



SAN MATEO COUNTY LIBRARY

2012 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*

Terry O'Connell, *Brisbane*

Laura Martinez, *East Palo Alto*

Pam Frisella, *Foster City (Chair)*

Marina Fraser, *Half Moon Bay*

Marge Colapietro, *Millbrae*

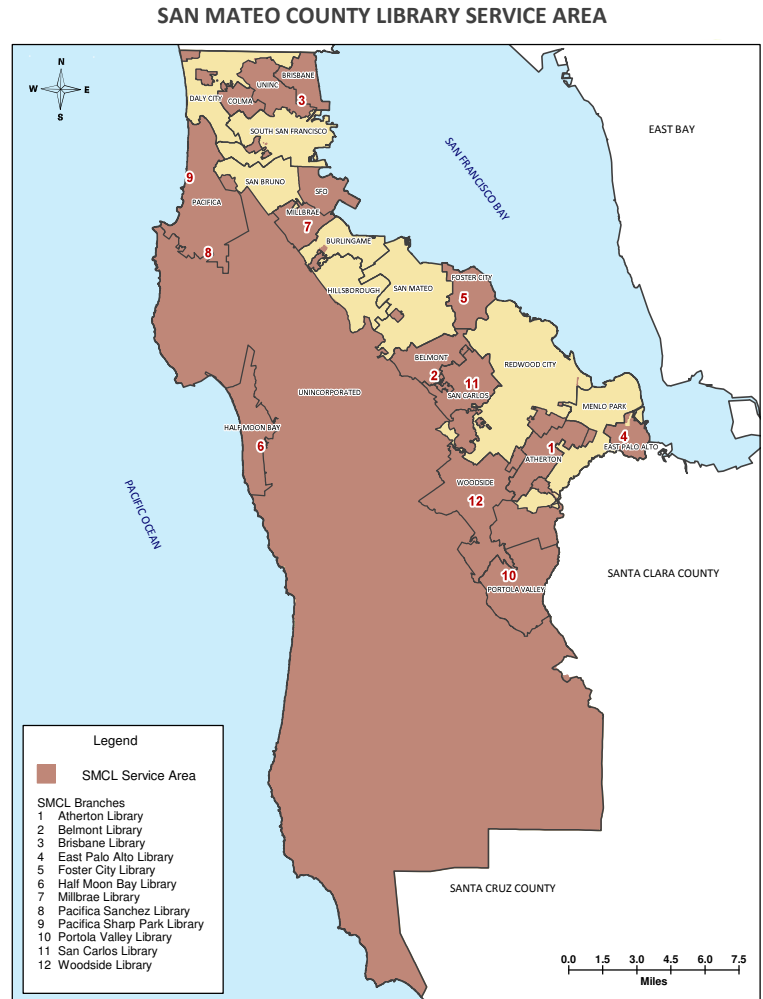
Pete DeJarnatt, *Pacifica*

Maryann Derwin, *Portola Valley (Vice Chair)*

Karen Clapper, *San Carlos*

Carole Groom, *San Mateo County*

Anne Kasten, *Woodside*



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

The San Mateo County Library is pleased to present our 2012 Annual Report. This report is a reflection of our collective communities as well as each individual who visits our libraries. It also showcases the tremendous efforts of the Library JPA, staff, volunteers, and our many community partners who provide the services and programs that support our mission and strategic goals.

San Mateo County libraries are building community and changing lives every day. Using dynamic partnerships, innovative technology and community based programming, our libraries have helped promote child development through play, improve community gathering spaces, honor local heritage, support families and children during the first stages of life, introduce teens to the work environment, encourage a love of reading and the spoken word, increase operational efficiencies, and more. The Annual Report highlights a few of these creative and significant accomplishments.

In fiscal year 2011-2012, 3.8 million books and other library materials were checked out and 2.3 million people visited our libraries. Over 700,000 free one-hour Internet and computer sessions were provided and 11,000 new library cards were given out. Based on these service statistics, the San Mateo County Library received a star-rating for the fourth consecutive year from Library Journal. Library Journal is the library field's leading

professional publication. This year, 7,513 public libraries were rated and 262 qualified as star libraries. The San Mateo County Library was ranked 18th nationwide and 3rd in California among public libraries with similar budgets.

The Library is a high performing organization that compares extremely favorably to other public libraries in the nation. Use of our libraries is well above the national mean and tax dollars are yielding a high level of community value. Being ranked among the best public library systems in the country demonstrates the importance our community places on their local libraries and the services we provide.

