



Inspiring and nurturing a vibrant community through exceptional library services.

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WRL NEWS

What a wonderfully busy and joyful summer it has been at Williamsburg Regional Library! Our buildings were buzzing with energy as thousands of children, teens, and adults alike dove into books, explored new ideas, and joined us for summer reading programs that sparked imagination and learning across all ages. Summer milestone events, such as the annual *1000 Books Before Kindergarten* graduation, beautifully illustrate how the library matters in the life of our community. We are grateful to the Friends of WRL and the many community partners and supporters who helped make summer at the library such a success.

At the same time, exciting changes are on the horizon. Construction on the natural playground at the James City County Library is now underway, and we can't wait to see this innovative play-and-learning space come to life. This project builds on the success of the Kiwanis Kids Idea Studio and is made possible by funding from the Friends of WRL, the Kiwanis Club of Williamsburg, Colonial Capital Kiwanis, the Kiwanis Club of Toano, and other donors. When it opens in spring 2026, it will be a place for children to climb, build, and explore the outdoors right in the library's backyard. This project reflects the spirit of WRL: a place where curiosity, creativity, and community come together.

Whether it's through books, programs, technology, or community spaces, WRL is here to connect people with ideas and with each other. Thank you for being part of this shared journey. Together, we continue to write the story of a library that makes life better for everyone.

- Sandy Towers, Library Director

Introducing Aspen Discovery, WRL's New Catalog

On October 13, WRL will introduce Aspen Discovery, a new online catalog designed to make browsing library materials easier, faster, and more personalized. Users will enjoy tailored reading recommendations, a sleek mobile-friendly design, and quicker access to curated items. Along with the catalog, the library will also launch Aspen LiDA, a new mobile app that mirrors the catalog's user-friendly experience. Starting October 13, users can search the collection, check out e-content, create lists, and more - directly from their phones or tablets. The app will be available for download in app stores by searching for "Williamsburg Regional Library." This update gives library users a modern, seamless way to explore all that WRL has to offer. [Read more about this exciting change.](#)

Comic Con



Fans of science fiction and fantasy had an out-of-this-world time at WRL's ComicCon on September 13! Over 700 guests visited the Williamsburg Library and the Stryker Center to attend various talks, answer trivia, compete in the cosplay contest, shop in the vendor gallery, and participate in other fun activities. Local authors Jaqueline T. Johnson, DL Farrar, Allison Keli, and Drema Deòraich captivated fans with their creativity in an insightful sci-fi fantasy panel. Other special guests included a Dr. Who panel from the Old Dominion Daleks and a talk and LARP (live action role play) demonstration from ORC LARP. Out on City Square, Tampa Taiko performed traditional Japanese drumming while guests enjoyed popcorn and popsicles.

Summer Reading



“Summer Reading is essential for keeping children engaged with books while out of school, sparking their curiosity, and building a lasting love of reading and learning that lasts year-round.” - Alicia Phinney, Youth Services Director

The library was at the heart of summer fun for thousands of young readers. The 2025 Summer Reading Color Our World program focused on spreading kindness and discovering how we can all make the world a better place. Each week, children eagerly shared their latest reading adventures, earned prizes, and joined in a variety of exciting activities. Over 4,300 children took part in the program and collectively read over 44,000 books, totaling 967,000 minutes spent reading.

Free Book Week marked the end of the summer activities. The WRL team distributed over 4,000 books during Free Book Week, both inside the buildings and on the Bookmobile. It wasn't just kids enjoying the fun; nearly 700 adults completed Summer Reading logs and earned great prizes throughout the season. Special thanks to the Friends of WRL, the Herbert Friedman Library Fund, the Schmidt Family, and all the local businesses who helped make Summer Reading a success!

Natural Playground Update



Get ready to climb, build, and explore the outdoors, right in the library's backyard! Construction on the natural playground at the James City County Library began in early September and is set to open to the public in spring 2026. Thanks to a partnership between the Friends of WRL and the Colonial Capital, Toano, and Williamsburg Kiwanis Clubs, this innovative play-and-learning space will spark children's imaginations with hands-on, interactive features that bring them closer to nature. Stay tuned for details on a special community celebration when the playground officially opens. There's still time to join us in bringing this vision to life. To learn more about supporting the playground project, visit wrl.org/581/Gifts-for-the-Playground.

Senior Programming

“Senior programming gives older adults the chance to connect with others while discovering new skills. It’s rewarding to see seniors enjoy learning at the library and to know they have spaces where they feel supported and inspired.”
- Melissa Simpson, Adult Services Director

This summer, WRL partnered with Senior Planet from AARP to help adults aged 60 and up use technology to learn new skills, prioritize wellness, and strengthen social connections. Participants gained digital literacy skills through classes on computer essentials, smartphone photography, exploring and downloading apps, and protecting their personal information online. The Outreach department also extended senior programming to Mondays @ Frink, a weekly series at the Abram Frink Jr. Community Center designed to connect families, children, and older adults through the joy of literacy. This program featured a special literacy café with activities like a virtual field trip to Mexico and crafts such as zipper pouches and tea towels. Together, these programs are bridging the digital divide and fostering connections across the community.



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