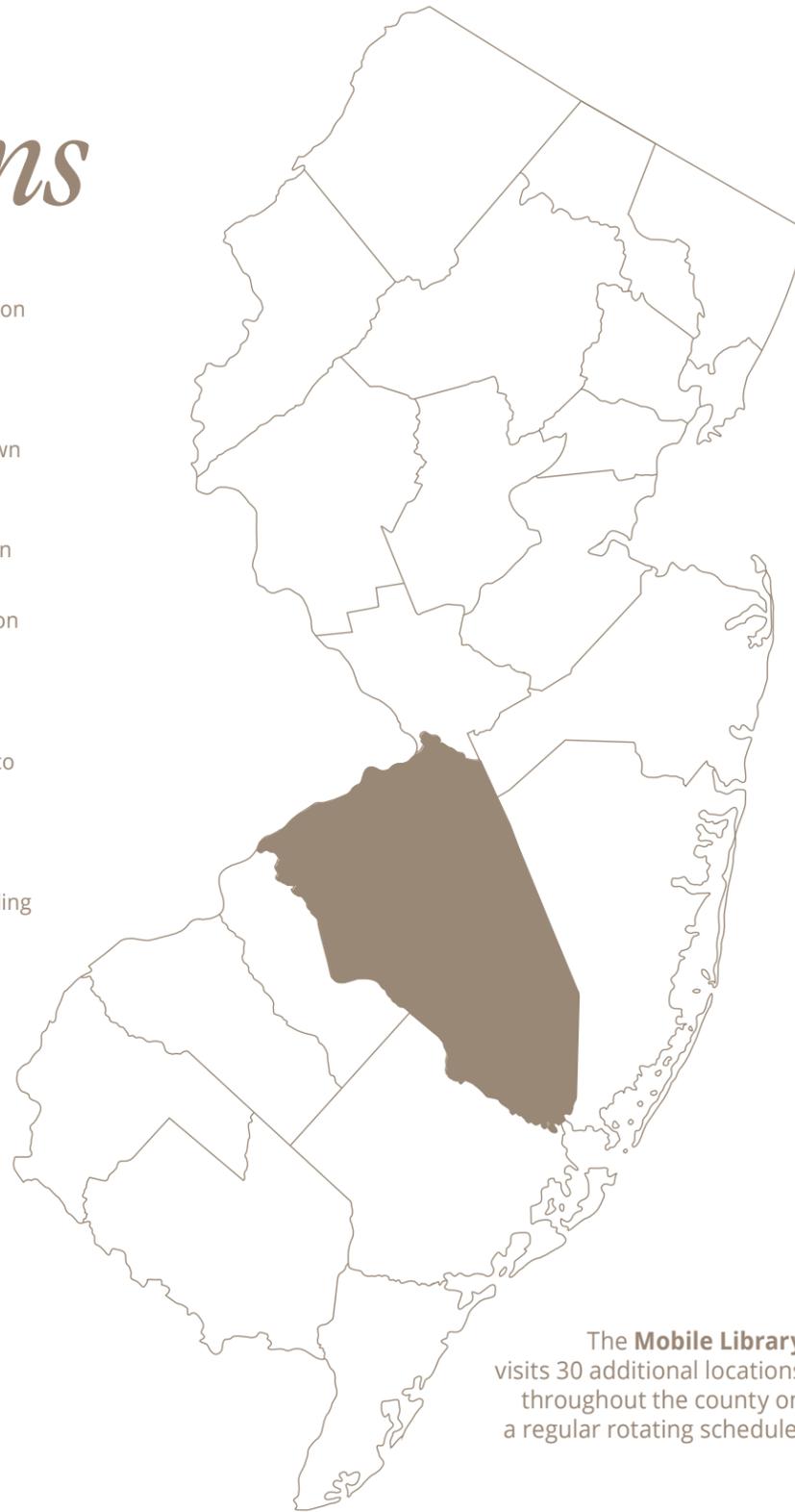


bcls *locations*

- 1. Burlington County Library**
5 Pioneer Boulevard, Westampton
- 2. Beverly Library**
441 Cooper Street, Beverly
- 3. Bordentown Library**
18 East Union Street, Bordentown
- 4. Library Company
of Burlington**
23 West Union Street, Burlington
- 5. Cinnaminson Library**
1619 Riverton Road, Cinnaminson
- 6. Crosswicks Library**
483 Main Street, Crosswicks
- 7. Delanco Public Library**
1303 Burlington Avenue, Delanco
- 8. Evesham Library**
984 Tuckerton Road, Marlton
- 9. Florence Library**
1350 Hornberger Avenue, Roebling
- 10. Maple Shade Library**
200 Stiles Avenue, Maple Shade
- 11. Pemberton Library**
16 Broadway, Browns Mills
- 12. Pinelands Library**
39 Allen Avenue, Medford
- 13. Riverside Library**
10 Zurbrugg Way, Riverside
- 14. Riverton Library**
306 Main Street, Riverton
- 15. Rowan College
at Burlington County**
900 College Circle, Mt. Laurel
- 16. Sally Stretch Keen
Memorial Library**
94 Main Street, Vincentown



The **Mobile Library** visits 30 additional locations throughout the county on a regular rotating schedule.

 **bcls.lib.nj.us**   

The mission of the Burlington County Library System is to enrich lives by providing opportunities for learning, growth and personal development.

AR2019 0820



2019 annual report



“

I'm proud to work on behalf of the residents of Burlington County and ensure our library system offers access to countless programs, inspirational and educational resources, as well as spaces that meet their needs. On behalf of the entire library commission, we are pleased with all of the important initiatives that were launched last year and look forward to continuing that work in 2020.

- Jon Chebra
 Chairman
 Burlington County Library Commission

”



“

The Burlington County Library System is an invaluable asset to residents of all ages and interest. With locations in every corner of the county and a multitude of resources available online, our libraries continue to enrich lives and offer countless opportunities for personal growth. I'm proud of all that was accomplished last year and look forward to celebrating even greater success in the future.

- Tom Pullion
 Burlington County Board of Chosen Freeholders