As Director of Library Services, I am deeply proud of the accomplishments in this report and want to thank the Library JPA Governing Board and Operations Committee, our wonderful volunteers and Friends of the Library groups, and the exceptional library staff for their outstanding contributions and dedication.



Anne-Marie Despain
Director of Library Services

"I am very proud to have chaired the Library JPA Governing Board; through the representation of each member we have been able to make great decisions. I have seen many changes and truly believe we are on a great path for success paved by the incredible staff of our library system." –Foster City Council Member and Library JPA Governing Board Chair Pam Frisella



INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS: Library Technology

The Library continues to implement innovative and cost-effective technology solutions to address customer needs. This year the Library introduced Radio Frequency Identification (RFID). Used in a library setting, RFID replaces outdated barcode technology and significantly improves checkout and check-in processes. Customers now have the ability to check out several items simultaneously, rather than just one item at a time. This faster checkout process greatly improves the customer experience. Additional benefits include increased staff productivity and greater security for library materials.

There have been several studies measuring the value of RFID technologies. The California State Library investigated the benefits of RFID implementation and found that there were significant savings in the number of staff needed to provide circulation services and handle materials, freeing up staff to have more meaningful interactions with patrons. Materials are now made available to customers in a much more efficient manner. Implementing RFID technology allows the Library to address increasing public use while operating within available resources.

"I love this library! Incredible selection and easy checkout. Love the ease of the new checkout system."
—San Mateo County Library Customer



INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS: Library Collections

Studies have shown that early exposure to art and music promotes activity in the brain and contributes to successful childhood development and literacy. Many local schools are eliminating these programs and often families cannot afford to engage in these activities. Two innovative library programs support this community need.

Earlier this year, the East Palo Alto Library created a unique guitar lending library. The project was identified as a need due to the well documented social and educational benefits of musical expression and lack of music education programs for youth

in the East Palo Alto community. Guitars are now available for checkout at the Library and weekly music lessons are offered by volunteers.

Another new service is the museum pass program called Discover & Go. It provides library cardholders with free passes to the Bay Area's best museums and cultural attractions. Passes are accessed online rather than traditional physical passes that must be checked out at a Library. Libraries and museums make great partners as they both seek to spark imagination and encourage exploration.

“Discover & Go provides accessible resources that are aligned with our mission to nurture literacy in all youth and families.” –Executive Director of Zeum Audrey Yamamoto



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: Library Events

The Library has been referred to as a family's best friend. It is fun, free and an educational way to engage all members of the family. San Mateo County Library strives to offer services and programs that support the public's desire for community gathering experiences by offering dynamic programs that encourage family participation, honor heritage and highlight unique events. This year, three programs illustrated community engagement at its finest.

Exploring Space At the San Carlos Library, families participated in a once-in-a-lifetime event by viewing a solar eclipse event. Local patron and amateur astronomer Bob Black pitched his idea for a family program at the library and staff helped plan and execute this rare after-hours event. Families were instructed on how to create sun viewing devices that allowed them to experience the eclipse both inside and outside of the Library. Telescopes were available for patrons to use; an astronomy video series was presented in the community rooms; and lots of activities and crafts were available for kids to enjoy. Community news reports credited the interior library dome as one of the best places in the county to witness the eclipse.

Local Traditions East Palo Alto Library regularly builds community through family oriented programs such as their annual Sweet Potato Pie Competition. Members of the community showcased their original creations, which included family secret recipes passed down through the generations. East Palo Alto’s community leaders made up the panel of judges who selected the very best, while those in attendance sampled pies and lobbied for their favorite. East Palo Alto Mayor Laura Martinez summed up the day nicely: “These functions do build community.”

Celebrating Diversity In honor of Asian Pacific American Heritage Month, the Foster City Library hosted its third annual celebration. A full day of family activities centered on storytelling, music, and literature. Story time events for children included farm fairytales and a special guest—a very large goose. High school students demonstrated traditional Chinese instruments in which the audience was invited to play. The day culminated in a moving program in which Japanese internees read their own stories from the anthology, “Making Home from War: Stories of Japanese American Exile and Resettlement.”

“We are fortunate to have such a wonderful Library. The Library presented several wonderful programs honoring Asian Pacific Americans and their accomplishments.”
—Foster City Councilmember Steve Okamoto





RAISING READERS: Library Poets

Poetry can be a powerful medium for literacy. It encourages children and adults to reflect on language in interesting and powerful ways and builds language awareness through the reading of poetry. Libraries promote National Poetry Month every April with a wide variety of programs for all ages. This year, two very successful programs are noteworthy.

