



**RICHMOND  
PUBLIC LIBRARY  
FOUNDATION**



**2021-2022  
Impact Report**



# Richmond Public Library: A Place for Community Connection

The Richmond Public Library is a vital part of our community - it is a connector of information, people and resources. Giving to the Richmond Public Library strengthens and amplifies these connections, ensuring that the resources found in our nine branch libraries are available to all.

Thanks to you, fiscal year 2021-22 was a year of generous giving to the Richmond Public Library Foundation. We are grateful for all of you!

You helped the Richmond Public Library provide exciting and vibrant programs and services, and invested in enhancing its special collections and facilities.

## Great Giving Creates Great Connections

*“The Library has always been a source of joy to me. When I was young I could not wait to get my own library card – it felt like a tremendous privilege and responsibility and was the first card in my wallet. And now that my son is so active and engaged in the world around him, I’m delighted to introduce him to those same benefits I enjoyed as a young visitor to the library. I give to the RPLF in recognition of my own experience, and to ensure that same experience is afforded to my child as well as other children across Richmond.”*

-Nissa Lipowicz



# Connecting to a Bright Future



## RVA Reads

An important early literacy outreach program, RVA Reads partners with Richmond's five Virginia Preschool Initiative Centers, Richmond Healthy Families, and Family Lifeline. Visiting a branch of the Richmond Public Library for story time is frequently an important step in learning to read and accessing books. RVA Reads partnerships, outside the Library's walls, foster a love of reading and building home libraries for 2-5 year olds. Donations to the Richmond Public Library Foundation help purchase books for families, sometimes the first book for a young child. We are grateful to the REB Foundation, the Robins Foundation, Dominion Charitable Foundation, The Tuckahoe Woman's Club, and individual readers across the City for supporting this essential program.

## YAVA

The Young Adult Virginia Author (YAVA) Program and Award connects teens directly with authors to learn about their writing process and journey as an author. Teen Judges select the YAVA Award winner and present a \$1,000 prize each Spring. The 2021-22 YAVA Award winner was Lamar Giles for his novel, *Not So Pure and Simple*.

The program and award are made possible through individual donations to the Richmond Public Library Foundation and sponsorship from Dominion Charitable Foundation. This program has been funded in partnership with the Friends of the Richmond Public Library.



RVA Reads Program Coordinator Barbara Crump reads to a class

# Connecting to Expanded Horizons and Opportunities

## Read Up, Richmond!

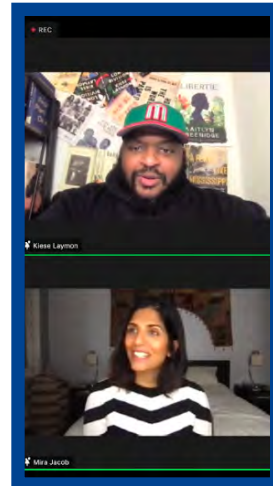
The Read UP, Richmond! Program challenges readers to engage with books outside their own lived experiences to develop a deeper understanding of the world. A partnership between the Friends of the Library and the Richmond Public Library Foundation makes it possible for RVA residents to connect people from different walks of life.

Kiese Laymon and Mira Jacob joined Richmond Public Library for the 2021 virtual Read UP, Richmond!

Laymon is the author of the bestselling memoir, *Heavy: An American Memoir*, which won the 2019 Andrew Carnegie Medal for Excellence in nonfiction and was named one of the 50 Best Memoirs of the Past 50 Years by The New York Times. Laymon was interviewed by Mira Jacob, author of the stunning graphic memoir, *Good Talk: A Memoir in Conversations*, which expands upon the delicate and nuanced conversations about race and politics she has with her son. These conversations touch on character and plot development, how decisions are made during the writing phase, and more, offering insights to the thinking and process around the experience.

## The Urban Fiction Experience

The Urban Fiction Experience is the only East Coast Urban Fiction event hosted by a library. This annual event engages readers from across the country and provides new and published African American authors with the opportunity to connect with each other, share spoken word performances and engage with local readers. This program is funded by individual donations to the Richmond Public Library Foundation.



Kiese Laymon and Mira Jacob





# Connecting With and Understanding our Environment



## Common Book

A collaborative effort with Virginia Commonwealth University, the 2021-22 Common Book was *Rising: Dispatches from the American Shore*. The author, Elisabeth Rush, spoke via Zoom to students at VCU and library patrons about the effects of climate change on Virginia's coastline. Funding from the Richmond Public Library Foundation made available free copies of the book to RVA residents to encourage community conversations on the topic.