 Deputy Director and 2020 Library Liaison

”



2019 financials

Total BCLS budget.....	\$ 12,457,100	budgeted
Total Fines and Fees.....	\$ 232,751	actually received
Total Library Grants/Aid.....	\$ 123,916	actually received
Friends of the Library	\$ 83,342	supporting programming and various operating expenses



circulation stats

Total items checked out	1,411,524
Youth Services items checked out	543,694
Adult Services items checked out	867,830
Total ILL requests satisfied	4,574
Total number of resident borrowers.....	76,086
Total number of out-of-county borrowers.....	1,378
Total number of new library cards issued.....	13,079

THERE'S ALWAYS SOMETHING INTERESTING going on at BCLS.
Stop by your local branch to see a show,
try a skill or pick up a hobby. We'll be waiting for you!



MISS KIM (left) played a series of concerts around the system to the delight of our youngest library customers. Events like these are made possible with support from the **BCLS FOUNDATION**.

BURLINGTON COUNTY LIBRARY in Westampton (right) is the main location for BCLS. See a complete list of our 16 branch and member locations on the back cover.



BURLINGTON COUNTY BOARD of CHOSEN FREEHOLDERS

- Tom Pullion
Freeholder Director
- Balvir Singh
Freeholder Deputy Director
- Felicia Hopson
- Daniel J. O'Connell
- Latham Tiver

Burlington County Administrator

Eve Cullinan

BURLINGTON COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM COMMISSION

- Jonathan A. Chebra
Chair
- Betsy Link
Vice Chair
- Sarah Holley
- Albert T. Lutner
- Beth Sherman

BURLINGTON COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM FOUNDATION

- Jessica Siragusa
President
- Patricia Lindsay-Harvey
Vice President
- Christine Dwyer
Secretary
- Stefanie Dellmyer
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- Carla Reinas
Assistant Treasurer
- Jo Anderson
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- Stephen Raymond, Jr.
- Ralph Shrom

Message from the Director

I'm delighted to report that 2019 represented another year of growth for BCLS. Thanks to the efforts of our hardworking staff, we continued to serve the residents of Burlington County by offering them plenty of opportunities for learning, growth and personal development – the key pillars of our mission.

