



News Release
For Immediate Release

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Library Staff Earns Recognition from Virginia Library Association

The Awards & Recognition Committee of the Virginia Library Association (VLA) is pleased to announce that the staff of Roanoke County Public Library, under the leadership of Director of Library Services Shari Henry, have been chosen for the 2020 Public Innovator Award.

This award recognizes public librarians or public library project teams who have made an outstanding contribution to advance the mission of a public library in Virginia through an innovative project, program or service during the nomination period. This group was selected for their commitment to equitable access to high-tech for everyone and with the tagline "We'll meet you at your wonder" as a guide, the RCPL team has embraced the world of artificial intelligence, robotics, and coding full throttle. Through innovative programming and first-of-its-kind technology offerings, they are building a community of strong digital citizens who will understand all of technology's promises, and also recognize its potential pitfalls.

RCPL works because of the great and innovative staff. Pre-COVID, approximately 100 staff members equaling about 62 FTE were spread out among six locations. The libraries are the highest circulating in the area, and the programs draw large numbers of people. On top of that, staff has shown a commitment to moving libraries forward into the 21st Century through a wide array of AI, robotics, and coding programming for all ages. Robots Pepper and Misty are important staff members as well, and contribute the hardware and software upon which much of the high-tech programming is developed.

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