



PRESS RELEASE

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Contact: Kelly Pitts

Email: Kelly.Pitts@kentcountyde.gov
(302) 744-2304

Kent County Public Library: Library of the Year

Dover, Del. – Kent County Public Library was awarded the Delaware Library Association 2024 Library of the Year award at an annual Awards Ceremony on Friday, May 10, during the 2024 Maryland Library Association/Delaware Library Association joint annual conference in Cambridge, MD. The Delaware Library Association (DLA) presents the award based upon recommendations submitted by members of the DLA or by citizens of the state of Delaware recognizing the library for showing outstanding merit in serving its patrons and community through unusual programs or activities. Kent County Public Library offers more than 300 programs a year!

Programs and activities cited by those who nominated Kent County Public Library for 2024 Library of the Year included:

- the New Zealand Penpal program that serves 600 participants,
- the Young Authors Workshop that brings together youthful writers and professional authors and illustrators for a day of fun, education, and learning while their parents attend a program on fostering creativity. Regional and nationally acclaimed authors are the focus of the well-attended Author Showcases in the Fall and Spring.
- Senior Art Workshops, open art studios, and showcases featuring the artwork of textile artists inspired by Van Gogh, miniature paintings, and community groups such as 4-H and Scouts, which are enjoyed by the entire community.
- Arts in the Parks, a popular weekly summer music series that attracts upwards of 200 individuals weekly at Brecknock County Park.
- Kent County's mobile library, the flagship of KCPL's outreach efforts makes at least a dozen weekly stops year-round to underserved schools, communities, and institutions.

- The library celebrates Kent County’s diverse demographics through its Hispanic Heritage Festival, Mini Sakura Matsuri, and monthly meeting of the Delaware Anime Society.
- Monthly “Spotlight on Delaware History,” programs are often collaborations with Mid-Atlantic authors, noted historians, and Delaware agencies devoted to history, culture, and humanities.
- This year the library partnered with Kent County Parks and Rec to offer free family films on a cinema-sized outdoor screen, and offered puzzle and board game swaps, dulcimer classes, numerous book clubs, story times, and, with the Friends of Kent County Public Library, hosted its fourth “Rods for Reading” Car Show!
- Literacy initiatives include maintaining 9 Little Free Library community book exchange sites, PAWS for Reading, Dial-a-Story, 1000 Books Before Kindergarten, Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library, and Summer and Winter Reading Challenges.

Kent County Public Library offers some unique online services, too: Mango Languages and Brainfuse VetNow, HelpNow, and JobNow are available free with a Kent County-issued library card, in both English and Spanish. KCPL is part of the Delaware Library Consortium and so cardholders have access to public libraries statewide as well as hoopla, Flipster, Libby/OverDrive, and more!

But the greatest asset of “The Friendly Library on the Highway,” is its helpful, knowledgeable staff. The small library is one of two public libraries in Southern Delaware that is open seven days a week, with weekly mobile library stops in each Levy Court District. Library Director, Dr. Hilary Welliver is thrilled that the Delaware Library Association recognizes and commends the outstanding, innovative, and sustained achievements of Kent County’s library staff with the 2024 Library of the Year award.

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