At the start of the year, I set out to plan our system goals a bit differently than we had in the past. I wanted to crystallize how our long term mission would come to light in 2019 with a vision to “create enlightening experiences for all members of the community.” More specifically, we strove to:

1. create pathways to success that develop individual goals.
2. be a source of inspiration and learning.
3. offer welcoming and functional spaces.

I am thrilled how this new approach led our planning efforts and kept our organization focused on delivering meaningful experiences to our customers. We offered countless opportunities to those ready to expand their minds and broaden their horizons. From college prep classes, to workshops focusing on career advancement, to business seminars,

we helped folks succeed. BCLS brought people together, too, and we strengthened our many partnerships with community organizations in 2019. We teamed up with nonprofit groups, government entities, local businesses, schools and others to better serve our residents. Our commitment to promoting creativity, culture and education remained strong as we continued to emphasize the value of quality programming, and residents of every age and interest enjoyed thousands of challenging activities, thought-provoking workshops and top-notch performances all year round.

The year also brought physical changes to some of our facilities as we continued to renovate and spruce up our libraries to meet the evolving needs of the community.

The pages that follow offer a closer look at the year in review at BCLS. In the meantime, we anticipate tackling more exciting goals and celebrating even greater accomplishments in 2020.

Ranjna Das
Director
Burlington County Library System

THE MISSION of the Burlington County Library System is to enrich lives by providing opportunities for learning, growth and personal development.

COVER and INSIDE PHOTOS: A member of the Woorigarak Korean Cultural Arts Center played a gayageum (cover), a traditional zither-like string instrument, during a **LIVE AT THE LIBRARY** performance, while skilled dancers from the center (previous page) also enthralled the audience.

bcls creates pathways to success



During a **SPECIAL NEEDS PARENT RESOURCE FAIR**, sensory activities kept kids engaged (top) while representatives from county agencies and community vendors presented a variety of resources and services available to parents and caregivers. We also presented a new workshop entitled **EMPOWERING GIRLS THROUGH SPORTS**.

bcls.lib.nj.us
f t i

Our **WEBSITE** was visited more than
5,820,000
times in 2019.

We closed out December with
3,208
FACEBOOK followers,
an 11.9% increase over 2019.

Our **TWITTER** followers increased
by 13.4% and our **INSTAGRAM** ranks
swelled by more than 21%.



BCLS has produced dozens of **IN-HOUSE VIDEOS** featuring upcoming events, recapping library programs, promoting services, offering instructions and more.

10,325 MINUTES
of customer viewing time revealed a few favorite videos, including our **SUMMER READING** promotion, a look back at **HARRY POTTER'S BIRTHDAY PARTY** (previous page), a closeout to **Summer Reading with PIE A LIBRARIAN** (right, top) and even

Virtual Storytime

featuring Miss Megan (right, bottom). We've posted several on Facebook and Instagram for on-demand viewing.

#BCLsreads
#exploreBCLS

Museum Pass Program

A **RECORD NUMBER** of BCLS customers used passes to visit museums and cultural venues all year long.

8,653 passes were used in 2019.

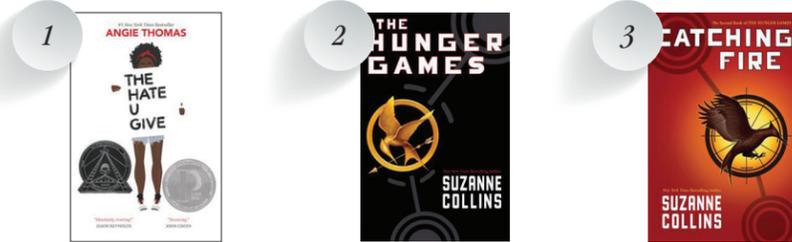
That's an increase of **22.8%** more passes than borrowed in 2018.



much-needed quiet area for studying. And, the library's new Collaborative Room has been furnished and is awaiting finishing touches before being made available to the public for a variety of uses.