The Belmont Library staff collaborated with Carlmont High School to connect teen students with the Library through poetry. Students were encouraged to enter the first Belmont Library Teen

Poetry Contest with an overwhelming response of 230 entries. Six young poets were honored at a celebration at the Library.

Now in its 13th year, the Portola Valley Library partnered with the Portola Valley School District to sponsor their annual Portola Valley Library Poetry Contest. The longevity and popularity of this program is a testament to the impact that poetry and the oral tradition has on a community. From a record 438 entrants, 31 children shared their poems at a culminating town-wide reading and celebration.

“Surely the poet-gods of Mount Olympus were in attendance as well and smiling as the event unfolded into a charmed local marking of National Poetry Month.” –Friends of the Portola Valley Library Board Member Lenora Ferro



RAISING READERS: Library Playtime

Recent studies have shown that playtime is essential to growing up healthy and benefits child development. The Half Moon Bay Library became the system's first Family Place™ provider. It serves the dual purpose of disseminating parenting information and promoting early literacy through imaginative play. The library environment is designed to engage children; connect parents with resources; and attract non-traditional library users.

In a similar program the Library partnered with Life Steps Foundation to provide Play & Stay: A Family Learning Workshop. Supported with funding from

First 5 San Mateo and the Silicon Valley Community Foundation, workshops were held in Pacifica, East Palo Alto, Half Moon Bay and Pescadero. Led by an early childhood specialist, they focused on language development and sensory play.

Family Place™ and Play & Stay create networks for families that nurture a child's development during the critical first years and help ensure all children enter school ready and able to learn.

"The Family Place™ program proves that libraries can be educational—and loud, raucous and fun."
—Youth Services Librarian Karen Choy

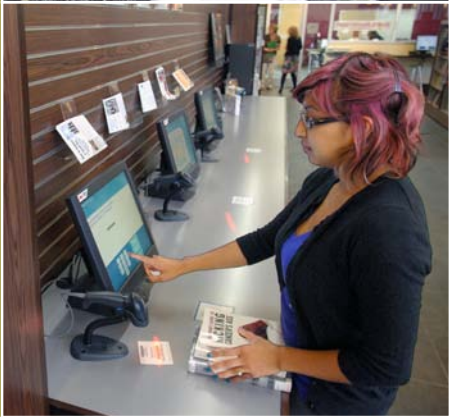


DYNAMIC PARTNERSHIPS: Library Connections

The Library has built strong relationships with San Mateo County agencies and other unique organizations in the Bay Area. Working collaboratively, the Library is better able to provide needed services and quality programs to address the needs of our communities. The following examples of successful partnerships this year illustrate our commitment to a community approach.

Teen Enrichment The Belmont Library and City of Belmont Parks and Recreation Department teamed up to provide coordinated teen services through a new community partnership. The mutual goal was to promote growth and enrichment among the teen population in Belmont. Both the Library and the City recognized that youth ages 12-18 are a core population served by each jurisdiction. Combining staff resources and a shared approach to service delivery has improved outcomes associated with the recreational, technological, and informational needs of teens. Approximately 800 teens a month attend these library programs.

Preserving Memories Another highly successful collaboration between the Library and the schools has been the Noche de Cuentos/Night of Stories program. The mission of Noche de



Cuentos is to promote and preserve the art of storytelling within Latino communities. Working closely with local elementary schools on the coastside, children collected, wrote and illustrated family storybooks based on their family stories. Once the stories were completed, an evening celebration was planned for the students to share their work with their family, friends and the community at large. Noche de Cuentos promotes community, reading, public speaking and self-esteem.

Reading Companions As part of an innovative partnership with the Peninsula Humane Society and the SPCA, pet assisted therapy teams help children improve their reading skills and make a new four-legged friend. The mere presence of an animal helps children become more confident readers. Through the Library's Paws for Tales Program, children have the opportunity to read aloud to a therapy animal at most of the San Mateo County libraries. One young child was brought to the program because he had never completed reading an entire book on his own. Sure enough, after meeting and reading to a trained therapy dog, the boy read an entire book from cover to cover!

"The Belmont Library Teen Center is a safe and convenient place for students to meet up, hang out and work on school projects." –Belmont Park and Recreation Staff Stephan Schultz





MAKING A DIFFERENCE: Library Volunteers

In a community grassroots effort to create growth and improve opportunities for youth, the East Palo Alto Library has been an integral partner with local schools and organizations. Due to a high rate of unemployment among teenagers in East Palo Alto, the Library created a teen volunteer work experience component to augment the Library's afterschool learning program.

