: Saxon's Diamond Centers and Klein's ShopRite of Maryland.

Headlining Sponsors: Absolute Investigative Fingerprinting Security and Landlord Services; American Design and Build/American Sentry Solar; Bel Air Friends of HCPL; The Bradley Foundation, on behalf of Dr. William Allen; The Daily Record; Heartfelt Florist; The Highlands School; Rockwell Jewelers; Skylight Creative Ideas; UM Upper Chesapeake Health; U R Washed Power Washing LLC; WebIXI; and Bobby & Angel Windsor.

Premier Sponsors: ACER Exhibit & Events; Achieve Behavioral Health Services; APGFCU-Business Banking; Blend Salon; Broom's Bloom Dairy; Casella; Julia Chang; Coffee Coffee; Comcast; Coppermine Bel Air Athletic Club;



Freedom Federal Credit Union; Full Circle Boards; Harford County Trash Services; Harford Mutual Insurance Group; Hillside Lawn Service Inc.; Keene Dodge Chrysler Jeep Ram; Maryland Brew Tours; McComas Funeral Homes; Nature's Care & Wellness; Pairings Bistro; PNC Bank; John Shields, Gertrude's Chesapeake Kitchen; Jon & Liz Shimaitis; Tar Heel Construction Group LLC; ThinkBig Networks; Thompson's Moving Inc.; and Advanced Eye Care & Aesthetics.

Supporting Sponsors: Brown Advisory; Boutique 44; Brightview Senior Living; BumbleJunk; Champion Insurance Inc.; Paige & Bill Cox; Deer Creek Exteriors; DiPaula Law; East Coast IV; Elite Power Washing LLC; Frederick Ward Associates; Hi-Brr Nation; Julie French; The Law Office of Shannon Gahs; Harford Community College; Mary & Mark Hastler; The Kelly Group; Library Interiors Design and Furnishings; MaGerks on a Roll; Wendy Meadows, Lawfully Lean LLC; NVS Merle Norman; Nemphos Braue LLC; Oak Contracting LLC; PK Law; Rainbow Restoration; Rockfield Foundation Inc.; Snee, Lutche & Helmlinger PA; Wade Sewell, Board of Education; T2S Solutions LLC; Towson University in Northeastern Maryland; Turf Connection Inc.; Vagabond Sandwich Company; Window Depot Baltimore; and Carol Wright & Mike Lafiandra.

Together with our sponsors, donors, volunteers, and community partners, Cirque de Magie was a powerful statement of support for the Library's mission. The Foundation is deeply grateful for the collective generosity that ensures Harford County Public Library will continue to inform, inspire, and empower generations to come.

Early Literacy & Childhood Education

“ We believe a strong library is one of the foundations of a successful community.
– Carolyn Lambdin,
President of the Morris
A. and Clarisse B.
Mechanic Foundation

REVITALIZING LITTLE LEAPERS

Launched in 2013, Harford County Public Library's Little Leapers program inspires an early love of science, math, and literacy for children from birth to age five. Thanks to community partners like Celebree School, the program continues to thrive.

This year, Celebree School committed \$30,000 over three years to refurbish all 104 Little Leapers kits, available at all 11 library locations. These kits include books, toys, puzzles, and activities that promote hands-on exploration and caregiver-child interaction. Nearly 1,300 kits were checked out in the past year, reaching families countywide.

The kits, featuring themes such as “I am an Astronaut” and “Let’s Get Ready for Kindergarten,” support play-based learning and STEM readiness, reinforcing early literacy foundations.

Through this generous partnership, Harford County Public Library ensures that its youngest residents have access to engaging resources that inspire wonder, enhance family connections, and lay the foundation for lifelong learning.



INVESTING IN EARLY LITERACY

The Harford County Public Library Foundation was honored to receive \$20,000 this year from the Morris A. and Clarisse B. Mechanic Foundation to strengthen early literacy programs across the Library system. These funds support vital initiatives such as story times, author visits, sensory play, parent-child workshops, and early learning resources that build pre-reading skills and empower caregivers.