At the **EVESHAM LIBRARY**, teens will find a redesigned space of their own to study, create and socialize, reinforcing the HOMAGO (Hang Out, Mess Around, Geek Out) concept that has been adopted to help focus the vision for all BCLS teen areas. At the **CINNAMINSON LIBRARY**, slat walls were installed on both floors to uniformly display program flyers and calendars, and steps to clean, weed and declutter were taken throughout the system. ♦

top 3 teen fiction titles



top 3 teen nonfiction titles



BCLS helps develop individual goals in a multitude of ways. From financial workshops, to college prep classes, to business seminars, our emphasis on learning is far reaching.

In 2019, we helped high school students navigate the college application process with PSAT/SAT study groups, practice tests and college essay peer review programs. We also offered workshops about financial aid and scholarships, and students hoping to play college sports received some helpful tips during **D1 BOUND**, a program about maximizing the recruiting potential in every student athlete. During our **EMPOWERING GIRLS THROUGH SPORTS** program, successful women discussed how college athletics instill self-esteem, confidence, leadership and more. And parent and caregivers of children and teens with special needs learned about some important services during our first library-hosted **SPECIAL NEEDS PARENT RESOURCE FAIR**.

For our fledgling entrepreneurs and small business owners, we focused on providing the knowledge they need to succeed. Our offerings included a program about adopting an entrepreneurial mindset, a five-part program just for nonprofits, a **BUSINESS STARTUP** series with UCEDC and the U.S. Small Business Administration, a **TAXATION UNIVERSITY** series about sales tax, business registration and income, and our ongoing **SMALL BUSINESS HOURS** that enable participants to brainstorm and network with librarians and peers.

Career-minded folks learned how to

adult literacy collections

are available at local branches and include topics such as:

- HIGH SCHOOL EQUIVALENCY PREP (GED, HiSET, TASC and more)
- FICTION SELECTIONS for beginning to intermediate adult readers
- OXFORD PICTURE DICTIONARY • FINANCIAL LITERACY BOOKS
- and MORE!

prepare for interviews and stand out to employers during our special **JOB SEEKERS 101** series, and our ongoing **WRITER'S CLINIC** offered one-on-one assistance with resumes, cover letters and other projects.

During our **BUILD YOUR WEALTH** program, participants learned about investing in real estate, and our financial workshops showed them how to secure mortgages, save for retirement and more. We also offered ongoing classes to our English language learners (ELL), who practiced speaking during our **TALK**

UP A STORM ELL CONVERSATION GROUP, and explored high school equivalency classes and other resources during our **ADULT LITERACY RESOURCE FAIR**.

BCLS was also recognized for its commitment to literacy last year when we were named one of a dozen public libraries to receive a **LITERACY COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT GRANT** from the New Jersey State Library. The grant allowed us to update and expand the literacy collection available to our growing ELL community. ♦

top 3 book titles



community sharing



BURLINGTON COUNTY LIBRARY (previous page) brightened up Youth Services with vivid paint selections, new furniture, an upgraded tech bar and more. **PEMBERTON LIBRARY** created a light-filled seating nook for customers to read, work or relax in while **EVESHAM LIBRARY** (below) redesigned their teen space.

BCLS continued to invest in its public spaces in 2019, tackling upgrades and renovations designed to better meet the needs of today's library users.

At the **BURLINGTON COUNTY LIBRARY**, visitors will find a revamped Youth Services Department featuring freshly painted walls, new, kid-friendly furniture, collaborative tables perfect for STEM programming and a modern tech bar with PCs and AWE Early Literacy computers.

Parents and caregivers will also find plenty of inviting places to sit and relax while their children explore the renovated space.

