



Virginia Association of Counties

ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

VA

APPLICATION FORM

All applications must include the following information. Separate applications must be submitted for each eligible program. **Deadline: June 3, 2019.** Please include this application form with electronic entry. If you do not receive an email confirming receipt of your entry within 3 days of submission, please contact Gage Harter.

PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: Augusta County

Program Title: Augusta County Storywalk

Program Category: Parks and Recreation

CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: Diantha McCauley

Title: Director

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SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: Timothy K. Fitzgerald

Title: County Administrator

Signature: T.K. Fitzgerald

Augusta County Storywalk

Faced with declining use of the Churchville Branch library, the new branch manager and library assistant needed something to catch area resident's attention to bring them into the library. Their solution was to build a temporary Storywalk® around the outside of the library during the village's annual Summer Market.

The library assistant, Charlene Schillinger, had read about Anne Ferguson's Storywalk® project and thought it would be a good way for the library to be a part of the Summer Market. The original Storywalk® was installed in Montpelier, Vermont. It was developed in collaboration with the Kellogg-Hubbard Library to promote both early literacy and physical activity. By taking the pages of a picture book and mounting them on posts along a walk both goals were accomplished.

The Churchville project was so popular that library staff decided to continue it through that summer and fall featuring several picture books. Over the winter, the main library in Fishersville decided to replicate the Storywalk® in conjunction with the Parks and Recreation Department. Staff from both departments developed plans to create several Storywalks® at several county parks and libraries. It was a perfect cooperative project that promoted reading and outdoor recreation while providing a fun free outdoor activity for families.

The Augusta County Storywalk® project is an example of multiple county departments working in collaboration with community organizations (and individuals) to promote early literacy and recreation. Public libraries and parks and recreation are often in competition for limited local funding. By partnering on this project, both departments were able to meet their service missions and generate positive publicity. The idea was so appealing that the county maintenance department offered to install the posts.

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Grant and local sponsorship funding was easily obtained from area Kiwanis and Lions clubs as well as from individuals. The second Storywalk® was completed with the cooperation of the Augusta County Schools, a new partner.

This is a low cost project with wide funding appeal that supports the library's mission to support early literacy and reading and the parks department's mission of supporting physical activity and recreation. The county maintenance department was happy to assist with the installation as it used their staff skills and demonstrated willingness to be team players with fellow county departments. County schools are new partners and share the goals of promoting literacy, parental involvement, and physical activity.

The first Storywalk® was designed as a pop-up program for the Churchville Branch Library in conjunction with Churchville's Annual Summer Market in 2017. Assistant Branch Manager, Charley Schillinger, and local volunteer, Carl Shifflett, used donated scrap materials to build small temporary posts and plaques to display story book pages. All together 14 displays standing 3 feet tall, and measuring roughly 14"X10", were placed strategically around the library building. Each display held two pages of a picture book guiding patrons from post to post to finish the story. The goal was to attract market attendees to the library and give them an alternative reading experience without sacrificing the enjoyment of the outdoor market appeal.

The StoryWalk® was well received by the public, so library staff decided to keep it up through the fall allowing the local schools to enjoy it as well. An estimated total of 250 people enjoyed the walk, many visiting multiple times to read new stories when they were posted. The Churchville StoryWalk® was dismantled in December due to weathering.

A second StoryWalk® was proposed in February 2018 by director Diantha McCauley to be placed around the main library in Fishersville. Schillinger contacted Augusta County Parks and Recreation inquiring about use of the land surrounding the library for the installation. Parks

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and Recreation Director, Andy Wells, suggested a partnership between the two organizations to provide StoryWalks® in multiple county locations. Parks and Recreation program coordinator, Nick Grow, met with Schillinger and children's department head, Hailee Coleman. The team designed a template for posts that would be weather resistant, cost efficient, easily maintained, and attractive. They estimated costs and created a prospectus to send out to local businesses and organizations asking for donations and grants. The team received one monetary donation from a local family, one grant from the local Kiwanis club, and one donation from the local Lion's club. These donations not only allowed the organizations to complete the Storywalk® at the Fishersville location, but also reinstall the Churchville Storywalk® and add one at the Stuarts Draft Park.