## Rain Gardens

To see words in action, visit RPL branches at North Avenue, Broad Rock, and West End. Enjoy the Rain Gardens filled with native plants and welcoming seating areas. These gardens, created in partnership with the James River Association and supported by grants and Richmond Public Library Foundation gifts, are designed to significantly reduce storm runoff water and increase opportunities for native pollinators.



Library Director Scott Firestine and  
Library Board of Trustees member Janet Woody



VCU Student Volunteer at Broad Rock Branch Library

# Connecting to Better Health and Supporting Health Literacy

## Daily Planet Health Services Partnership

Recognizing that access to good health care is essential to maintaining a vibrant community, RPL joined the Network of the National Library of Medicine (NNLM) in 2021. This NNLM grant supports an innovative partnership with Daily Planet Health Services (DPHS) that connects health literacy and good health. Recent Centers for Disease Control research suggests public libraries are logical choices as partners in improving population health. Free and accessible to all libraries are centers of community engagement and education. In line with RPL staff experiences, the Centers for Disease Control report indicates Library staff members routinely assist patrons with unmet health and social needs. Bolstering the benefits of partnering with a Library System, Pew Research indicates “78% of adults feel that public libraries help them find information that is trustworthy and reliable.”



These factors supported a collaboration with the DPHS Medical Mobile Unit, which traveled to Richmond Public Libraries to offer medical services such as vaccinations, COVID testing, HIV screening, blood pressure screenings, and more. This program helps remove transportation as a barrier to care. This project was supported by funds from the National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health under cooperative agreement number UG4LM013729 at the University of Iowa, Hardin Library for the Health Sciences. The content is solely the responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily represent the official views of the National Institutes of Health.

Part of the National Institutes of Health, NNLM provides science-based medical information through Medline Plus, available on the Library’s website.



# Connecting to Community Understanding

## Civic Engagement

The library is a place for civic engagement. In May, the Richmond Public Library and the Richmond Public Library Foundation hosted Pulitzer Prize winner and Richmond Times-Dispatch columnist Michael Paul Williams and Pulitzer Prize nominee and author Chip Jones for “What Makes a Fact True - Local Journalism and American Democracy” moderated by VCU Assistant Professor Stephanie Rizzi.

Programs like this one foster community conversation and help make Richmond a more connected place.



L to R: Chip Jones, Michael Paul Williams, Stephanie Rizzi

## Community Memory Fellow

In partnership with the Virginia Museum of History and Culture (VMHC), Richmond Public Library will establish a Community Memory Fellow position within the Library. The Fellow will be a collector, interpreter, historian, and preservationist who will work closely with other cultural institutions and individuals across the City of Richmond. The Fellow’s work will include collecting oral histories across neighborhoods, faith-based communities, school communities, sports and grassroots civic organizations. The goal is to create a publicly accessible location - the Richmond Room - where one can readily access a diversity of records and stories spanning the City, from house to block to zip code. The grant funds will be matched by individual donations through the Foundation.



L to R: Pamela Kiecker Royall (VMHC), Clay Dishon (RPL), Nissa Lipowicz (RPLF), Ben Himmelfarb (RPL), and Hunter Applewhite (Dominion Energy Foundation)

# Your Donation to the Foundation Connects the Library to the Community



We deeply appreciate everyone who invested in the Richmond Public Library this past year with a gift through the Richmond Public Library Foundation.

## Ways to Connect With Us:

- Visit [rvalibrary.org](http://rvalibrary.org) to give online, or use the enclosed envelope to invest in RPL.
- Give through the Commonwealth of Virginia Campaign #201299
- Please contact the Foundation office at 804-646-5511 to discuss gifts through wills, trusts, or stock.
- Guidestar Gold Seal of Transparency
- Give by mail: 

Richmond Public Library Foundation  
101 E. Franklin Street  
Richmond, Virginia 23219

## Gifts to the Foundation Enable the Library to Offer:

- The Common Book, free to the community
- The Urban Fiction Experience
- The YAVA Award and Teen Experience
- RVA Reads to Richmond preschoolers
- Innovative programs such as “What Makes a Fact True: Local Journalism and American Democracy”
- Thousands of new books



Please visit our website for a longer thank you list.