There were changes at the **PEMBERTON LIBRARY**, too. Staff created a new dramatic play center to promote the township school district's curriculum of "learning through play" for young children, updated seating in the quiet lounge area to appeal to a variety of readers and working adults, and repurposed some furniture to provide a

top 3 video games



welcoming & functional spaces



LIBRARIES=SUCCESS brought administrators and librarians from the state, county and schools (above) together with students from Hainesport School (previous page and below) for a day of interactive STEM exploration, featuring BCLS teacher kits designed to enhance classroom studies through experiential learning.



BCLS made headlines in September when it teamed up with the Hainesport Township School for its **LIBRARIES=SUCCESS** event, part of a New Jersey State Library initiative to encourage families to sign up for library cards. The event not only served as a library card drive for the local middle school students, but it also showcased the ongoing collaboration between BCLS and the school. As a bonus, about 60 students had an opportunity to check out the library STEM Kits that are available for teacher use year-round in the classroom. Representatives of the New Jersey State Library, the New Jersey Library Association and the Department of Education were also in attendance. Community interaction is integral to the way BCLS operates and we're always eager to join forces with others to make powerful connections.

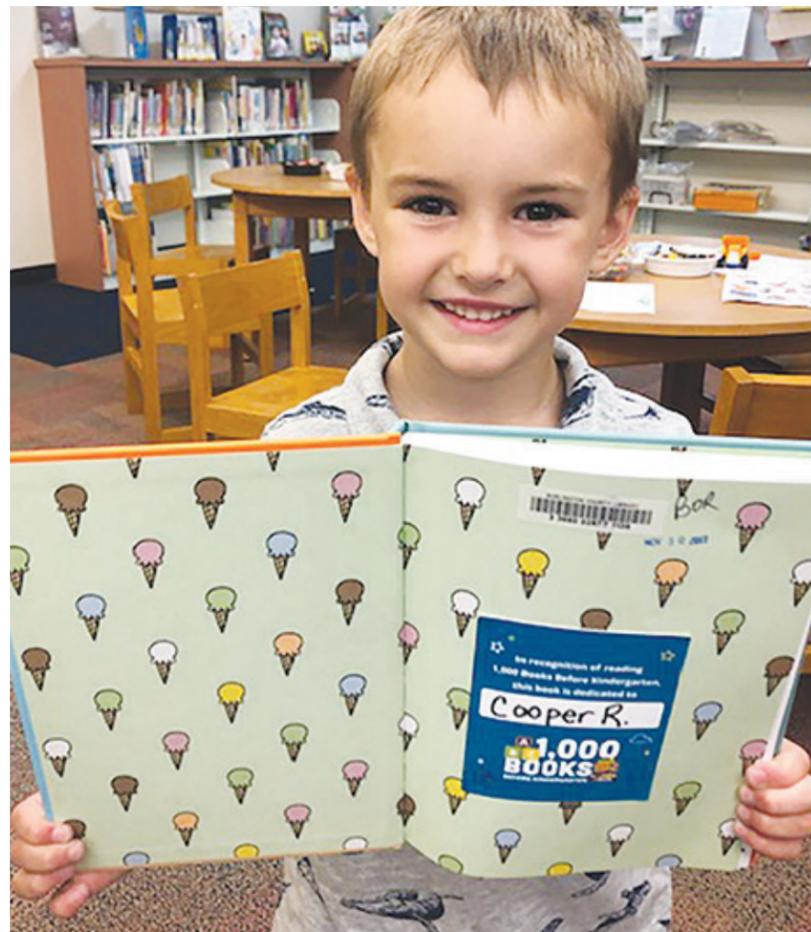
Last year, we also partnered with the Volunteer Center of Burlington County to present the 13th Annual **MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY CHALLENGE**, an event that featured card making, donation collection stations and a chance to learn about volunteering from local organizations.

2019 also marked the fifth annual **DAY OF FREE LEGAL SERVICE**. Hosted by the Burlington County Bar Association, the event offers free legal service in the following areas: wills, expungements, foreclosures and personal bankruptcy at no charge to patrons. Attorneys, paralegals and administrators worked to provide service to 88 patrons and a county judge was available to answer questions regarding wills, living wills and advanced directives. ♦

a source of inspiration & learning



1,000 BOOKS BEFORE KINDERGARTEN is an early literacy initiative which helps children build reading proficiency prior to entering school.