This gift continues a long-standing partnership dating back to 2010. Since 2016, the Mechanic Foundation has contributed \$20,000 annually, and its landmark \$25,000 gift in 2015 established the Early Literacy Center at the Bel Air Library, a vibrant space central to family literacy. In total, the Foundation has invested \$260,000 in HCPL.



“ At Celebree School, we believe lifelong learning begins in early childhood. Little Leapers aligns perfectly with our mission to nurture curiosity and imagination. We're proud to refresh these kits so families can explore science and math together in meaningful ways.”
–Richard Huffman, Founder &
CEO of Celebree School



Building the Future Over Breakfast | June 25, 2025

Economic Development & Workforce Empowerment

GAME CHANGERS BUSINESS SPEAKER SERIES DEBUTS WITH DR. ANIRBAN BASU

In September, the HCPL Foundation launched the Game Changers Business Speaker Series, an initiative designed to provide business leaders, professionals, and community members with insights into economic trends. The series opened at the Abingdon Library with renowned economist Dr. Anirban Basu, chairman and CEO of Sage Policy Group, Inc.

Dr. Basu's presentation, "The Good, The Bad, & The Ugly," offered an in-depth analysis of the major factors shaping the economy, including interest rates, global conflicts, wage dynamics, business confidence, and demographic shifts. He also provided a forecast for the coming year, equipping attendees with knowledge to make informed decisions in their organizations and communities.

The event was made possible thanks to the generous support of sponsors, including: The Kelly Group as Presenting Sponsor, APGFCU as Breakfast Sponsor, and the Harford County Chamber of Commerce and Venture Access as Partner Sponsors.

The series builds on the Library's extensive business resources, including professional databases, multimedia tools, entrepreneurship and business management guides, grant writing resources, and access to major publications like The New York Times and The Wall Street Journal. Together, these services and programs demonstrate the Library's ongoing commitment to supporting Harford County's business community, empowering leaders, and strengthening the local economy.

"We believe that vibrant communities are built on a foundation of knowledge and collaboration. We are proud to sponsor the Harford County Public Library's Game Changer Business Speaker Series and to support organizations that fuel innovation and foster partnership."

-Bryan Kelly, CFP, Founding Partner of The Kelly Group

BUILDING THE FUTURE OVER BREAKFAST: ADVANCING STEM & STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

On June 25, Harford County Public Library, in partnership with the Maryland Economic Development Corporation (MEDCO), hosted Build the Future Over Breakfast at the Abingdon Library. The event convened more than 60 influential leaders from defense, education, and economic development sectors for a morning of strategic conversation focused on strengthening regional economic opportunities and the STEM talent pipeline.

Moderated by Tom Sadowski, Executive Director of MEDCO, the distinguished panel included Harry Coker, Jr., Secretary of the Maryland Department of Commerce; Kimberly G. Ploskonka, Director (A) of the Army Research Directorate, ARL, DEVCOM; and Nicole Funk, Managing Director at Deloitte. Together, they explored strategies to amplify the groundbreaking research at Aberdeen Proving Ground (APG) and the Army Research Laboratory, strengthen public-private partnerships, and attract and retain top talent.

Friends of HCPL

The Friends of Harford County Public Library are an invaluable part of the library's success and community impact.

Their unwavering dedication and deep love for the library shine through in everything they do, from volunteering their time to championing HCPL's mission.

These passionate advocates provide essential financial support that helps fund innovative programs, engaging events, and vital resources that might otherwise be out of reach.

Through creative and consistent fundraising efforts – like book sales, special events, and sponsorships – they help ensure the library remains a vibrant hub for learning and connection.

Their contributions directly enhance services for

children, teens, and adults, enriching lives across Harford County.

Their belief in the power of libraries to transform lives is both inspiring and contagious. They foster a culture of generosity and civic pride, encouraging others to support and celebrate Harford County Public Library.

The Friends also help amplify the library's visibility in the community, acting as enthusiastic ambassadors wherever they go.

Their support allows the library to dream bigger, reach farther, and serve more people with creativity and care.

