

NEWS RELEASE

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SUFFOLK PUBLIC LIBRARY WINS TWO STATEWIDE AWARDS FOR OUTSTANDING PROGRAMS

SUFFOLK, VA (April 25, 2017) The Suffolk Public Library (SPL) won two statewide awards for a library serving a population over 80,000 in recognition of their impactful programs. The awards were presented by the Virginia Public Library Directors Association on Friday, April 21st at the 2017 Annual Meeting of the Virginia Public Library Directors Association in Staunton, Virginia.

The Virginia Public Library Directors Association considered nominations from libraries across the state and chose Suffolk Public Library for their outstanding work in the Suffolk Community. The library won Outstanding Cooperative Program for their coding program with Suffolk Public Schools, and they won Outstanding Adult Program for their *Amazing Peanut Chase Scavenger Hunt*.

Beginning in August 2016, SPL's Elementary Age Services Supervisor orchestrated a coding curriculum to be used during the technology resource period in three pilot Elementary Schools – Creekside Elementary, Oakland Elementary and Mack Benn, Jr. Elementary. The program taught students the fundamentals of computer programming and computer science through the use of "plugged" and "unplugged" activities with the help of Code.org. Students solved puzzles and created code using

computational thinking and problem solving skills as well as skills that could easily translate in other subject areas. The long-term goal of the program is to provide an easily replicable program that any teacher could incorporate into their classroom. By first modeling the program and then providing professional development to all of the teacher assistants that are overseeing and facilitating the technology resource classes in all elementary schools in the city of Suffolk, SPL hopes to help create a more sustainable and accessible model for technology instruction in Suffolk. Staff is developing curriculum for K-5, with plans to train library programmers to expand the pilot program to all elementary schools in Suffolk in the next year. Providing the training, modeling the programming, training students and staff to use Code.org, and turning over a “class in a box” for teachers to use will help this be replicable not only in Suffolk, but also around the state.

The *Amazing Peanut Chase Scavenger Hunt* took place in July of 2016 and encouraged participants to work as a team to explore the City of Suffolk while competing for prizes. Playing off of Suffolk’s history of peanut production and ties to Mr. Peanut, the scavenger hunt sent participants all over the 430 square miles of Suffolk searching for peanut-themed spots and significant and sometimes surprising Suffolk locations. The Amazing Peanut Chase engaged people with the library on a level that they may not have experienced before, incorporating outside activities, competitive energy, and of course some library swag. The event brought in people from all over Suffolk, and surrounding areas, to help build that sense of community and togetherness. Participants revisited some familiar spots, discovered new areas, and learned interesting facts about places in Suffolk. Scavenger hunt locations ranged from downtown Suffolk all the way up to North Suffolk and included stops such as the Suffolk Planter’s Club and the fountain at the movie theater in Harbour View. An after party was held that afternoon at the North Suffolk Library where prizes were distributed and more fun and games took place. This event received a lot of positive feedback from the community. Participants were enthusiastic and full of competitive energy from the start as they shared their adventures with friends and family by

posting photos online. The library got to see people from all over come together for this unique community event and plans to host a second one in the summer of 2017.

The Virginia Public Library Directors Association brings together library directors from across the state of Virginia to recognize the contributions of libraries throughout the year. The association provides a means for statewide communication, research and planning concerning public library services and operations. It promotes professional growth and professional unity, and provides a forum for discussion among public library directors. Awards are based on the population size of the community a library serves.

To learn more about the Suffolk Public Library, visit www.suffolkpubliclibrary.com. Follow the library on Twitter @SufPubLib and check for updates on Facebook at [Facebook.com/SuffolkPublicLibrary](https://www.facebook.com/SuffolkPublicLibrary).

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