BCLS FOUNDATION actively seeks out financial support from surrounding business partners and other charitable entities. In 2019, the foundation accepted generous donations from LITERARY ACCESS FUND and REPUBLIC BANK (above) and from INVESTORS FOUNDATION (below) which helped underwrite their mission and goals for the year.



The BCLS Foundation 2019 evening with the Philly POPS was supported by our Silver Sponsors

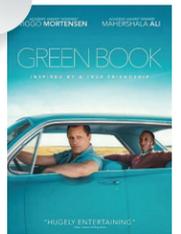


and other generous benefactors.

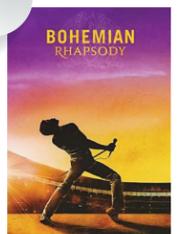
top 3 films

borrowed

1



2



3



streamed on **kanopy**

it's a tie

1



supporting the library



At their 4th annual packed-house fundraiser featuring the PHILLY POPS (above), BCLS FOUNDATION presented outgoing chair of the BCLS Board of Commissioners, Ralph Shrom (below, center), with the 2019 LITERACY ADVOCACY AWARD.



BCLS is also fortunate to have the support of the **BURLINGTON COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM FOUNDATION**, a nonprofit organization formed in 2015 to raise funds for library services, resources and programs. In December, the Foundation welcomed guests to its signature fundraising event, the fourth annual **PHILLY POPS** benefit holiday concert live in the library auditorium. During the festive evening, the Foundation honored founding board member and **2019 LIBRARY ADVOCACY AWARD** recipient Ralph Shrom for his many years of unwavering dedication to Burlington County and steadfast support of BCLS. Also last year the foundation was awarded a \$7,500 grant from Literacy Access Fund and a \$2,500 grant from Investors Bank Foundation. These funds were used to purchase early literacy resources, a new AWE computer and a suite of coding robots.

Our volunteer **FRIENDS GROUPS** worked hard in 2019, too. Throughout the year, they rolled up their sleeves to collect and sort books, DVDs and other items to sell at library book sales throughout the system. Their efforts have not gone unnoticed. In total, our Friends groups raised \$83,342 to help support library programming, including our spectacular Sundays on Stage performances, Summer Reading events, the Museum Pass Program and more. We also used some of the funds to install a new state-of-the art projector in the library auditorium. We're grateful to have so many friends we can count on! ♦



During our **SUMMER READING** program, kids enjoy themed activities, programs and shows, and develop an enthusiasm for reading by keeping track of their summer books to earn great prizes.

BCLS values creativity, culture and education and we make it a point to promote all three. Access to books has long been a cornerstone of library services, and last year we again offered an array of programs designed to promote a lifelong love of reading. For our youngest library visitors, we continued to build on the success of our **1,000 BOOKS BEFORE KINDERGARTEN** program, and since every book counts, we're always excited to welcome pre-kindergartners to our vast array of library story times. From zoo animals, to holidays, to science and technology, there are

countless themes for little readers to explore at every library branch, every week of the year. We even offer a multilingual story time featuring stories read in Punjabi, Hindi and English! We celebrated the first year of the program's success in January with special anniversary parties throughout the system, and we're happy to report that participation continues to grow! At the end of 2019, 1,740 children committed to reading 1,000 books, and more than 70 have reached this noteworthy goal.

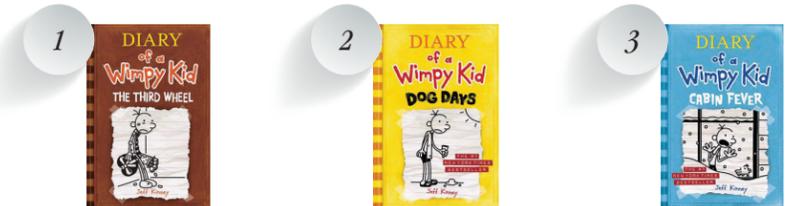
Reading doesn't take a break in the summer, either, and BCLS kids had

a blast participating in our annual eight-week **SUMMER READING** program featuring the theme **A UNIVERSE OF STORIES**. Children of all ages enjoyed a variety of dynamic and engaging activities at all library branches, including **BLAST OFF TO READING**, an interactive musical performance with puppets and songs about space. Other offerings included STEM-themed programs and experiments, nature and animal presentations, magic shows and more. And those who completed the mission and reached their reading goals took home some cool prizes!

top 3 young kids books



top 3 older kids books





Maelee Blaney reads to Django.