Simply put, the Friends groups are at the heart of Harford County Public Library's story – one that continues to grow, thanks to their support.



The Friends of HCPL at the 2025 Summer Reading Celebration
June 16, 2025

Genealogy Programs

Genealogy programs, both virtual and in-person, attracted more than 1,000 participants from all over the world, blending skill-building in genealogy with meaningful storytelling.

Tracing the stories of families and communities is at the heart of our Family and Local History programs. Whether participants are just beginning their genealogy journey or diving deep into archives and DNA results, the Library provides resources, workshops, and expert guidance to make those connections meaningful and lasting.

In October, our virtual Family History Month series offered three programs on a variety of topics from deciphering old handwriting, to exploring German ancestry, and uncovering newsworthy ancestors in historic newspapers. Evening sessions like Genealogy After Hours gave participants quiet time to research with

access to the Maryland Room. In early November, the Save a Story! DIY Oral History workshop empowered families to record their own histories for future generations.

Just a few months later, January's Genealogy Week series expanded this journey with three virtual programs. Peggy Jude helped participants navigate advanced DNA analysis, Lisa Lisson demonstrated how to virtually walk the same streets as ancestors, and a FamilySearch workshop guided attendees through building digital trees and preserving memories.

Together, the Family History Month and Genealogy Week series underscored HCPL's role as a trusted guide for those seeking to discover, understand, and preserve their family stories. They reminded us that the past lives on in the stories we carry forward.

Innovation Lab: A Decade of Creativity & Community Impact

This year, the Harford County Public Library Foundation celebrated its ongoing partnership with Rosedale Bank, which pledged \$10,000 over five years to continue sponsoring the Library's award-winning Innovation Lab. This commitment ensures the Lab remains a center for creativity, technology, and lifelong learning.

Located at the Abingdon Library, the Innovation Lab serves users aged 11 and up with access to iMacs, HP laptops, 3D printers, and specialized software for video production, graphic design, self-publishing, and more. It also offers workshops for younger children, fostering creativity and curiosity across all ages.

The Lab supports students, hobbyists, entrepreneurs, and lifelong learners, helping residents develop workforce-ready skills, prototype products, and expand digital marketing. Rosedale Bank has supported the Lab since its founding ten years ago, and the renewed sponsorship will fund technology upgrades and new materials.

“At Rosedale Bank, we believe in nurturing curiosity and empowering every generation to thrive. Our continued support of the Innovation Lab reflects our deep commitment to Harford County's youth and families, ensuring access to cutting-edge learning tools and creative opportunities.”

—Kevin Benson, President and CEO of Rosedale Bank

Summer Reading Challenge 2025: Color Our World

Harford County Public Library's annual Summer Reading Challenge engaged readers of all ages from June 2 through August 16, 2025, with the inspiring theme Color Our World. From infants to adults, participants set and achieved reading goals, logged their progress online, and enjoyed a summer filled with books, creativity, and discovery. As part of Summer Reading, HCPL also coordinated and hosted our Annual Literary Spelling Bee, for spellers of all ages, at the 37th Annual Harford County Farm Fair.

Summer Reading is a powerful force that colors a child's world with endless possibilities, fueling dreams and expanding creativity. Studies show that children who participate in summer reading programs begin the school year with stronger reading skills, reduced summer learning loss, and more confidence.

The 2025 Summer Reading Program was made possible by the hard work and dedication of our amazing Library staff. Planning begins a year in advance with great care given to selecting meaningful programs and events, outreach, and other important collateral. These elements all work together to allow HCPL to reach customers in new and exciting ways. Funding for the over 57 Summer Reading Guest Presenters is funded by our amazing Friends of HCPL groups. Also, a big thank you to the generous support of our summer reading bag and book sponsors: Celebree School, Harford Day School, Bel Air Friends of HCPL,

Rosedale Bank, Klein's ShopRite of Maryland, APGFCU, Rotary Club of Aberdeen, Havre de Grace Friends of HCPL, Aberdeen Friends of HCPL, Abingdon Friends of HCPL, Aberdeen IronBirds, and Horizon Cinemas.

