

Maryland Snapshot Day 2011 - A day in the life of Maryland libraries

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"If you have a garden and a library you have everything you need." ~ Marcus Tullius Cicero, Roman Statesman, Philosopher, and Lawyer (106-43 BC)

Snapshot Day was created by New Jersey Public Libraries in 2009 as a means to collect data for sharing with its state legislature. Once shared with American Library Association (ALA), the advocacy tool took off and more than 35 states have participated each year since. The original Library Snapshot Day took place in New Jersey as collaboration between the New Jersey State Library and the New Jersey Library Association. The idea has quickly caught on. In early 2010 members of the American Library Association voted to make Library Snapshot Day a national initiative, asking state libraries and state library associations to sponsor Snapshot Day as an annual event to prove the value of their libraries to decision-makers and increase public awareness.

"Library books reduce stress. Permit me to travel around the world and through time. They stimulate my imagination. The library has more than books; the Blu-ray™ collection is pretty large for Southern Maryland. Their website has a lot to offer too!" -David R.

Maryland Library Association (MLA) and Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) have teamed up to oversee the implementation of Maryland Snapshot Day for the past two years. Spearheading the team is Paula Isett, Community Outreach Specialist, and this year Melissa McDonald served as coordinator. Academic, school, public, and special libraries from around Maryland participated in Snapshot Day, submitting statistics, and wonderful stories and 'snapshots' of life in our amazing libraries.



One very interesting difference between the first year and the second is that the database retrievals skyrocketed this year – indicative of the importance of technology in library science.



	2010	2011
Participating Libraries	53	84
Visitors	108	103, 027
Questions Answered	25,000	20, 161
Items Circulated	160,000	124, 027
Database Retrievals	75,000	189, 727
Classes/Programs	336	316

A common theme flowed through patron comments – they are passionate about their libraries! Linda S., a patron from a Charles County Public Library branch, stated “[t]he library is vital to the community. It connects us to each other, to learning and the world. I use the library professionally to supplement how I use books with

“I like the library because there are so many good books to read.”
Tad R., 9 years old

the preschool children I serve as a speech-language pathologist.” After receiving help putting a book on hold, an elderly patron at a Frederick County Public Library branch emphatically stated, “Oh ... I don't know what I'd do without this library.”

Bill Peak of Talbot County Free Library relayed this story: [It's] mid-afternoon, and there's a little girl, perhaps four or five years old, and her mother standing at the Circulation Desk. As the Circulation clerk checks out her books, Mom is simultaneously trying to load them into her book bag and respond to her daughter's demands that she be taught how to snap her fingers. Distractedly, mother illustrates the method she prefers, and the little girl ineffectually and inaudibly rubs one tiny finger against another. Remembering my own first attempts at learning this difficult art, I stop and offer my assistance. A passing patron—a Ph.D. historian whom I happen to know—also stops, sets aside his battered briefcase, and demonstrates the way he snaps his fingers. The little girl watches the three of us earnestly. When she and her mother finally leave, she is still trying to make with her fingers produce a snapping sound. The historian and I share a smile and then part as well. Where else but a public library could a young mother, her four year-old, and two 60-somethings come together over a practice as simple and complex as snapping one's fingers?”

“We love the library. We are in our 80's and enjoy reading. The personnel are so helpful and pleasant.” ~Kathleen L.

From baseball's Blue Crabs' mascot *Pinch* visiting Charles County Public Library, and the *Cat in the Hat*, and his friends *Thing 1* and *Thing 2* visiting Caroline County Public Library, to the Southern Maryland Regional Mobile Library visiting patrons in remote areas of southern Maryland, happiness is ever present!





“As an English teacher, I live for books! I’m always telling my students how lucky we are to have access to public libraries! Thank you!!” -Kathleen S.



Maryland libraries fill a myriad of needs in ways no other organizations can:

- ❖ Students are able to conduct online research, collaborate with other students, and have a quiet place in which to study
- ❖ Job seekers can conduct online job searching, attend resume writing workshops, and receive support from librarians and patrons
- ❖ Elderly patrons can seek a place of fellowship or a quiet place for reading
- ❖ Adults can attend workshops of all types – healthy eating, book talks, and improving computer skills are just a few examples
- ❖ Teens can find a variety of social programs just for them – from book clubs to game nights to author talks
- ❖ Young parents can find a fun place in which to enjoy kids programming for their little ones, and social outlet for themselves
- ❖ All readers can find the “just right” book – be it print, e-book, or audio format
- ❖ Organizations such as civic groups, book clubs, Boy Scouts & Girl Scouts can utilize the facilities

Snapshot Day is an important advocacy tool for all Maryland libraries Please consider participating next year. Summaries of both 2010 and 2011 Maryland Snapshot Days are available on the Maryland Snapshot Day website www.mdlib.org/snapshot/ ... please visit us soon! Friend us on Facebook (Maryland Snapshot Day), Follow us on Twitter (@MDSnapshotDay), or e-mail for more information (marylandsnapshotday@gmail.com). Author Eudora Welty once said “A good snapshot stops a moment from running away” – don’t miss the opportunity to stop, snap, and let your library shine!

Mark your calendars for 2012 Snapshot Day – Wednesday, October 10, 2012.