

ENGAGING WITH WORDS AT EVERY AGE



IMPACT REPORT 2023-2024



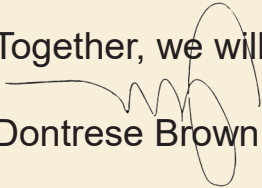
Dear Richmond,

As the incoming Richmond Public Library Foundation Board President, I am thrilled to share how gifts from individuals, foundations, and community partners have been transformative for Richmond Public Library this year.

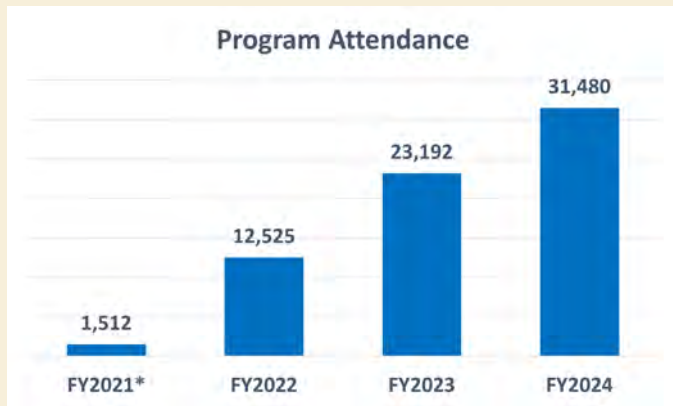
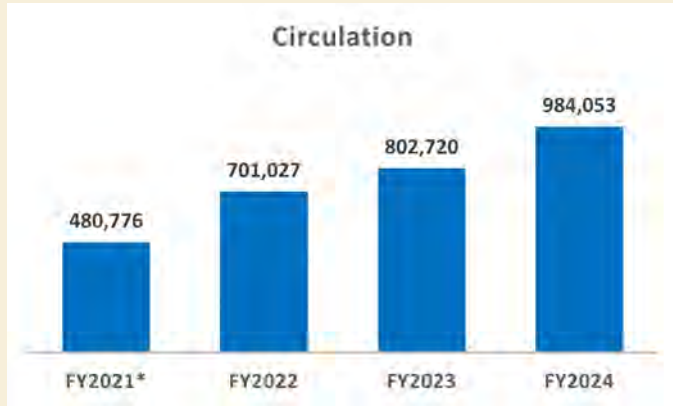
Our neighborhood libraries are community hubs and sanctuaries for reflection, learning, and connection. With your philanthropy through the Richmond Public Library Foundation, we seek to build an active and strong community of library advocates, helping ensure all of Richmond has free access to an expansive array of resources and opportunities.

Whether you're a long-time library enthusiast or just discovering our library community, **there is a place for you here**. With you, we strengthen a vital place of connection, knowledge, and reflection—our Richmond Public Library.

Together, we will.


Dontrese Brown

Engagement by the Numbers



*Impacted by COVID

Your Library Card is a Passport to Adventure and Learning

Welcome to your neighborhood library! You will find shelves brimming with books, movies, and music. From exciting programs with library mascot *Ripple the River Otter* to lively book clubs, homework help, and job application assistance, there is something here for everyone.

Connect with our friendly, knowledgeable staff, who can show you how to use Libby, Acorn TV, hoopla, or kanopy, all free to explore and use. Check out a laptop, host a meeting, learn a new language, or simply find a quiet corner to read - all in your own neighborhood.

Your library card is a passport to all the library offers. Bring your curiosity and see where your next library adventure takes you!



Virginia State Park Ranger Sammy at the Main Library

Young Readers at the Richmond Public Library

A sturdy foundation is essential for building a strong, long-lasting house. The same goes for preparing little ones for the reading and writing adventures that await them in school. Every moment spent with stories, whether snuggling up with a picture book or playing alphabet games, prepares children for lifelong learning and success.