21,108 READERS

REGISTERED FOR SUMMER READING 2025!

TOP BOOKS
BY AGE
GROUP:



Birth to PreK



Elementary School



Middle School



High School



Adult

Second Annual Taste of Harford: Back for Seconds

On May 18, 2025, the Harford County Public Library Foundation hosted the 2nd Annual Taste of Harford: Back for Seconds at the picturesque Vignon Manor Farm in Havre de Grace. The sold-out celebration welcomed 550 guests for a day dedicated to showcasing the incredible flavors, creativity, and community spirit of Harford County's agricultural and culinary leaders.

Taste of Harford raised more than \$33,000 to support essential Library programs and resources. These funds help sustain services that impact every resident, ranging from early literacy programs and STEM education to internet access, job resources, and lifelong learning opportunities.

This year's event spotlighted 39 local restaurants, farms, breweries, wineries, and caterers, each offering guests a "taste" of their specialties, often featuring locally sourced ingredients. Guests also cast votes in the Best Bite of Harford County competition, with winners including:

- Latitude Seafood Company – Best Seafood
- Maison Intimate Catering – Best Meat Dish
- Island Spice Grille & Lounge – Best Vegetarian
- Jimmy's Famous Seafood – Best Food Truck
- Newberry Café – Best Baked Good
- Broom's Bloom Dairy – Best Dessert
- Coffee Coffee – Best Non – Alcoholic Beverage
- Tropical Smoothie Café – Best Smoothie

To mark the Library's upcoming 80th anniversary, Broom's Bloom Dairy created three special ice cream flavors for guests to sample: Dewey Decimal Double Dutch Chocolate, Periodical Peppermint, and the winning flavor, Librarian Lemon Lavender.

Participating restaurants and food vendors included Bacco Italian Wine Bar, Bacco Pizzeria, Broom's Bloom Dairy, Coffee Coffee, CoffeeBar Bel Air, Falling Branch Brewery, Fawn View Farm, Fiore Winery & Distillery, Flavor Bakery & Cafe, Fresh Source Farms, Full Circle Boards, Granova Poultry, Grid Iron Hill Farm, Harford Vineyard & Winery, Highview Farms, Hopkins Farm Brewery, Inferno Phil's Outpost, Island Spice Grille & Lounge, Jimmy's Famous Seafood, Kona Ice, The Ladew Café, Latitude Seafood Company, Ladies Auxiliary of the Level Volunteer Fire Company, Inc., Lib's Catering, The Local, Maison Intimate Catering, Old Line Spirits, One Eleven Main, Newberry Café and Bakery, Pairings Bistro, Pat's Pizza & Grill, Passanante's Home Food Services, Peru's Chicken II, Pompeian, Pond View Farm

& Market, Slate Farm Brewery, Sweet Kings, Tropical Smoothie Café, and Tutti Paella.

In addition to the food and drink tastings, Taste of

Harford also featured a vibrant farmer's market and artisan showcase.

Participants included A Pleasant Shoppe, The Blended Bead, Fire Beard Forge, Heartfelt Florist, HopeWorks Global, Odd Bird Bookshop, Peppers and Pots, Southern Sol Shoppe, and Sad When It's Gone Desserts, along with local authors D.A. Jennings, Irmgarde Brown, Kristie Wolf, and K.R. Raye.

Thank you to our sponsors: American Design and Build, American Sentry Solar, Harford County Government, Harford's Heart, Keene Dodge Chrysler Jeep Ram, Harford County Trash Services, Hillside Lawn Services, Klein's ShopRite of Maryland, Window Depot, Nemphos Braue, Deer Creek Exteriors, Brothers Services Company, Elite Home Entertainment, Gemcraft Homes, Harford Bank, Ivy Hill Construction Services, Anna and James Lambdin, Point Breeze Credit Union, Rainbow Restoration of Northeastern MD, and ThinkBig Networks.

And to our event partners: Harford County Chamber of Commerce, Harford County Office of Economic Development, Harford County Farm Bureau, Restaurant Association of Maryland, and Vignon Manor Farm, whose collaboration helped make the event a success.