Through State Library funding, Teens Engaging In Employment Now (TEEN) was established as a new volunteer program to provide a wide range of workforce development opportunities for teens.

Participants completing the program gained the skills, experience and confidence needed to obtain meaningful employment and seek higher education opportunities while growing a sense of community and volunteerism. Additionally, the young children who were tutored by these teens made significant gains in their reading ability, with 65% improving by at least one grade level and 43% improving by two grade levels in just eight months.

“The TEEN project provides an excellent opportunity for teen volunteers to gain the skills needed to obtain meaningful employment and to seek higher education possibilities.” –California State Librarian Stacey Aldrich



MAKING A DIFFERENCE: Library Friends

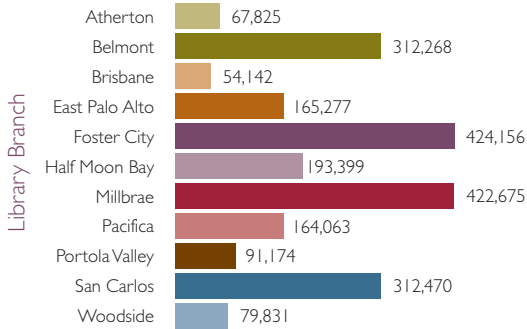
Library supporters have a tremendous impact on our libraries; two longtime Friends were honored this year. Adele Carney received a proclamation from the Belmont City Council, commemorating her work on behalf of the Friends of the Belmont Library. The extraordinary success of her fundraising efforts has supported many library programs throughout the years. Elaine Pitts received the City's highest honor when she was inducted into the Foster City Community Walk of Fame. Under Elaine's 20-year leadership, the Friends of the Foster City Library raised funds to support a new library in 1997 as well as a recent building renovation in 2009.

All of our libraries are fortunate to have the enthusiastic support of our Friends of the Library groups. Many programs and special projects would not be possible without this additional support. The recent interior remodel at the Millbrae Library is an example of how the Friends' hard work benefits our communities. Thanks to their generous support the Library was able to make a number of facility enhancements including the addition of a custom-made mural in the Kid's Place.

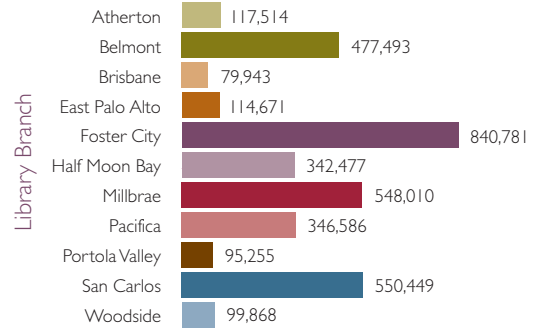
"My love for libraries as a source of information and enjoyment dates back to my youth. The library has continued to be there for me as a necessary complement to my education and my need to know in an ever changing world." –Friends of the Foster City Library Board Member Elaine Pitts

NUMBERS AT WORK

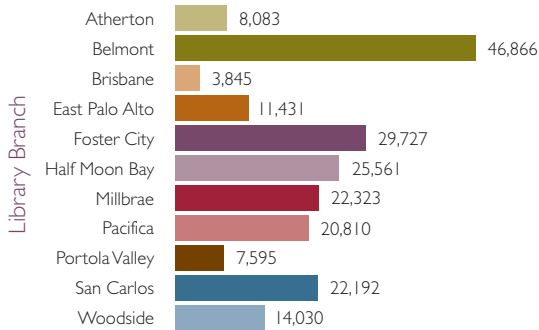
LIBRARY VISITORS



ITEMS CIRCULATED



PROGRAM ATTENDANCE



2,287,280

Total Library Visitors

3,756,016

Total Items Circulated

215,321

Total Program Attendance

NUMBERS AT WORK

12

Number of Libraries

270,925

Population of Service Area

8.4

Library Visits per Capita

760,866

Number of Items in Library Collection

64%

Library Card Holders as a Percent
of the Population

607,456

Number of eBranch Visits

13.9

Circulation per Capita

365

Number of Public Computers

19,902

Number of Volunteer Hours

6,726

Number of Programs and Events Offered

34,021

Number of eBook and Audio Downloads

90%

Percent of Customer Survey Respondents
Rating Services Good or Excellent



Select photos by Scott Bushman Photography and the Half Moon Bay Review. This report is available online at smcl.org.

San Mateo County Library

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