A golden retriever helps children learn to read

WESTAMPTON, N.J.

With his sweet, gentle demeanor—and warm, cuddle-up fur—Django, a 3-year-old golden retriever, has become everyone’s favorite listener at the Read-to-a-Dog program at New Jersey’s Burlington County Library. “I knew he would be the perfect puppy for therapy work,” says owner Maria Gifford, 59, who brings Django to the library twice a month, where kids practice reading aloud to him to improve their skills without feeling judged. Since starting with the program in March 2018, Django has built up a young fan club. “Kids walk in carrying their books and excited to see him,” says Gifford. “He really connects with people.”



Throughout the year, children are also invited practice their skills and gain confidence by reading to therapy dogs such as Django (left, top, as featured in *PEOPLE* magazine), Buddy, Gage and the ever-popular Bear Bear (left, bottom). We encourage readers of every age to get together for an array of engaging book discussions as well. Adults share their thoughts during the **PAGE TURNERS BOOK CLUB** at the Burlington County Library, the Tuesday Night Book Club at the Bordentown branch and the **BOOKBUZZERS** group at Maple Shade. Meanwhile, kids get together at the **GRAPHIC NOVEL BOOK CLUB** at Cinnaminson, the **READY READERS BOOK CLUB** at Pemberton, the **TEEN BOOK CLUB** at Evesham and more.

Movies - from dramas, to comedies to documentaries - play a key role at BCLS and adults and teens once again became instant movie critics at three special library screenings last fall. Our audience joined movie fans from around the world in selected their favorite finalists during the 22nd Annual **MANHATTAN SHORT FILM FESTIVAL** and all votes for Best Film and Best Actor awards were forwarded to the **MANHATTAN SHORT** headquarters. We also dimmed the lights for countless movie time showings at every BCLS location, all year long. Each

Our **READ TO A THERAPY DOG** program was featured in the April 1, edition of *PEOPLE* magazine (top). Bear Bear (bottom) and other therapy dogs sit with children as they read out loud.

outreach events attended

Representatives from BCLS appeared at **140 COMMUNITY EVENTS** throughout the county during calendar year 2019.

BCLS is proud to have a dedicated team of hardworking, talented staff members and volunteer partners who are always striving to meet the needs of the community. While 2019 was the year that some beloved staff retired, we are proud to have had **41 NEW FACES JOIN OUR LIBRARY SYSTEM.**

Our team does so much more than work at your local library branch. All year long BCLS staff is out in the community and partnering with other organizations to bring our library services to customers in new and interesting ways.

Maple Shade Branch Manager **JAIMIE DONNELLY**, along with a librarian from the Maple Shade School District, presented *Leap into Science: A School Library and Public Library Approach* at the New Jersey Association of School Librarians 2019 Fall Conference. The presentation focused on ways to incorporate more STEAM learning into the library curriculum.

At the New Jersey Library Association Annual Conference in May, Librarian **MEGAN DEHMELT** presented findings about tweens, an underserved population that tend to relate best to library programs that straddle youth and teen offerings. Megan worked on what became a psychological study that included direct survey responses from teens, tweens and fellow librarians to help outline recommendations for how to interact successfully and appropriately with this age group. In addition, Youth Services Librarian **VICKY ROSS** presented a Poster Session on two complementary BCLS school services offered to Burlington County educators, customized Classroom Assistants and themed Classroom Kits.