Baltimore Orioles Birdland Caravan | January 31, 2025

Stories of Celebration

Harford County Public Library is proud to be a gathering place for celebrations that unite our community. Whether exploring science and technology, sharing the joy of fandom, enjoying a local bite, or experiencing a magical night in the stacks, these events demonstrate the many ways libraries bring people together and spark curiosity in every generation.

From October through November, the Library celebrated **Maryland STEM Festival**. Families joined Pop-Up STEM programs, teens coded and created during Teen Time, and adults explored artificial intelligence and 3D printing.

September brought the excitement of **Fandom Fest**, where families celebrated comics, games, and pop culture. From superhero obstacle courses to anime bingo and cosplay contests, the day was filled with energy and creativity. Partners like Critical Hit Games and Diamond Comic Distributors added to the fun with Dungeons & Dragons sessions and free comics.

Also in September, the Library celebrated **National Library Card Sign-up Month** under the theme "Libraries – More Than Meets the Eye." Families proudly shared photos of their cards online, while Harford County Public School students discovered their school IDs could open the door to HCPL digital resources, eBooks, and tutoring.

In late January, Harford County Public Library was thrilled to be one of only a few stops, across the state of Maryland, for the **Baltimore Orioles Birdland Caravan!** Held at our Abingdon Library, over 800 fans attended this free, pop-up event throughout the day. All had an opportunity to grab some O's swag as well as a photo with players Colton Cowser, Ryan Mountcastle, Jordan Westburg, and manager Brandon Hyde. This event beautifully showcased Harford County Public Library as a vibrant gathering place where community spirit is celebrated and connections flourish.

In April, HCPL celebrated **National Library Week**, with events like literary open mics, poetry readings, and family celebrations inviting everyone to rediscover why they are "Drawn to the Library." The Harford County Council presented a proclamation recognizing National Library Week and the Library's outstanding role in strengthening community life.

Teen Voices: Creativity & Leadership at HCPL

Teens are a vital force in the Harford County Public Library community, bringing boundless creativity, energy, and fresh perspectives. Our programs are intentionally designed to meet them where they are – providing spaces for exploration, skill-building, and joyful self-expression. This year's flagship events, including the month-long TeenTober celebration and the springtime Film This! festival, vividly demonstrated how the Library empowers young people to discover their passions and share their unique talents with the world.

TeenTober engaged participants with a wide range of activities – from Taylor Swift-themed parties and friendship bracelet-making to manga drawing, and seasonal pumpkin spice tastings. Special after-hours events gave teens ownership of library spaces, creating safe, welcoming environments for laughter, games, and peer connection.

In spring, Film This! showcased the remarkable creativity of teen filmmakers who transformed books into original movie trailers. Fourteen imaginative entries lit up the big screen as families and friends cheered, asked questions, and voted for their favorites across multiple award categories including acting, costume design, and music.

TeenTober, Film This!, and our other robust teen programs exemplify HCPL's commitment to fostering a safe, inspiring platform where teens thrive – as readers, creators, leaders, and valued members of our shared story.





Wheelchair Costume Workshop and Inclusive Trunk or Treat

In October, the Harford County Public Library Foundation hosted the Wheelchair Costume Workshop and Inclusive Trunk or Treat, bringing joy, creativity, and community spirit to families across Harford County. The event, held at The EPICENTER in Edgewood, united more than 100 volunteers who worked tirelessly to design and build Halloween costumes for six children, ages 2 to 10, who use wheelchairs as their primary mode of mobility.

From a Buzz Lightyear spaceship to a dazzling Princess Peach from the Mario games, each wheelchair was transformed into a one-of-

a-kind creation tailored to the child's dream. Volunteers included artists, carpenters, seamstresses, engineers, and community members who poured their skills and creativity into every detail.

The project was made possible through the generosity of sponsors including **Spooktacular Sponsors:** APGFCU and The Harford Center; **Pick of the Patch Sponsors:** American Design and Build Ltd., American Sentry Solar, Bayside Commercial Building Services, Coppermine Bel Air Athletic Club, and Rosedale Bank; and **Hocus Pocus Sponsor:** Mt. Washington Pediatric Hospital.

