



SAN MATEO COUNTY LIBRARY
2011 ANNUAL REPORT



VISION

Connect. Discover. Evolve.

MISSION

The San Mateo County Library provides innovative, dynamic services that connect our diverse community with opportunities for individual growth and enrichment.

STRATEGIC GOALS

Destination Libraries: Create welcoming spaces that promote a sense of community pride and facilitate customer-centered services.

Collections and Services: Develop and deliver outstanding library collections and services that reflect the interests and needs of our diverse customer base.

Community Engagement: Raise awareness and visibility of San Mateo County Library services and increase recognition of the Library as an essential community asset.

Organizational Culture: Become a learning organization that continuously assesses community needs and develops staff to provide excellent customer service.

JPA GOVERNING BOARD MEMBERS

Kathy McKeithen, *Atherton*

Dave Warden, *Belmont*

Cy Bologoff, *Brisbane*

Laura Martinez, *East Palo Alto*

Pam Frisella, *Foster City (Chair)*

Marina Fraser, *Half Moon Bay*

Nadia Holober, *Millbrae*

Pete DeJarnatt, *Pacifica*

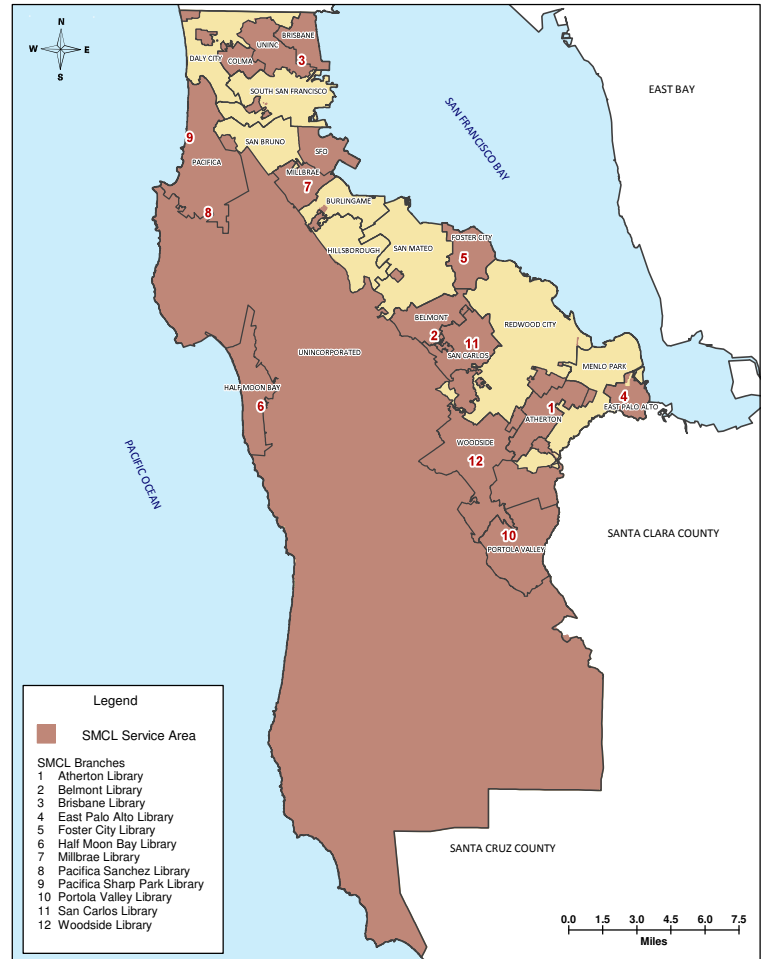
Maryann Derwin, *Portola Valley (Vice Chair)*

Randy Royce, *San Carlos*

Anne Kasten, *Woodside*

Carole Groom, *San Mateo County*

SAN MATEO COUNTY LIBRARY SERVICE AREA



The San Mateo County Library (SMCL) is a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) comprised of the cities of Atherton, Belmont, Brisbane, East Palo Alto, Foster City, Half Moon Bay, Millbrae, Pacifica, Portola Valley, San Carlos, Woodside, and the unincorporated areas of San Mateo County.

