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Flagler County Public Library receives state CARES grant to enhance safety, contactless services

September 22, 2020 – Flagler County Public Library received a $36,000 state CARES grant to enhance residents’ safety through the provision of more contactless services for the community in this era of COVID-19.

“The total funding available was only $1.9 million for all of the public, school and academic libraries, and all museums across the state of Florida,” said Library Director Holly Albanese. “This is a big deal for us. With 31% of our population older than 65 years old, we have a vulnerable population choosing to remain at home – forgoing library services – resulting in a decline in circulation.”

The lion’s share of the grant money will be used to purchase HoldIT lockers for contactless pick up. Book sanitizers that use UV-C light to kill germs and bacteria will mean that returned resources will be shelved more quickly and will no longer have to undergo a 24-hour quarantine.

“With the lockers, patrons can pick up their materials 24/7 and don’t have to be limited to our open hours for curbside,” Albanese said. “We also have a hand-held UV-C sanitizer that will allow us to quickly sanitize computer equipment, crafts and supplies enabling us to put things like puzzles back out for a more interactive environment.”

Video equipment was also approved that will improve the quality of some of the virtual programs offered. Additionally, the library was able to purchase an online newspaper and magazine subscription service.

The application was made on behalf of Flagler County by the Northeast Florida Library Information Network. The NEFLIN library cooperative serves 24 counties, and its board selected only four recipients of the 21 submittals it received for CARES grant assistance – one of which was Flagler County.

“We miss the crowds at the library, but we continue to provide the highest level of service we are able to provide,” Albanese said.

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