Also Community Rehabilitation Services, SURVICE Engineering Company, Service Coordination Inc., and McCormick & Company, among others. For many organizations, participation offered both a meaningful way to give back and an opportunity for teambuilding.

The celebration culminated with an inclusive trunk or treat on October 5, where the children proudly paraded their new costumes before joining more than 300 children and families for an evening of candy and community fun.

Winter Reading Program 2025: Cozy Up With a Good Book

3,733

adults & high school students enrolled.

14,810

books, eBooks, audiobooks, & magazines read.

6,153

Bingo activities completed.

TOP TITLES CHECKED OUT DURING WINTER READING:



From December 21 to March 19, adults and high school students were invited to "Cozy Up With a Good Book," setting personal reading goals while connecting with the community. Adults read or listened to at least five books, and high school students, at least three, earning a coveted 2025 Winter Reading collector's mug made possible with sponsorships from APGFCU, BGE, Brightview Senior Living, the Bel Air and Havre de Grace Friends of HCPL, and the Harford County Public Library Foundation.

New this year, Winter Reading Bingo encouraged participants to engage with the Library and our community by completing cozy activities such as attending Library events or visiting local businesses. Completing a row earned a signature HCPL magnetic bookmark and entry for an exclusive 2025 Winter Reading tote bag prize, both courtesy of HCPL.

More than 3,700 participants completed the program.

A letter from THE DIRECTOR OF PHILANTHROPY & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Dear Friends & Supporters,

This year has marked an exciting and transformative chapter for the Harford County Public Library Foundation, defined by the deepening impact of our shared mission and the generous support of donors like you. Thanks to your contributions, we launched and expanded programs that truly reflect our commitment to fostering joy, imagination, and opportunity for everyone across Harford County.

Memorable moments came to life at the Library's first Wheelchair Costume Workshop and Inclusive Trunk or Treat, where more than 100 volunteers worked together to create unforgettable experiences for children who use wheelchairs, showing the power of community and belonging. Our 2nd Annual Taste of Harford set new records in attendance and raised more than \$33,000, supporting vital initiatives that keep the Library vibrant and relevant. At our 20th Annual Gala, Cirque de Magie, inspired by Erin Morgenstern's *The Night Circus*, guests were transported to a world of wonder and helped raise funds essential to sustaining a wide range of programs for all ages.

Our focus on innovation and workforce development made important strides. With support from partners like MEDCO, Build the Future Over Breakfast brought together regional leaders to explore opportunities at Aberdeen Proving Ground and strengthen the STEM pipeline, both critical to our community's success. The relaunch of the Game Changers Business Speaker Series, featuring economist Dr. Anirban Basu and presented by the Kelly Group, underscored the Library's vital role in bringing business and community leaders together, providing timely insights that are usually reserved for exclusive boardroom audiences.

Early literacy and STEM education thrived thanks to renewed partnerships. Celebree School's continued sponsorship of the Little Leapers STEM Kits nurtured curiosity among our youngest learners, while Rosedale Bank's support of the Abingdon Library Innovation Lab ensured ongoing access to advanced resources for students and entrepreneurs. We are deeply grateful for the Morris Mechanic Foundation's generous \$20,000 gift, which strengthens children's programming throughout the system, opening new opportunities for young minds.

This year, our Annual Giving Campaign reached new heights, enabling improvements at StreamWorks in Bel Air as well as enhancements at the Jarrettsville and Havre de Grace branches. Thanks to your generous gifts, the Foundation also fully funded the FY25 Winter and Summer Reading Programs, which set new participation records and helped build a culture of reading and discovery across the County.

Most importantly, none of this progress is possible without the generosity of donors like you. Your commitment transforms lives, inspires young readers, supports lifelong learners, and keeps the Library a safe, welcoming place for all members of our community. On behalf of the Foundation, I thank you for your continued support and advocacy.