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

I recently read an article that mentioned that in 1935, libraries had so proved their value that few libraries closed their doors during the Great Depression. This was an important reminder of the rich role libraries played in the past and a challenge to stay relevant today. The San Mateo County Library is here today because of the commitment and value placed on public libraries as a vital community asset.

"In a time of soup lines and economic destitution, the library was known as the "bread line of the spirit." –David Morris, Vice President of the Institute for Local Self-Reliance

In these challenging economic times, our libraries continue to be shaped by their communities and we stay committed to remaining important to the people we serve. In fiscal year 2010-2011, community members checked out close to 4 million books and other library materials, and 2.4 million people visited our libraries.

The Library also received national recognition this year. Our new eBranch website was named a Webby Award Official Honoree, one of the Internet's most respected symbols of success, and for the third year in a row, the system was named a four star library by *Library Journal*.

A recent report found that the importance of libraries continued to grow in 2010 and accelerated dramatically as the national economy sank and people looked for sources of cost-effective

help in a time of crisis. In fact, 68% of the population we serve has a library card. This year, the Library was proud to announce the debut of a new library card. A library card is so basic that we often overlook the power it represents. The new card gives access to the vast array of library resources and materials online and in each of our libraries.

Today, the San Mateo County Library remains committed to ensuring that our libraries continue to grow with our communities, and to keep meeting their needs and exceeding their expectations in the years to come. I am heartened by all the stories I hear about how important our libraries are to the people and communities we serve, and pleased to share some of those stories in this year's Annual Report.

Finally, I would like to thank the many people who support the Library to help us fulfill our mission, including the Library JPA Governing Board and Operations Committee, our dedicated staff, the many Friends of the Library groups, our wonderful volunteers and our generous donors.



Anne-Marie Despain
Director of Library Services





DYNAMIC PARTNERSHIPS: Food for Fines

This year, the Library responded to the recent economic downturn by partnering with Second Harvest Food Bank to offer a “Food for Fines” program. Developed in collaboration with the County of San Mateo, this innovative community food drive allowed library patrons to reduce accumulated fines by donating food at their community libraries. Not only did this effort raise over 23,000 pounds of food but it also helped to restore library privileges and collect long overdue materials from over 3,300 residents.

All food was donated to Second Harvest Food Bank, which distributes millions of pounds of nutritious food annually to people in need in San Mateo County; the majority of these people are children and seniors. The Second Harvest Food Drive Coordinator said, “The total poundage of the drive is leaps and bounds above other food drives. I have to say it was wildly successful.” The Library is very grateful for our communities’ overwhelming response.

“This is a wonderful opportunity to provide food for those in need in our community, while clearing up fines and resuming greater use of our outstanding library system.” –San Mateo County Supervisor Carole Groom



DYNAMIC PARTNERSHIPS: Community Garden

In the sunny yard adjacent to the Pacifica Sanchez Library, a community garden has taken shape. Gardening programs have always been popular at our libraries but now through a dynamic partnership and local involvement from the community, one garden bed has grown to include eight raised vegetable beds with 320 square feet of growing space.

Truly an active garden, the Master Gardeners of San Francisco and San Mateo Counties present programs in the garden regularly, and library volunteers have kept the project alive by seeking funds and donating their own time. The library

garden encourages residents to learn about sustainability and the importance of green space and growing fresh food. It has also fostered a sense of stewardship for the community, reclaiming an unused piece of land for positive community use and educational activities. The harvested vegetables are donated to the Pacifica Resource Center, a group that helps families in Pacifica.

“The hope is that the library garden can become not only a teaching and research space, but also one that gives back to the community in terms of produce—thereby being a place of resource physically and educationally.” –Volunteer and Master Gardener Elizabeth Marshall



INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS: Library Technology

Operating in a technology-rich area, the Library has continued to pilot and implement several successful technology programs that address customer needs. In March, the Library's Social Online Public Access Catalog (SOPAC) debuted.