In the library we nurture early learning skills with The Basics™, which empowers the cognitive and social-emotional development of children.

In the community, the Library and the Foundation partner with individual donors, Robins and R.E.B. Foundations, Virginia Credit Union, and VCU Pauley Heart Center. Together we gifted 13,765 books to 1,577 children in preschools and daycares across Richmond through our library outreach program, RVA Reads.



Family Reading Time

Summer Interns Expand Summer Capacity and Fun at the Library

We piloted a Summer Intern Program in summer 2023 with two college students majoring in early education or child development. It went well, and thanks to generous community support through the Foundation, we expanded to 10 interns for summer 2024 - one at each branch, with two at the Main Library.

Interns led storytimes, assisted with events like RippleCon, and managed other library duties. They gained valuable skills and made community connections. This program also allowed us to increase youth services across all nine branches, boosting our storytimes and other activities for young patrons.

Summer Reading Sees Record Participation:

The number of children involved in summer events increased by 53% over the previous year to 3,581 in 2024.



Summer Intern Program 2024

Recap from the Library: Summer Reading 2024

With the Foundation's support and the help of the summer interns, we are delighted to share the following exciting summer highlights:



Multiple storytimes every week to feed young imaginations



Supercharged STEAM programs, zooming from 1-2 per month to 1-2 per week



The Teeny Tiny Farm brought mini marvels - llamas, horses, and cows that fit in your heart, not your backpack



Virginia State Park Rangers brought the great outdoors to us



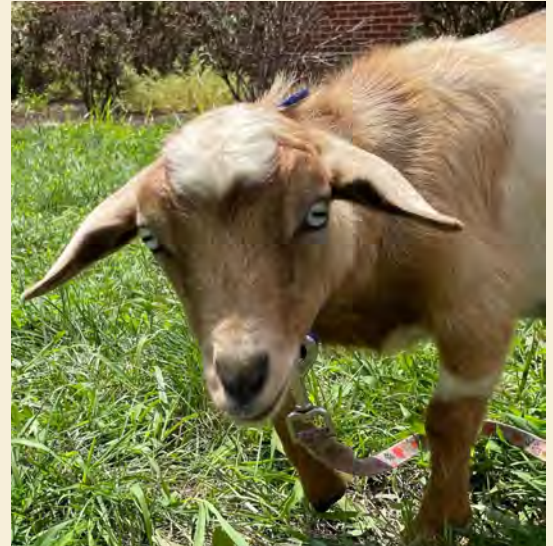
Our Teen Art program let young artists shine



Mad Science brought mind-blowing experiments and laughter



Our "Lift Off to Kindergarten" program prepared little ones and their families for their big new adventure as kindergarteners



Ferdinand the Goat at North Avenue Branch

Make It Last Forever at the Memory Lab



Memory Lab patron preparing items for digitization.

Your library is a free connection to critical digitization resources in our greatly expanded Memory Lab at the Main Library.

Do you have faded Kodachrome slides, beloved VHS tapes, or precious audio cassettes? Friendly staff can guide you through as you use our scanners, video converters, audio equipment, and more.

Connect with us and learn new skills as you preserve important family stories for generations to come. Scan the QR code to schedule a visit. You will leave with digital copies that are easy-to-share, ensuring family knowledge and memories live on.



Richmond Public Library's Digital Special Collections

We are passionate about making Richmond's diverse history accessible to all. Whether you are tracing family roots or documenting neighborhood changes, your stories offer valuable voices and perspectives to our city's history.

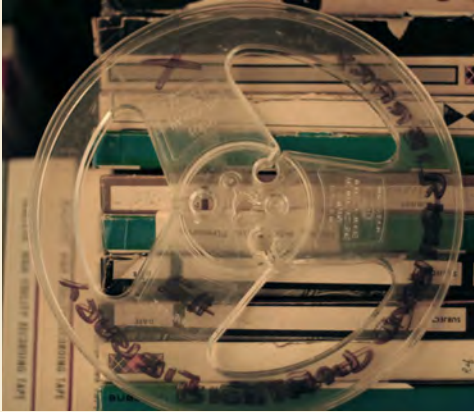
We invite digital story contributions highlighting underrepresented histories, to fill gaps in Richmond's public records. You are not simply preserving your own history – you are helping build a more complete, inclusive record of Richmond's past and present.

