

fiscal year 2021

dual



PANDEMICS



**HOWARD COUNTY
LIBRARY SYSTEM**
Public Education for All

pandemic 1: coronavirus



VIRTUAL CLASSES

2,939 online instructor-led
classes and events



ON DEMAND CLASSES

Baby Games | Family Time |
Preschool Parade | Head Start |
STEAM Saturday | Teens Talk and
Teach | Art Tutorials | DIY

ON YOUTUBE

52,418 views

659 new
subscribers

2,841
hours watched

+MOMO
attendees, including those who
viewed 173 pre-recorded classes

STREAM DOWNLOAD LEARN

126% INCREASE

46,000 movies, music, and TV shows

72,856 eBooks | 71 percent increase

223,114 eAudiobooks | 30 percent increase

When HCLS closed its doors in March 2020 to combat the first wave of the coronavirus pandemic, our innovative team pivoted quickly and effectively to provide excellent service to Howard County residents. After providing contactless pickup since summer 2020, in April 2021 branches reopened for limited hours, with limited services. Outdoor classes began in summer 2021. In August 2020, HCLS waived customer fines for books, and remains fine free as a means of increasing equitable experiences.

3,255 new online accounts
36 percent increase over FY20

CONTACTLESS PICKUP

255,771 contactless pickup requests
1,552 average requests per day

BUNDLE BAGS

Customers could choose from
nearly 30 topics – from picture
books for preschoolers and
graphic novels for teens to
mystery books for adults – then
our team filled bags to go.

100
AVERAGE
DAILY
REQUESTS

11,020 Bundle Bag requests filled
over 8 months

ASKHCLS
425,000
questions answered via
chat, phone, and email

Nearly 400 people gathered for
The Longest (Virtual) Table in
October, featuring legendary
Blues musician Daryl Davis who
shared his story of transformative
relationships with former
members of the Ku Klux Klan.



While the global pandemic was underway, HCLS also recognized that our country was wrestling with a second pandemic of continued, systemic racial inequity. Among the most affluent and educated counties in the country, Howard County is acclaimed for being diverse and inclusive. Still, the Association of Community Services FY2020 Self-Sufficiency Indicators Report confirmed Black residents increasingly have the worst outcomes across most self-sufficiency indicators (i.e., unemployment, poverty, homelessness, evictions).

As a trusted county institution and among those with the widest reach, HCLS is uniquely positioned to inform and educate community members of equity issues.

HCLS made a significant commitment to improving racial equity in our community and contributing to a more just society.

Through REAL (racial equity at the library) conversations among staff, substantive training for staff and community members, and sustained programs and events, HCLS honored staff and public requests to enhance racial equity locally.

"I am very grateful to have the opportunity to receive the full effect of the two-day racial equity training and be in the presence of thought leaders and community learners. I walked away with many "aha moments" and internal growth."

"Thank you for educating us so deeply and for really working to improve our community."

"I feel when we...listen to each other's stories it is impossible to not see us as humans and try to cultivate more intimacy and ask each other questions."

pandemic 2: race relations

pandemic 1: coronavirus



With Our Community

Remembrance Trees: In December, we invited the community to write messages of remembrance that were tied to trees outside our branches, for those who died during the first wave of the pandemic.

Enchanted Garden donated more than 500 pounds of food to the Howard County Food Bank, helping to provide fresh fruits and vegetables to those in need.



Hotspots & Chromebooks

borrowed to address the digital divide for the almost 3,300 households in Howard County without broadband internet access.

Learning Activity Kits

In March 2021, HCLS debuted a set of take-home, hands-on learning activity kits that focused on, for example, computer programming, biochemistry, and civil engineering, in response to a need for student learning supports.

CUSTOMER COMPLIMENT

I really love Films That Connect Us and the community that is being built among the regular attendees! Always great discussions, and I have seen so many movies I never would have otherwise.