Both packages can be requested to supplement school curriculum. During the conference’s Annual State Librarian’s Breakfast, Vicky also accepted the award for *Best Practices in Early Literacy* from the New Jersey State Library. BCLS was honored for its longstanding ABC STEAM program, designed to promote STEAM skills and early literacy for children through exploratory, hands-on stations. ♦



Despite her busy schedule, Maple Shade Branch Manager **JAIMIE DONNELLY** always takes a moment to offer customers great film, book and music suggestions. She also took time to attend a statewide conference for school librarians, discussing how they can further incorporate STEAM learning into their programs.

working together



BCLS hired **41 NEW STAFF MEMBERS** in 2019, including (L to R) Adult Services librarians Gabriella Graziul, Shazia Zaman and Naju Webb Johnson.

week, children enjoyed a wide variety of popular animated films and other family-friendly entertainment, while adults watched movies geared to more mature audiences, thought-provoking documentaries and foreign films.

Our **PROJECTOR TO THE PAGE** program allowed participants to enjoy a special feature film and then take home a book related to the movie. And during **BANNED BOOKS WEEK**, we presented a free screening of Ray Bradbury's classic *Fahrenheit 451* followed by a discussion with Dr. Jack Kerwick of Rowan College at Burlington County.

Throughout the year, BCLS also welcomes a host of exceptional speakers to our libraries and in 2019, the list of fascinating folks who joined

bcls auditorium

During 2019 we hosted 49 PROGRAMS with a total attendance of more than 5,880 PATRONS.

us to share their expertise and bring history alive was both lengthy and noteworthy. Carol Simon Levin of the New Jersey Storyteller's Network helped us celebrate Women's History Month with a presentation about Emily Warren Roebling and the woman who helped supervise the building of the Brooklyn Bridge.

Author John Zinn discussed the history of baseball in New Jersey from 1855 to 1880. David Emerson

helped us celebrate our nation's independence during **GEORGE WASHINGTON REMEMBERS NEW JERSEY**. Beatles scholar and 1960s rock historian Vincent Bruno detailed the historic journey of one of the world's most influential rock bands from Liverpool to Abbey Road. Holocaust survivor Joel Fabian shared his story of strength and survival as he recounted his past at Terezin Concentration Camp. Randy Ellis discussed vinyl records and their history. And we celebrated Patriots Week with a visit from **THOMAS PAINE** as depicted by Bob Gleason of the American Historical Theater.

We also welcomed a mix of fascinating authors to our libraries to share the inspiration behind their stories, including *Sex and the City* and



SHAKESPEARE LIVE! A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM was a fun, family-friendly interpretation of one of *The Bard's* comedic love stories, presented as part of our free **SUNDAYS ON STAGE** series.

Us author Jennifer Keishin Armstrong, and a Skype visit with Young Adult author Becky Albertalli, best known for *Simon Vs. the Homo Sapiens Agenda*, which was adapted into the 2018 film *Love, Simon*.

Meanwhile, for those who wanted to explore their creative sides in more depth, popular *Burlington County Times* and *SJ Magazine* columnist Sally Friedman presented **MY STORY, MY LIFE**, an eight-week personal essay

writing program that was offered in the spring and again in the fall. During each session, Friedman encouraged participants to explore their ability for reflection and creation to help encourage them to write and share their own personal life stories. ♦

top 3 online resources

1 Personal and professional training videos at **lynda.com**

2 Genealogical research materials from **ancestry** Library

3 Documentary and fine film streaming with **kanopy**

THOMAS PAINE, as portrayed by historical reenactor Bob Gleason, visited the Bordentown library and regaled the crowd with tales of his experiences during the Revolution and beyond.



“

Each year we book programs that will not only entertain our regular customers, but will hopefully interest those that may not have visited our library in years. Whether it's a Friday night out with friends or an afternoon with family, we offer everything from tribute bands and educational speakers to movies and so much more, right here in Burlington County.

- Jessica Connor
Program Coordinator

”

PHILLY SOUL COLLECTIVE (top) and **EVERYDAY PEOPLE** (right) are just two groups that played exuberant concerts in front of sold out crowds as part of our **LIVE AT THE LIBRARY** series.