This work began two years ago when the Foundation and the Virginia Museum of History & Culture's *Commonwealth History Fund* together funded a new library position, Community Memory Fellow. Designed to preserve and share untold Richmond stories, both the position and the work led to the award of a transformative 5-year Mellon Foundation grant. Join us in this journey of preservation and discovery.



Marvin Hicks, Community Memory Fellow, interviewing Mayor Levar Stoney for the 2020 Monuments Project.

A Partner in Making History Accessible



Richmond Public Library's Memory Lab has opportunities for both organizations and individuals to discover and document their own histories.

One local organization recently connected with our Memory Lab resources. The Ealey Project (TEP) covers the work of civil rights lawyer, the Honorable Roland J. "Duke" Ealey of Jackson Ward. The project's goal is to produce accurate, first-hand accounts of Jackson Ward during post Reconstruction-era challenges and the Civil Rights movement.

"The settings afforded by the library and the professionalism and positivity exhibited by the library staff create a seamless welcoming environment for our TEP staff and our clients. We are proud to have such a partner as the Richmond Public Library..." -James Vigeant, President, TEP

Your library card connects you to African-American Heritage Quest, AncestryLibrary, HeritageHub, and more. The Memory Lab has Personal Archiving Kits for check-out, enabling elders, history buffs, and family members to preserve and share neighborhood and family histories.

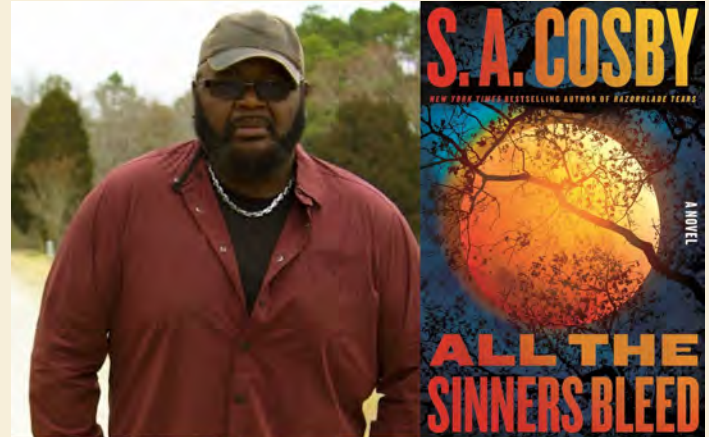
Contact Chloe McCormick, Special Collections Librarian (chloe.mccormick@rva.gov) or Marvin Hicks, Community Memory Fellow (marvin.hicks@rva.gov) at 804-646-1609.

Read Up Richmond

We believe that reading is transformative. It can help us step outside our own experiences and gain a deeper understanding of the world around us. That is why we are so excited about Read Up Richmond.

This author talk and interactive program challenges us to read differently - to pick up books that introduce us to perspectives and stories beyond our own lived experience. When people from different walks of life come together in the library, we can learn from each other and engage in thoughtful conversations.

Every fall, we invite you to join us on this literary adventure. Immerse yourself in tales that transport you to new places, introduce you to unfamiliar experiences, and challenge you to see the world through fresh eyes and a new perspective. When we learn, reflect, and connect with each other, we make Richmond a more vibrant, interconnected place for everyone.



S.A. Cosby, 2023 Read Up Richmond Guest Author

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**Richmond Public Library's mission is to
*Inform, Enrich, and Empower***

**You can help us expand programs, update
resources, and ensure services remain free and
accessible to all by donating here:**



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