SAN MATEO COUNTY LIBRARY

2007-2008 Annual Report

Connect
Discover
Evolve

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.

San Mateo County Library 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 SMCL 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.

The San Mateo County Library (SMCL) has had another tremendous year. We served more people with more resources and services than ever before and staff continue to receive high praise for their outstanding customer service.

Notable achievements include circulation of materials which climbed to over 4 million items, an increase of 10% from the previous year. Use of the virtual library remains strong with 1,189,690 visits to smcl.org. Programs and events continue to be extremely popular. A total of 5,483 programs and activities for children, teens and adults supported the public's desire for community gathering experiences. Our library system is flourishing thanks to the hard work of staff and the strong support of our communities.

SMCL also took important steps in 2007-08 to plan for future success by implementing a new seven-year strategic plan. This plan will guide the development and continuous improvement of our ever-changing services. The plan identifies four strategic goals designed to steer and shape the system; Destination Libraries, Collections and Services, Community Engagement, and Organizational Culture.

As services evolve to respond to communities needs, one thing remains the same, people still have the desire to connect, to know their neighbors. Libraries represent one of the few places in society that can serve as a community commons, a place to bring generations and cultures together.

We are proud of the accomplishments of the past year. We are proud to help build community.

Anne-Marie Despain
Interim Director of Library Services

Positive Impact

The wonderful thing about helping someone in one generation is that it usually helps the next. Such was the case with Crystal.

Crystal spent four years working with the San Mateo County Library READs program. During this time she worked with the volunteer-based adult literacy program to build up her skills in order to pass the state driver's license test and also acquire a GED.

When Crystal married, her husband also joined the program and soon received his GED. Their son David attended Libros y Bebés, a bilingual baby storytime, and is now ready to start kindergarten. His new sister, three month old Xochitl, now comes to "Bebés" as well. There was even more success when Crystal was named "Employee of the Year" at the Ritz Carlton in Half Moon Bay!

It took Crystal's determination to better her and her family's lives and to get to where she is today. It took the San Mateo County Library to help her get there.

Destination Libraries

The secret is out that libraries are destination places of community engagement! This is partly due to the variety of programs San Mateo County Library offers, from the practical to the poetic.

Last year, SMCL hosted everything from art programs to musicians, Ikebana flower-arranging, book and film discussion groups, storytimes, and Internet classes.

Just as books inspire, delight and touch us at our core, so do these live programs. In addition, they bring the added dimension of an audience. When the members of an audience begin to interact, the library becomes a microcosm of the community. Indeed, for many, the library has become the community center of choice, the place to connect with like-minded people as well as the place to engage in civil discourse with those of opposing viewpoints.

Check out our website at smcl.org for a complete list of upcoming programs and events and join in!

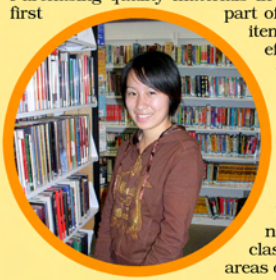
Collections Make The Difference

Feedback gathered via surveys, online feedback forms and direct patron requests has indicated that library users want a library collection that spans popular entertainment materials and resources to support a variety of education and enrichment needs. In alignment with the new strategic plan, SMCL has worked hard to develop and deliver library collections that reflect the interests of our customer base.

Over 143,000 items were added to the collection in 2007-08. Emphasis was placed on building a world language collection to serve the diverse San Mateo County population. Over12,500 items in languages such as Chinese, Hindi, Russian and Spanish were added to the collection and are heavily used.

Another focus of collection development was the continued expansion of popular materials such as full-feature movies on DVD and books-on-CD. The 70,000 DVDs currently available for check-out are the most heavily circulated items in the collection.

Purchasing quality materials in response to patron needs is only the first part of developing a library collection. Once items are added to the system, additional efforts are made to ensure that these collections are accessible. All branches have made significant efforts to display items using established marketplace techniques so that they are more visible. New items are prominently displayed in high-traffic areas and special collections are selected and featured by library staff. Patrons easily find new books and media, rediscover classics and learn about new ideas and areas of interest.



San Mateo County Library At-A-Glance

Number of Service Outlets	12
Population of the Service Area	278,388
Number of Registered Borrowers	168,569
Borrowers as a % of Population	61%
Annual Circulation *	4,069,410
Circulation per Capita	14.6
Number of Library Visits	2,328,091
Visits per Capita	8.4
Number of Public Computers	309
Percent of Self-Check Usage	72%
Number of Events Offered	5,483
Program and Event Attendance	169,436
Number of Collection Volumes	815,900

* Does not include loans of electronic/digital books or "hits" on electronic databases.

Customer Satisfaction

Critical to the success of the system is feedback from the public. In order to gauge effectiveness, SMCL regularly solicits customer feedback. In 2007-08, 309 surveys were received with 91% of respondents rating overall satisfaction as good or excellent. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, particularly in the areas of customer service, and materials and events offered. Additionally, 96% of respondents gave a rating of good or excellent for knowledge of staff assisting them, and a rating of 94% for staff availability.

Measuring Performance

The figures below represent just some of the data collected by the San Mateo County Library. This information helps us understand where we are and which way we are going. It also assists in making sound decisions on issues that affect future service delivery.

Branch	Items Circulated	Library Card Holders	Library Visitors	Program Attendance
Atherton Library	138,347	8,214	76,107	6,682
Belmont Library	576,625	18,262	340,127	18,584
Brisbane Library	97,140	3,495	78,616	6,003
East Palo Alto Library	98,308	16,057	166,370	11,429
Foster City Library	963,911	27,818	414,938	26,698
Half Moon Bay Library	383,116	16,396	195,865	16,923
Millbrae Library	577,350	17,127	416,797	16,588
Pacifica Libraries	394,069	23,571	197,330	23,214
Portola Valley Library	62,196	4,292	33,765	4,562
San Carlos Library	629,657	22,308	317,857	18,099
Woodside Library	113,727	9,194	90,319	10,544
Other *	34,964	1,835	---	10,100
Total	4,069,410	168,569	2,328,091	169,436

* Bookmobile and Other Literacy Programs

Generous Support

San Mateo County Library is fortunate to have strong support from its Friends Groups. Generous contributions totaling over $128,000 in 2007-08 allowed the San Mateo County Library to enhance collections, support homework help, summer reading programs, and specials events.

The work of volunteers is also invaluable. To meet the rising demand in the areas of events, collections and literacy support, volunteers contributed 16,630 hours of service.

The work of these wonderful community members ultimately makes a tremendous difference in the lives of the citizens of San Mateo County.

The New Portola Valley Library

The new Portola Valley Library is scheduled to open in September 2008. This town-led project includes a new library, community center, and town hall. Nestled amongst beautiful Redwood trees and a flowing creek, the 6,284 sq. ft. library fulfills the promise of a state-of-the-art "green project."

Patrons will immediately notice a variety of new features including the latest technologies for checkout, a "one-stop" service desk, sixteen computers, a Learning Center, and an attractive marketplace area for browsing new materials, including books, books-on-CD, and DVDs.

The comfort of this larger space with nature-oriented furnishings, bookstore feel, and sense of light and the outside environment, all point to a community destination place to look to with pride.

San Mateo County Library

The San Mateo County Library 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.

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