

## **The Latest at the Libraries**

**Anne Shepherd- Library & History Division Manager**

Have you visited a Charlotte County Library lately? If not, come on in and see the many new offerings that we have for you. The four county libraries are among the busiest places in the county. Last year 628,580 citizens visited a library and checked out 854,977 items—how would you like to put all of that back into place! Our libraries are thriving with more visitors, more services and more demands on the staff. We have absorbed staff and hour cuts and staff has truly committed to doing more with less—in the month of July we handled 9,585 computer uses by the public.

As the new division manager of libraries and history in Charlotte County, I am committed to finding ways to bring new services to our citizens in a cost efficient and staff efficient way. This summer we have been very excited to offer some new materials to our visitors. Have you tried a Playaway? A Playaway is a book in digital format—it means you get a very small preloaded player, which you can attach headphones to and it is ready to go. Playaways are great for walking, gardening and beach visits. Playaways can be checked out for three weeks at a time and they are now available at the Mid-County Regional Library, the Punta Gorda Public Library and the Port Charlotte Public Library. Check out a Playaway next time you come in.

Paperbacks are the newest format filling our shelves; these are not the tired, worn out titles from the past. This is a new collection of the latest titles that can be checked out for three weeks and can be renewed. Look for the bright yellow labels on the spines—the collection is located all together in one area at your library. The most exciting new item coming to our libraries for children is called View. View is a preloaded player with five to six books on it specifically for children. The View is child proof and reads the books aloud to the child. These players will be here this fall. Four thousand children participated in our summer reading program this summer. These children will do better in school this year because they read throughout the summer.

Over eight thousand children came to a library program last year. Many of the programs were funded by the various Friends of the Library Groups at each library. Everyone is welcome to become a Friend of the Library—details are at each library and on our website.

Computer use and online features are a fast-growing part of our services. You can reserve a new best seller library title at home and then you will get an e-mail when it is ready to be picked up! Call or ask at your nearest library if you have questions about our website or our online services. Our website is [www.CharlotteCountyFL.com/Library](http://www.CharlotteCountyFL.com/Library). At the Englewood Charlotte Public Library we are in the midst of planning for a much needed expansion and renovation. At that time we will be adding all the newest materials for everyone to enjoy. We anticipate the opening of the newly renovated library in late fall of 2012.

Come visit a Charlotte County library soon and see what our close to 50,000 visitors a month are excited about. We have something for every age and every interest. If you have questions,

please visit our website [www.CharlotteCountyFL.com/Library](http://www.CharlotteCountyFL.com/Library) or call us at 941-766-READ (7323).