SOPAC is an interface for the traditional online public access catalog, which allows library users to search for items in the library collection, place holds and view account information. Additionally, patrons can tag, rate and review their favorite materials after logging in with an eBranch account. SOPAC adds value to the existing library catalog by adding more

data, making the library experience more interactive, and fostering a sense of community.

Another new service offered this year included the installation of a library materials dispensing machine at the Millbrae BART station. Purchased with funds from the California State Library and the Peninsula Library System, the machine is an innovative and cost-effective way to extend service to residents and busy commuters. The machine features a touch screen that customers use to select books. The books are then delivered through an opening in the front of the unit by a robotic arm.

“Public libraries in 2011 are not just about single buildings but services distributed throughout the community to meet people at their point of need.” –California State Librarian Stacey Aldrich



INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS: Youth Center Book Group

Just as books inspire and educate, so does the variety of programs the Library offers every day. The Library has continued to support the public's desire for community gathering experiences by offering over 6,000 programs. One of these programs is our book group for incarcerated youth, held at the San Mateo County Youth Center. This is an important audience to which the library reaches out in order to break the cycle of recidivism. Research suggests that literacy interventions have a positive impact on youth during incarceration and greatly influence their success following release.

To enhance the teens' experience and further connect them with the reading and writing process, authors of the books they are discussing are invited to speak. Recently, a library staff member arranged for well-known community activist and author of inner-city stories, Sister Souljah, to make a visit. The author, who lives in New York, was unable to make an in-person visit, so a virtual visit was planned. The girls at the Youth Center responded positively and the author spoke highly of the experience. This is the first of what we hope will be many virtual author engagements.

"Speaking to incarcerated females via Skype was powerful to me. They are not the typical audience. They are young ladies who really want to hear something that they can connect with and utilize to make meaningful change in their real lives." —Author Sister Souljah



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: **New Bookmobile**

This year, a new bookmobile was purchased to keep up with demand for services and new technologies. Bookmobiles play an important outreach role and are an effective tool for connecting with new users, strengthening cooperative partnerships with local agencies, raising awareness of library offerings, and increasing visibility throughout the community.

Each week, the bookmobile visits about 20 locations throughout the Coastsides, including schools, retirement homes and rural areas. It traveled 5,500 miles last year and loaned out more than 45,000 books, movies, music CDs and audiobooks. The

new vehicle has already proven to be in high demand, visiting numerous farmers' markets, and community fairs. The replacement of the bookmobile enables the library to expand outreach services throughout the county, reaching a larger number of community members.

The 35-foot long vehicle incorporates state-of-the-art green technology, including solar panels and a hybrid generator. A community hub wherever it goes, the bookmobile offers a free wireless Internet hotspot, a wheelchair lift, and a shady place under a canopy to relax, read or attend outdoor programs.

"The library-on-wheels is increasingly becoming the easiest way for Coastsiders to get their hands on books, CDs and other media." –Half Moon Bay Review Reporter Mark Noack



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: Homebound Program

San Carlos resident Mary K. Einzig was a regular library user. However, during this past year, she became unable to visit the library. Mary's absence did not go unnoticed, as she had often entertained staff and library users by reciting poetry. Staff began informally finding ways to get books to Mary at her home. Starting with this informal delivery program, staff explored and developed a formalized homebound delivery service.

The Library's Homebound Program is a new and innovative outreach service that utilizes volunteers to help deliver books, movies, and other library materials. This new service, available at several of our libraries, is a valuable program that gives lifelong learning opportunities to residents who are unable to visit their libraries.

"The feeling that the volunteers and I had when we left our patrons was wonderful. We felt like we had made a real difference in their lives and that we had somehow connected them with the world of library materials again! We are truly a library without walls!" –Library Staff Member Gail Benjamin



RAISING READERS: Early Literacy

Numerous studies have shown that an early introduction to books is one of the most important interventions to build reading and language skills in order to prepare children for school success. In some of our communities, 25% of children grow up in families that lack the income to cover basic needs like rent, food and transportation. For these families, buying children's books is often not feasible.

