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Library Awarded Two Grants Totaling \$60,000

St. Mary's County Library Director Kathleen Reif is pleased to announce the library has been awarded two grants totaling \$60,000. These grants will allow the library to offer two new services: computer classes at Charlotte Hall and Leonardtown libraries and outreach to English language learners.

These federal grants are funded by the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS) through the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA).

One grant will provide "Laptop Computer Labs" for the Charlotte Hall and Leonardtown Libraries. At the present time computer classes can only be offered in the Computer Lab at Lexington Park Library since the other two branches lack a computer lab. The solution the staff came up with is a Laptop Computer Lab using the library's meeting rooms and the wireless network donated and maintained by BAE Systems, a corporate partner of the library. The library will use the grant funds to purchase 13 laptop computers which will travel between the two branches in order to offer classes at both Charlotte Hall and Leonardtown. These Laptop Labs will allow the library to offer basic introductory classes as well as enrichment classes for children, teens and adults. An Open House is scheduled from 2-4 pm on September 2 at Leonardtown and on October 2 at Charlotte Hall.

The second grant will reach out to children in families whose primary language is not English. This grant, Reaching Out to English Language Learners, is a collaborative effort with Head Start and Judy Centers to improve the reading skills of these children. The grant will provide for staff training and the purchase of bilingual resources which can be checked out by families to use with their children. The grant has also provided funding to purchase two new computers for Lexington Park Library's children's area. The computers provide educational software in English and other languages. The library will conduct classes, tours and programs to reach out and provide help to these families.

"A real need exists for these services and I am very proud of our library staff who saw the need and took the initiative to write these grants," states Reif. "We were quite honored to have both of the grants fully funded, particularly with the fierce competition throughout the state for grant money."

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