What happens when a library can DREAM BIG?

IMPACT REPORT

FALL 2021
Your Friends of Williamsburg Regional Library Foundation exists for one very important reason – to nurture and support our marvelous library’s creativity and outreach.

We are fortunate to live in an area where the local governing bodies allocate solid basic funding for the library. The Friends provide the resources to support creative new outreach and programmatic initiatives and to allow the staff to be nimble when confronting challenges as well as opportunities. Rarely have such abilities been more critical than in the past year. Was the library successful? Absolutely! Emblematic of that success is the fact that the Library Journal has just awarded our library four stars, a distinction accorded only one other library in Virginia.

This report is offered to you our donors in gratitude for your faithful support of the Friends’ efforts during this past year and to give you a glimpse of just some of the things you, through the Friends, have accomplished. Among them:

- Opened the Kiwanis Kids Idea Studio – Supported by James City County, the library board, all three local Kiwanis clubs, and many individuals and businesses, as well as by the Friends; the Idea Studio is a first in Virginia - a children’s center combining the best features of a first-rate children’s book

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**FAST FACTS**

- **$976,000**
  - Money Raised Between 2018 - 2020
- **$1,025,000**
  - Spent in Project Funding 2018 - 2020
- **57**
  - Projects Funded 2018 - 2020
- **$3,023,869**
  - Total Funds Under Management As of 12/31/2020
- **$205.20**
  - Average Gift 2018 - 2020
collection with many of the features only found elsewhere in a children’s museum. 14,000 visitors since the Idea Studio’s Grand Opening is ample testimony to the venture’s success.

- Expanded Wi-Fi coverage – Friends grants tripled the number of library sponsored Wi-Fi hot spots, focusing heavily on underserved communities. That allowed more children without internet resources at home to study and learn during the pandemic and gave adults access to critical health information and the means to submit employment applications electronically.

- Repurposed funding to support increased demand for ebooks and digital audiobooks during the first COVID wave (resulting in a 73% increase in digital circulation in the first part of the pandemic). The Friends also made funding available to allow library staff and volunteers to produce plastic face shields for local medical personnel, and other essential workers.

- Continued support again this year for two highly successful summer reading programs. Over 2,500 children took part in this annual activity while 1,100 adult readers participated in the second year of an adult reading program.

These activities would not have occurred without the financial support and the volunteer activity the Friends were able to provide. When we asked, you gave. Your gifts allowed the library to be flexible in a time of crisis and creative in meeting the needs of our community. Whether you volunteered in the Book Nook, made a financial or an in-kind contribution, or participated in our fundraising efforts, thank you! What an impact your gifts have made, not only in the library, but also in the strength of community we are privileged to share!

Sam Sadler, President
Friends of Williamsburg Regional Library Foundation

wrl.org/give
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bgoldberg@wrl.org
The Friends Board of Directors is made up of a talented and dedicated group of volunteers from Greater Williamsburg who are supported by a host of subcommittees that work together to make an impact on the future of the Williamsburg Regional Library and be good stewards of the resources entrusted to the Friends.

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The library programs are wonderful! Callani really looks forward to the library events and we attend almost every library program at the Frink Community Center. The Reptile Man, STEAM Open House, the Magic Show. Callani especially enjoyed the STEAM programs. The library staff, Eletha, Nick, and Chris are so caring and so child-oriented, they really make the children feel special. The children love when Mr. Nick goes to get the pizza at 11:30! And the ice cream too! The programs are great, and a lot of people come! The library is such an important resource in our community to help children learn and grow.

"The library is such an important resource in our community to help children learn and grow."

RACHEL & CALLANI
DONATIONS IN 2020

Our library delivers award winning services and is accessible to everyone because of the commitment of our local governments and the generosity of private donors. Here’s how it works. While tax dollars keep the lights on, buildings open, and cover the operating expenses, we know the library is so much more. That’s what the Friends do.

We make a good library an excellent one – with your help. We are grateful to all our Friends who made a gift as of midnight December 31, 2020.

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The library is our second home. Ricardo and I became active with the library when he was just two weeks old starting with Baby Storytime. The staff in the children’s area are like family. They are always so helpful and they are literally just watching Ricardo grow. We love having access to so many books, educational programs, and activities to educate Ricardo’s mind. The library gives us an opportunity for Ricardo to meet other kids of different backgrounds and cultures who could potentially turn into lifelong friends within our community. We cannot say enough great things about the library and the programs they continue to offer. We are grateful. Many thanks to the WRL staff and donors!

“The library is our second home.”

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One of our main criteria for searching for a house was to be very close to the library so we could go often. Over the past several months the library has become our second home. We frequent the library several times a week and sometimes twice a day. One of the biggest reasons we continue to come back is because of the friends we have made here. The day the Idea Studio finally opened, we were there! We were so amazed at the renovations, including the new play area for toddlers and all of the interactive features! Sometimes I don’t think the library knows what an impact it has on the daily lives of the people who come there, but we will never forget how blessed we are to have such a wonderful place to go.
“Thank you for providing us an opportunity to learn, grow, and explore!”

We think that the Williamsburg Regional Library is an extraordinary place to learn and grow! The librarians, resources, programs, and materials at the library are amazing and make this library unique. One of our favorites is the Learning to Go program. There is a telescope to explore the night sky, a lap harp to learn music, a fashion design kit to express creativity, and even mini robots to program. We have access to an astounding list of material that is available for us to check out and take home! Thank you for providing us an opportunity to learn, grow, and explore!
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We have made every effort to ensure the accuracy of this listing of 2020 supporters. Please notify Benjamin Goldberg, library development officer, (757) 741-3390, of any inaccuracies or omissions. We sincerely regret any errors.
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$1.15 MILLION IN SALES

51,000+ HOURS OF VOLUNTEER TIME

The average cost of a book is $1, so that’s roughly 1.1 million books! The average book is 3.3 inches thick, so our volunteers have sold about 57 miles of shelved books!
What are Friends for? Just about everything it turns out. WRL turns to our Friends over and over and over to make great things happen for our community.


The Friends are with us every step of the way cheering the library on. You understand that proactively making great services available requires extra resources, advocacy, and support. Your support gives the library the freedom to boldly try new ideas, occasionally fail, and still keep reaching, experimenting, and innovating.

Thanks to our wonderful Friends, the library can be there for our community in extra ways. Big and small ways that make a difference to a lot of people during a time that has been scary, lonely, and isolating. The Friends help provide valued services for people outside of the library buildings that bring people important resources, quiet joys, and a sense of connection. And some big joys and triumphs like the Grand Opening of the new Kiwanis Kids Idea Studio at the James City County Library, when thousands of children came together and played and played and played. It was such a memorable day for so many families, and the Friends made it happen.

I have experienced a lot of strong emotions over the past year, and I know the library staff has too, but one of the strongest is an enormous sense of gratitude for everything our Friends and donors have made possible.

Thank you from all of us and the many thousands of people that love and use the library. You are simply the best!

Betsy Fowler
Library Director

“You are simply the best!”
What happens when a library can DREAM BIG?

IMPACT REPORT
FALL 2021