The Grand Opening and Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for the Churchville StoryWalk® is scheduled for May 20, 2019. A new partner, the Augusta County Schools, joined this installation. The Churchville Elementary School is located to the rear of the Churchville Branch Library and adjacent to the Churchville ballfields and park. School personnel were interested in extending the StoryWalk® from the library to school property so a Memorandum of Understanding was signed and the location of the posts were determined in April.

The Parks and Recreation Department is responsible for building the posts and coordinating with the County Maintenance Department on the installation of the StoryWalks®. The Library is responsible for maintaining the Storywalks®, creating the story panels that are featured, and coordinating programs that feature the service. Librarians have also invited local schools to utilize the StoryWalks® in their curriculum and family events.

Each Storywalk® installation costs around \$500 for materials: the wood, plexiglass cover, book, and laminating the book pages. Labor is included in the employees' work day. Donations totaling \$1,000 were received through grants and donations for community

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organizations and individuals. Sufficient funds to install a third StoryWalk® at the Stuarts Draft Park are close to the total needed.

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Executive Summary

The Churchville Branch Library staff decided to participate in the Churchville Summer Market with the goal of reintroducing the library to the community. Both the branch manager and assistant manager were new to their positions and excited to show the changes to the library and the services available to the public. After learning about the Kellogg-Hubbard Library StoryWalk® project, they decided to build one to feature during the Summer Market. It proved so popular that staff decided to keep the temporary posts up through the fall and changed the story several times to keep families coming.

Later that winter, Augusta County Library staff wanted to replicate the StoryWalk® project at the main location in Fishersville and extend the walk to the ballfields behind the library. The goal was to draw families at the games into reading the story and then visiting the library. The Parks and Recreation Department became an enthusiastic partner and offered to build the wooden posts and help find sponsorships to pay for the materials.

The Fishersville StoryWalk® was dedicated on October 24, 2018 after sufficient funding was obtained from one family's donation. Grants and gifts from local organizations and individuals were received to complete an permanent StoryWalk® at the Churchville Library which will open this May and a third StoryWalk® at the Stuarts Draft Park.

The Augusta County StoryWalk® Project is an example of multiple county departments working in collaboration with community partners to promote early literacy and recreation. By pooling resources, the Library and the Parks and Recreation Departments were able to meet their service missions while generating positive publicity. County families benefited from a simple, fun, and free outdoor activity that promoted early literacy and exercise.

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Brief Overview

With the goal of increasing use of the Churchville Branch of the Augusta County Library, the new branch manager and library assistant decided to participate in the annual Churchville Summer Market. They wanted to replicate Anne Ferguson's StoryWalk® hoping that a deconstructed picture book mounted on posts along a path leading from the market to the library would draw families into the library. The project was so successful that it was continued through the fall with several changes of picture book.

The Augusta County Library and the Augusta County Parks and Recreation Department decided to build upon the success of the Churchville StoryWalk® by cooperating on the installation of .StoryWalks® at other county parks and libraries. Both were excited about the benefits -- promoting reading, outdoor recreation, and a free activity for families.

Sponsors were sought and grants submitted to fund the project. On October 24, 2018, the first permanent StoryWalk® was dedicated at the library's Fishersville Main location. A permanent StoryWalk® will open at the Churchville Library and Elementary School on May 20, 2019; the first partnership with the Augusta County Schools. The next installation is planned for the Stuarts Draft Park for later in 2019.

The Augusta County StoryWalk® Project is a unique partnership between the County's Library, Parks and Recreation, Maintenance, Schools and community organizations and individuals. By working together, we are promoting recreation, literacy, and environmental awareness through a simple, fun, and free outdoor activity.