

PRESS RELEASE

WRL Receives \$20,500 in Grant Funding for Culinary Literacy Classes

WILLIAMSBURG, Va. (Aug. 7, 2023) – Williamsburg Regional Library (WRL) was selected to receive a \$7,500 grant from Sentara Health and a \$13,000 grant from the Friends of WRL Foundation to bring culinary literacy classes to underserved areas in the community.

The new WRL initiative, Better Health Through Culinary Literacy, will educate and empower families to make informed decisions about their nutrition and diet through targeted classes on healthy eating and nutrition paired with related cooking demonstrations. The program, led by the library's Outreach team, will provide residents of underserved neighborhoods with free classes and access to a new mobile teaching kitchen and equipment on an ongoing basis.

“WRL is committed to empowering families in our community with the knowledge and skills they need to make healthier choices for their well-being,” said Library Director Betsy Fowler.

“By bringing our new mobile teaching kitchen into local neighborhoods and offering free culinary literacy classes, we aim to improve the health of residents who may not have easy access to healthy food and food education.”



An image of a mobile teaching kitchen that will be part of WRL's new culinary literacy program.

Participants will learn important culinary literacy skills including reading and writing recipes; understanding cooking and ingredient terminology; learning to prepare a meal; understanding the basic math of measuring; learning the basic science of cooking; knowing how to read and understand nutrition labels; understanding what food does to the body; and learning how to navigate grocery stores with health in mind. The goal of the program is to improve culinary literacy for families, thereby improving their overall long-term health.

Classes will begin in fall of 2023. Learn more about library programs at wrl.org.

The Williamsburg Regional Library (WRL) is an award-winning regional library system that consists of the Williamsburg Library on Scotland St. in Williamsburg, the James City County Library on Croaker Rd. in James City County, the Stryker Center on N. Boundary St. in Williamsburg, and its Mobile Library Services vehicles. The WRL service area includes the City of Williamsburg, James City County, and York County.

The Friends of Williamsburg Regional Library Foundation strengthens a treasured cornerstone of our community. As an independent nonprofit, the Friends raises funds to support the Williamsburg Regional Library. The library's budget funds day-to-day needs, such as salaries, maintenance, and programming. But the Friends allow the library to dream big – igniting ambition, backing innovative initiatives that otherwise would be out of reach, and opening a world of discovery for everyone in the Historic Triangle. Modern libraries are much more than books and story time. The Friends help Williamsburg Regional Library stand as a leader among them.

Sentara, an integrated, not-for-profit health care delivery system, celebrates 135 years in pursuit of its mission—"we improve health every day." Sentara is one of the largest health systems in the U.S. Mid-Atlantic and Southeast, and among the top 20 largest not-for-profit integrated health systems in the country, with 30,000 employees, 12 hospitals in Virginia and Northeastern North Carolina, and the Sentara Health Plans division which serves more than 1.2 million members in Virginia and Florida. Sentara is recognized nationally for clinical quality and safety and is strategically focused on innovation and creating an extraordinary health care experience for our patients and members. Sentara was named to IBM Watson Health's "Top 15 Health Systems" (2021, 2018), and was recognized by Forbes as a "Best Employer for New Grads" (2022), "Best Employer for Veterans" (2022), and "Best Employer for Women" (2020).

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