The San Mateo County Library's Early Literacy programs include a book give-away component to address this need. Last year 16,500 developmentally appropriate children's books were distributed to

at-risk families at low-income medical and health clinics, domestic abuse centers, homeless shelters, and other community agencies. This library-led effort promotes early childhood reading in the community. Library staff offer storytimes and model reading methods to engage parents and children in the magic of books.

"A woman introduced herself and told me she was from the library and had a free book for my son. I could see Chris' face light up. I want to express my sincere gratitude for taking the time to run this program for families like mine." –WIC Participant



RAISING READERS: Summer Enrichment Series

The San Mateo County Library continues to support lifelong learning and educational achievement by offering summer reading programs. Statistics show the importance of keeping children reading and academically active during the summer months. The Millbrae Library offers a unique Summer Enrichment Series. Local community talent is tapped to teach sessions, covering a wide variety of topics including science, math, art and music.

Millbrae Scientist Ernie Appelhans's classes are always popular. A 3rd grade student rushed into the library, looking to sign up for Ernie's next class and

to check out a batch of science experiment books. The beaming child said, "When I grow up I'm going to be a scientist, just like Ernie!"

The Library's annual reading program brings children and families into their local community libraries for reading and literacy-enhancing programs such as storytelling, music, creative arts and performances. Over 6,800 children participate in the San Mateo County Library Summer Reading program every year.

"It is great to see the kids actually get involved in a project and enjoy doing it. As I was moving about during the class, one of the girls enthusiastically said, "I just love science." –Scientist and Library Presenter Ernie Appelhans

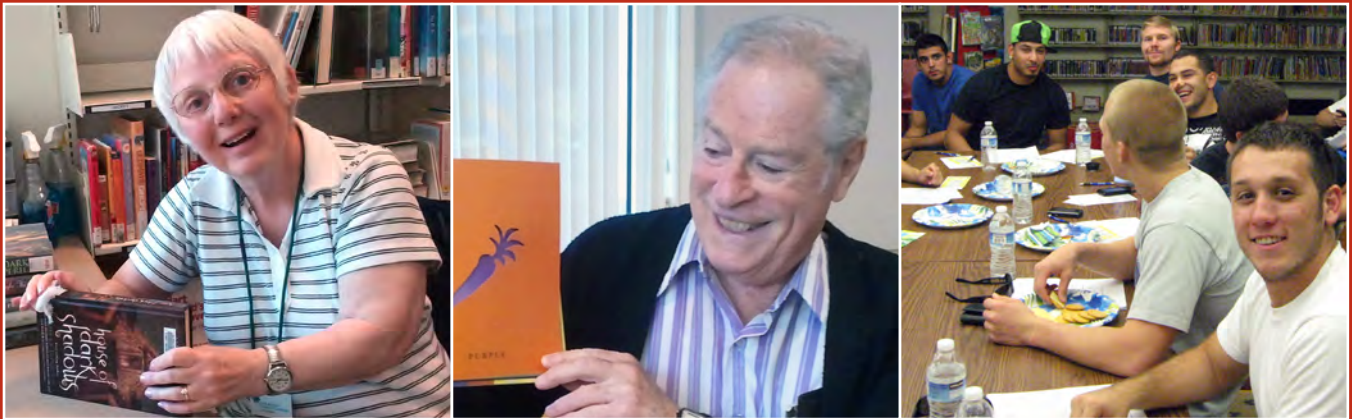


MAKING A DIFFERENCE: STEP Intern Program

Record unemployment and a growing population of at-risk foster youth led to the establishment of the Summer Training and Employment Program (STEP). National studies have shown that once foster youth reach the age of 18, they often struggle to succeed because they lack family support and structure. In partnership with San Mateo County's Human Services Agency, the Library has hired several STEP interns. The program gives emancipated foster youth the opportunity to develop job skills through paid work experience, offering positive role models and employment coaching, opportunities for job readiness and skill building, and transition planning.