Sincerely,

Amber C. Shrodes,

Director of Philanthropy & Community Engagement



Harford County Public Library FOUNDATION

Foundation Statement of Activities

SUPPORT AND REVENUE	\$307,258
Contributions	\$158,925
Event Revenue	\$99,312
Interest Income	\$49,021
DONATIONS TO HCPL	\$50,902
SUPPORTING SERVICES EXPENSES	
Fundraising	\$5,483
Accounting & Administration Expenses	\$42,116
TOTAL SUPPORTING SERVICES EXPENSES	\$47,599
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS	\$208,757
NET ASSETS	
BEGINNING OF YEAR	\$1,380,337
END OF YEAR	\$1,589,094

Our Mission

The mission of the HCPL Foundation is to cultivate support and raise funds to maximize Harford County Public Library's value to the community and enhance Library programs, resources, and special projects beyond the capacity of the Library's tax-funded operating budget. The HCPL Foundation raises awareness and funding through corporate sponsorships, individual giving, special events, and grants.

Incorporated in 2000, the HCPL Foundation is a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization (ID#23-2987712) led by a 20-member Board of Directors representing community and business leaders in Harford County, including three members of the HCPL Board of Trustees.

Thank You

TO ALL OF OUR FY25
DONORS!

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Community Pillars \$10,000+

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Klein's Family Markets
The Morris A. & Clarisse B.
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Nature's Care and Wellness
Rockwell Jewelers, LLC
Rosedale Bank
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President's Circle \$5,000+

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The Daily Record	The Kelly Group	WebIXI
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Harford Day School	Maryland Economic Development Corp.	

Director's Circle \$2,500+

Aberdeen IronBirds	Casella Waste	Island Spice Grille & Lounge	Jon & Liz Shimaitis
Aberdeen Rotary Club	Coffee Coffee	Julia Chang Life Coaching	T2S, LLC
Acer Exhibits & Events	Comcast	Maryland Brew Tours	Tar Heel Construction
Achieve Behavioral Health Services	Coppermine Bel Air Athletic Club	McComas Funeral Homes	Group, LLC
Advanced Eye Care & Aesthetics	Freedom Federal Credit Union	John Mettee IV & Jamila Mettee	ThinkBig Networks, LLC
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Blend Salon	Havre de Grace Friends of HCPL	Pairings Bistro	Patrick Vincenti
Brightview Senior Living	Hillside Lawn Services, Inc.	Reflected Images Custom Detailing	Window Depot Baltimore
Campion Insurance, A Division of	Horizon Cinemas	Rotary Club of Aberdeen	Carol Wright & Mike Lafiandra
Maury Donnelly & Parr, Inc.			

Librarian's Circle \$1,000+

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Abingdon Friends of HCPL	Russell & Lisa Fleming	The Law Office of Shannon Gahs	The Rockfield Foundation, Inc.
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Boutique 44	Frederick Ward Associates	and Furnishings	Chris Schubert
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Brown Advisory	Green Valley Growers	The Liriodendron Mansion	John Shields
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Bruce P. Burns &	The Harford Center, Inc.	MaGerk's Pub & Grill	The Society of Italian American
Bonnie Dubel	Harford Community College	Greg McLaughlin	Businessmen
Ladew Cafe	Harford County Chamber	Cynthia Miller	Sympatico Media, LLC
Chesapeake Employers'	of Commerce	Newberry Café & Bakery	Towson University in
Insurance Company	Harford County Government	NVS Merle Norman	Northeastern Maryland
William & Paige Cox	Harford County Trash Services	Oak Contracting, LLC	Turf Connection, Inc.
Deer Creek Exteriors, Inc.	Mark & Mary Hastler	PK Law	Vagabond Sandwich Company
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East Coast IV	Kiddie Academy	Rainbow International of	Lean, LLC
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Patron's Circle \$100+