## Foundation Board Officers (2021-2022)

**John Ulmschneider, President**

Emeritus Dean of Libraries and  
University Librarian Virginia Commonwealth University

**Nissa Lipowicz, Vice President**

Orange Frame Productions

**Rich Peterson, Treasurer**

Community Volunteer

**Scott Firestine, Secretary and Library Director**

**Susan S. Revere, Executive Director**

## Foundation Board Directors (2021-2022)

**Emily Altman**, Virginia Community College System

**James K. Beazley**, Dominion Energy

**Peter Blake**, State Council of Higher Education for Virginia

**Fran Bradford**, McGuire Woods Consulting, LLC

**J. Dontrese Brown**, BROWNBAYLOR

**Trevor S. Cox**, Hunton Andrews Kurth LLP

**Ruth DeBoer** (ex-officio), Friends of Richmond Public Library

**Brenda J. Drew, Ed.D.**, Educational Consultant

**Hollee Freeman**, Freeman Educational & Business  
Consulting, LLC

**Joanne V. Frye**, Commonwealth of Virginia

**Jennifer Goins**, Bon Secours Richmond Health Care Foundation

**P. Kelly Kyle**, Community Volunteer

**Alex Maffett**, RBC Wealth Management

**Lyn Kyle Manson**, Verizon Wireless

**Jennifer D. Mullen**, Roth Jackson

**Susan McFadden Patow**, Education Consultant

**Marshall Pearsall**, Community Volunteer

**Felix Schapiro**, Community Volunteer

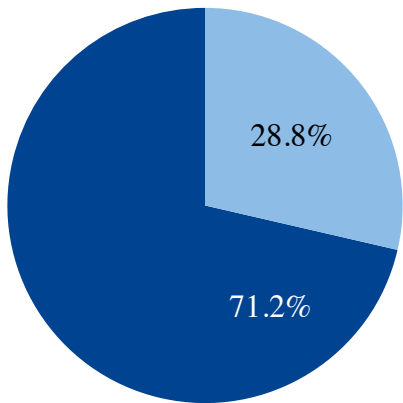
**William Yates**, (ex-officio) Richmond Public Library  
Board of Trustees

**Judge C.N. Jenkins, Jr.**, Emeritus

**Brooks Smith**, Emeritus

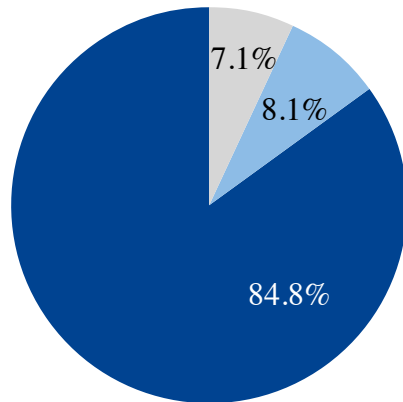
# Financials and Statistics

## Contributions



■ Restricted, \$128,235  
■ Unrestricted, \$51,943

## Expenses



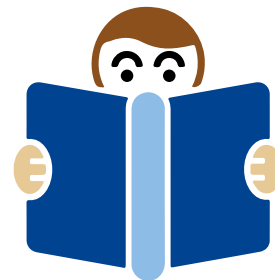
■ Program Support, \$121,542  
■ Audit, Tax, Accounting, \$11,600  
■ Office Expense, \$10,194



**13,071** new library cards were issued



**701,027** items were checked out (print, digital, media)



**12,525** individuals attended programs

# Benefits You Can Enjoy at Richmond Public Libraries



1. Free Wi-Fi
2. Free notary services
3. Fax, scan, photocopy (copies @ .15/page)
4. Free access to computers
5. E-content apps and platforms on your computer, reader or phone
6. Borrow a magazine or Broadway musical
7. Large event space for community use
8. Meeting & study rooms available
9. Virtual access to a master gardener
10. Kids books, take home craft kits, or programs in the branches
11. Immersive learning through The Great Courses Library Collection
12. A wide variety of online databases
13. Museum Backpack with free passes to local museums
14. Nature Backpack with free passes to local parks
15. Job search assistance
16. Homework help
17. Local history & special collections that allow you to learn more about your community
18. Free access to WestlawNext and Lexis Advance in our Law Library
19. Publically accessible art gallery highlighting local artists
20. ...and so much more! Visit [rvalibrary.org](http://rvalibrary.org) for more information.



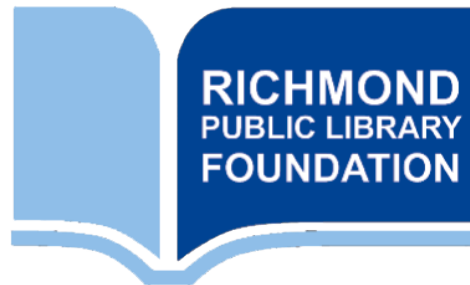
**Before**



**After**



**Thank you to everyone! Without you, we couldn't make projects like this a reality.**



**Richmond Public Library Foundation**  
101 E. Franklin Street  
Richmond, VA 23219  
(804) 646-5511