Last summer, the Foster City Library was pleased to host STEP intern Dennis Viscarra, who was a little nervous about starting his first job. Dennis worked closely with staff to learn about the library and understand his new job. Staff quickly came to admire Dennis's fortitude, energy and enthusiasm. Dennis believes that the rest of his career will be a reflection of this first job experience, and he approaches every day as if it were his first day of work. Dennis was hired after his internship ended and has continued to contribute to the library, in part by mentoring the newest STEP intern.

"This was my first job and I received kind and helpful support from the staff members. All the staff were close mentors, helping me set goals and work through them. I'm enjoying my experience working at the library." –Library Staff Member and former STEP Intern Dennis Viscarra



MAKING A DIFFERENCE: Library Volunteers

In a remarkable demonstration of local effort and community involvement, our volunteers greatly enhance services and add value to the library. Each investment of time makes a difference in our communities. This year, our volunteers contributed over 20,000 hours of service.

Volunteer Marvin Solomon invests in his community by providing weekly storytimes at the Library; additionally, he includes regular visits to a local daycare center. Marv sings songs, reads books, and engages the children in creative ways each week. He has been known to hand out apricots to go along

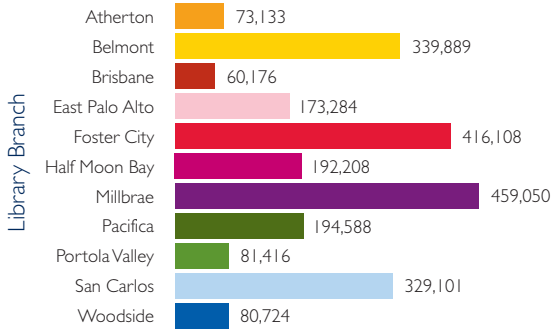
with his themed storytime about farming. Another volunteer, Alyce Bishop, enjoys her work at the library so much that she has recruited many new volunteers from her friends from the assisted living center where she lives.

The Library is also fortunate to have the enthusiastic support of our Friends groups, which support each community library through advocacy and funding for library materials, programs and events, and special projects.

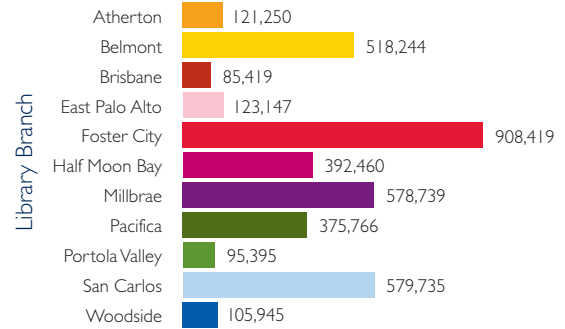
“Volunteering for this storytime brings back memories of reading to my own children.” –Storytime Volunteer Marvin Solomon

NUMBERS AT WORK

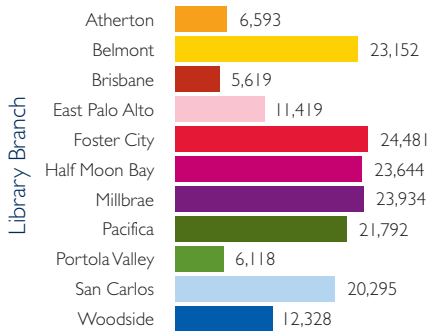
LIBRARY VISITORS



ITEMS CIRCULATED



PROGRAM ATTENDANCE



2,399,677

Total Library Visitors

3,989,770

Total Items Circulated

181,567

Total Program Attendance

NUMBERS AT WORK

12

Number of Libraries

286,569

Population of Service Area

8.4

Library Visits per Capita

796,827

Number of Items in Library Collection

68%

Library Card Holders as a Percent
of the Population

475,936

Number of eBranch Visits

13.9

Circulation per Capita

359

Number of Public Computers

21,550

Number of Volunteer Hours

6,083

Number of Programs and Events Offered

45,961

Number of eBook and Audio Downloads

93%

Percent of Customer Survey Respondents
Rating Services Good or Excellent



SAN MATEO COUNTY LIBRARY
Connect. Discover. Evolve.

San Mateo County Library
125 Lessingia Court
San Mateo, CA 94402
650.312.5258
www.smcl.org