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Aberdeen Lioness	Richard Battaglia	Box Hill Pizzeria	Paula Burley	Crabby Axe Throwing
Lions Club	Baysail School of Sailing	Judith C. Boyce	Diane Cahoon	Dianne C. Dacey
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Chesapeake Reigon	Jacob Bennett	Brothers Services Company	Katie Chatas	Greg Derwart
The Arena Club	Best Friends Furever	Gwendolyn P. Brown	Pam Chen	Judith Dettner
Ashley Addiction	Sheri Bianca	Jim & Devon Brown	Richard Choi	Adrienne Diaczok
Treatment	The Blended Bead & Sad	Marilyn Brown	Jarrett Cieslak	Pamela Dorsey
Ellen Ayers	When It's Gone Desserts	Theresa Brown	Kristie Clement	Brian Drumgoole
Bacco Italian Wine Bar	Raymond Bonincontri	Irmgarde B. Brown	Joseph Cluster	Jennifer Drumgoole
and Bacco Pizzeria	Bonnie Bonomo	Karen Brown	CoffeeBar Bel Air	
Bonnie L. Ballard	Sheila Bowers	Bulle Rock Golf Course	Robert L. Compton	

(continued on page 18)

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Kia Dunn	Dr. Monique Head	Jeanmarie Leopold	Peru's Chicken II	Donald Strobach
Robyn Durchanek	Healing Choice	Valerie Lesniak	Mike Peters	Christine Suman
Dutch Wonderland	David L. Heckman	Let's Roam	Amy Phillips	Marni Sundquist
Harry Dutcher	George & Cynthia	Kathleen Letsch	Joseph Piazza	Sweet Kings
Elite Home Entertainment	Hergenbahn	Level Volunteer Fire	Deborah Pilarski	Katherine M. Tagliaferri
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and Catering	Donna Hogarth	J.L. Lora	Steve Pryor	Stephen G. Tillinghast
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Elizabeth Feters	Derek Hopkins	Nancy Lynch	Jim & Teresa Reilly	Bob Titelman, Jr.
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Flavor Bakery & Café	Abigail Hultquist	Main Street Home Loans	William J. Reuling	Avelaine Trabel
Monica Fleming-Oltarzewski	Emily H. Humm	Maison Intimate Catering	Heidi Richardson	Steven Troch
Tabitha Ford	Immediate Studios LLC	Market Street Brewery	Brenden Ring	Tropical Smoothie Café
Bridget Forney	Inferno Phil's Outpost	Frank Marsden	Dan & Susan Roarty	Steve & Terry Troy
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Harford County Public Library Board of Trustees | FY26



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 @hcplonline hcplmd Harford County Public Library

ABERDEEN 21 Franklin St | 410-273-5608
 @AberdeenLibrary aberdeenhcplmd

ABINGDON 2510 Tollgate Rd | 410-638-3990
 @HCPLAbingdon abingdonhcplmd

BEL AIR 100 E. Pennsylvania Ave | 410-638-3151
 @belairbranch belairhcplmd

DARLINGTON 3535 Conowingo Rd | 410-638-3750
 @DarlingtonLibrary darlingtonhcplmd

EDGEWOOD 629 Edgewood Rd | 410-612-1600
 @edgewoodlibrary edgewoodhcplmd

FALLSTON 1461 Fallston Rd | 410-638-3003
 @fallstonbranchHCPL fallstonhcplmd

HAVRE DE GRACE 120 N. Union Ave | 410-939-6700
 @HdGLibrary havredegracehcplmd

JARRETTSVILLE 3722 Norrisville Rd | 410-692-7887
 @JarrettsvilleLibrary jarrettsvillehcplmd

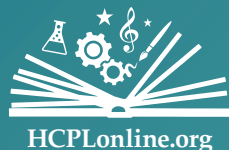
JOPPA 655 Towne Center Dr | 410-612-1660
 @joppabranch joppahcplmd

NORRISVILLE 5310 Norrisville Rd | 410-692-7850
 @norrisvillelibrary norrisvillehcplmd

WHITEFORD 2407 Whiteford Rd | 410-638-3608
 @WhitefordLibrary whitefordhcplmd

ROLLING READER Mobile Unit | 410-612-1600
 @rollingreader hcplrollingreader

SILVER READER Mobile Unit | 410-638-3151
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**Harford County
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