CUSTOMER COMPLIMENT

You guys are the glue that are holding these difficult times together. Thanks for coming to work and helping my little family feel connected to their community and to the fictional friends we continue to make. Book wizards to the rescue.

VIRTUAL A+ EVENTS

SPELLING BEE: **45** participating schools

BATTLE OF THE BOOKS: **273** teams

author events

HCLS partnered with other Maryland libraries to present important authors and speakers, such as Dr. Ibram X. Kendi, former Secretary of Education John King, Dr. Jennifer Eberhardt, and best-selling writer Isabel Wilkerson.

Summer Reading

HCLS expanded its reach to meet the needs of its youngest customers.

380 Head Start

students received

drawstring backpacks filled with summer reading items. Spanish speaking students received Summer Reading game boards in Spanish and English and a bilingual book.



"My soul has brought me to every single meeting. I would keep doing this as long as it goes. Give me more!"

In response to community requests and needs, HCLS launched Brave Voices, Brave Choices, a new racial equity initiative in April. Moving past statements, HCLS provides training and sustained programs to help people grow personally and professionally, increase understanding and relationships across differences, effect change, and create an equitable society free of guilt, blame, and hostility.

Racial equity training participants include elected and appointed leaders, library staff, community members, and leadership affiliated with the county's major systems and organizations.

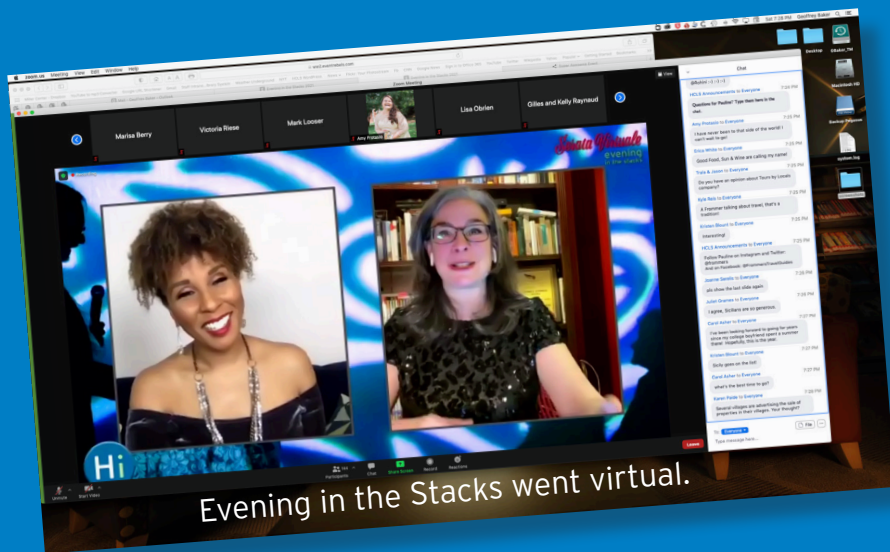
HCLS asked the community to share stories about experiences of racism, bias, discrimination - and hope. These stories have been shared publicly on social media and HCLS' website.

pandemic 2: race relations

##BRAVE VOICES BRAVE CHOICES

- More than 400 people participated in racial equity training.
- Twenty members representing a cross section of the community serve on HCLS' Racial Equity Alliance.
- More than 600 stories submitted by the community about experiences of racism, bias, discrimination - and hope.
- More than 98% of BVBC participants noted enhanced learning for informed action.

Neighbors and colleagues who, in the past, would have avoided acknowledging or discussing racism, microaggressions, and their existence in Howard County - either because of discomfort or denial - are now engaging in these discussions. I find this encouraging because we can only begin to address these if we admit that it is happening here.



Evening in the Stacks went virtual.

Even books were quarantined.



Staff filled orders for contactless pickup.



Children's classes expanded outdoors.



Bundle bags addressed the need to browse.

Art continued virtually and outdoors



FIVE STAR LIBRARY

ranked by *Library Journal*, the highest ranking attained by fewer than one percent of public libraries in the U.S. – and the only five star library system in Maryland.