



San Mateo
County
Libraries

Annual Report 2016–2017

Transforming Lives Transforming Communities





Mission

San Mateo County Libraries strengthen our community by creating an inclusive sense of place and environment for learning.

Vision

San Mateo County Libraries ignite growth through transformative experiences.



"I'm so impressed with the quality of our libraries. Engagement with users is positive and welcoming. In the midst of all the chaos in the world, our libraries are like jewels of serenity, information, activity and energy."

Library Patron

Director's Message

All of us at San Mateo County Libraries are thrilled to present our 2016-17 Annual Report—full of exceptional achievements that represent our work to transform lives and communities.

Our libraries and services reflect the diversity, collaboration and creativity that are at the heart of our community. We provide unmatched services, curate high-quality learning experiences, and are ranked 4th in California and 24th in the nation among peer libraries by *Library Journal*.

This year, we received the library field's most prestigious award, the American Library Association's John Cotton Dana Award for outstanding public relations, in recognition of our new, modern, inclusive brand and its positive impact on the community. The *Open for Exploration* campaign unified our twelve community libraries under a shared vision and conveyed the essence of who we are, champions of learning, sharing and exploration. The campaign was enthusiastically received by the public with substantial increases in both monthly card applications and website visits.

In addition, the Urban Libraries Council named us one of 10 Top Innovators nationwide for our *Talk*

Read Sing program, which uses word-tracking technology—combined with an evidence-based curriculum—to enhance language development in lower-income families with children under three. Early results have shown that participating families significantly increased verbal interaction and time spent reading with their children.

We are also pleased to report that a team of researchers from Stanford University School of Medicine found that our libraries are highly successful summer food distribution sites because they are warm, welcoming, stigma-free environments where people feel safe. That too, is one of our great achievements, because at our core, our mission is to strengthen our community by creating an inclusive sense of place and environment for learning.

We invite you to explore our many other accomplishments in this report.

Anne-Marie Despain
Director of Library Services

San Mateo County Libraries Joint Powers Authority Governing Board Members

Rick DeGolia, Atherton

Charles Stone, Belmont

Lori Liu, Brisbane

Donna Rutherford, East Palo Alto

Gary Pollard, Foster City

Rick Kowalczyk, Half Moon Bay

Reuben Holober, Millbrae

Mike O'Neill, Pacifica

Maryann Derwin, Portola Valley

Cameron Johnson, San Carlos

Anne Kasten, Woodside

Carole Groom, San Mateo County

Fulfilling the Community's Vision

We chart our progress by our strategic plan goals which were developed through an expansive public engagement process in 2015. Community members identified a vitally important role for libraries as spaces for learning and community strength in a time of great social, economic and environmental change.

To meet the learning needs of our highly diverse and dynamic community, we developed the following strategic goals:

We are leaders in establishing a foundation for early literacy, and supporting exploration and growth at every stage of life.

We understand community needs and promote meaningful library services as solutions.

We cultivate an active presence and create spaces that support discovery, enrich lives and uplift the community.



"SMCL always seems to be on the cutting-edge of library services."

Makerspace Master Plan
Focus Group Participant

"The diversity of libraries and their materials makes the San Mateo County system really great—you have many items not easily found in other library systems."

Library Patron



Story of Impact: Transforming Lives and Communities

Thirteen-year old Kayley is growing up in San Mateo County Libraries. Ever since she was a baby, her mother has brought her to our Libraries for the abundant, diverse children's programming.

"One of my earliest memories was a Big Sister Party at the Belmont Library," said Kayley, "I was three-and-a-half and my mom was pregnant. I remember it really well." That was ten years ago. Since then, Kayley has become a voracious reader and enthusiastic library volunteer—reshelving books, performing outreach at National Night Out and promoting the Summer Learning Challenge.

She is also an outstanding student who read more than 30 books this summer alone. She has accomplished all this with a learning difference and an auto-immune disease. "I love to read, but since I'm dyslexic, I read by contextualizing. My

challenges have taught me not to compare myself to others, just to my past self."

"This summer, Kayley had an idea for a children's book club, which became a reality with the support and guidance of Children's Librarian, Michelle Ng. "She is an amazing person and super approachable. She helped me make this what I wanted it to be, a club to help kids develop into kind, responsible, empathic adults." Kayley's book selections focus on themes like perseverance, inclusivity, creativity and resilience, with the goal of developing strong, healthy, positive children and communities.

Kayley's story exemplifies San Mateo County Libraries' transformative role as both a place where individuals can develop and thrive, and as a cornerstone of community strength. We look forward to being with Kayley at every stage in her life.

Year in Review

65%
of residents have
a library card

3.2 M
total circulation

638,638
physical items in collection

2 M
digital items in collection

2.2 M
library visits

39,759
hours of volunteer time

93%
of patrons are satisfied
with our libraries

91%
of employees feel
engaged in work

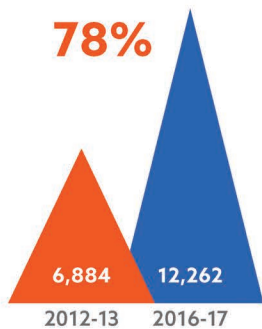
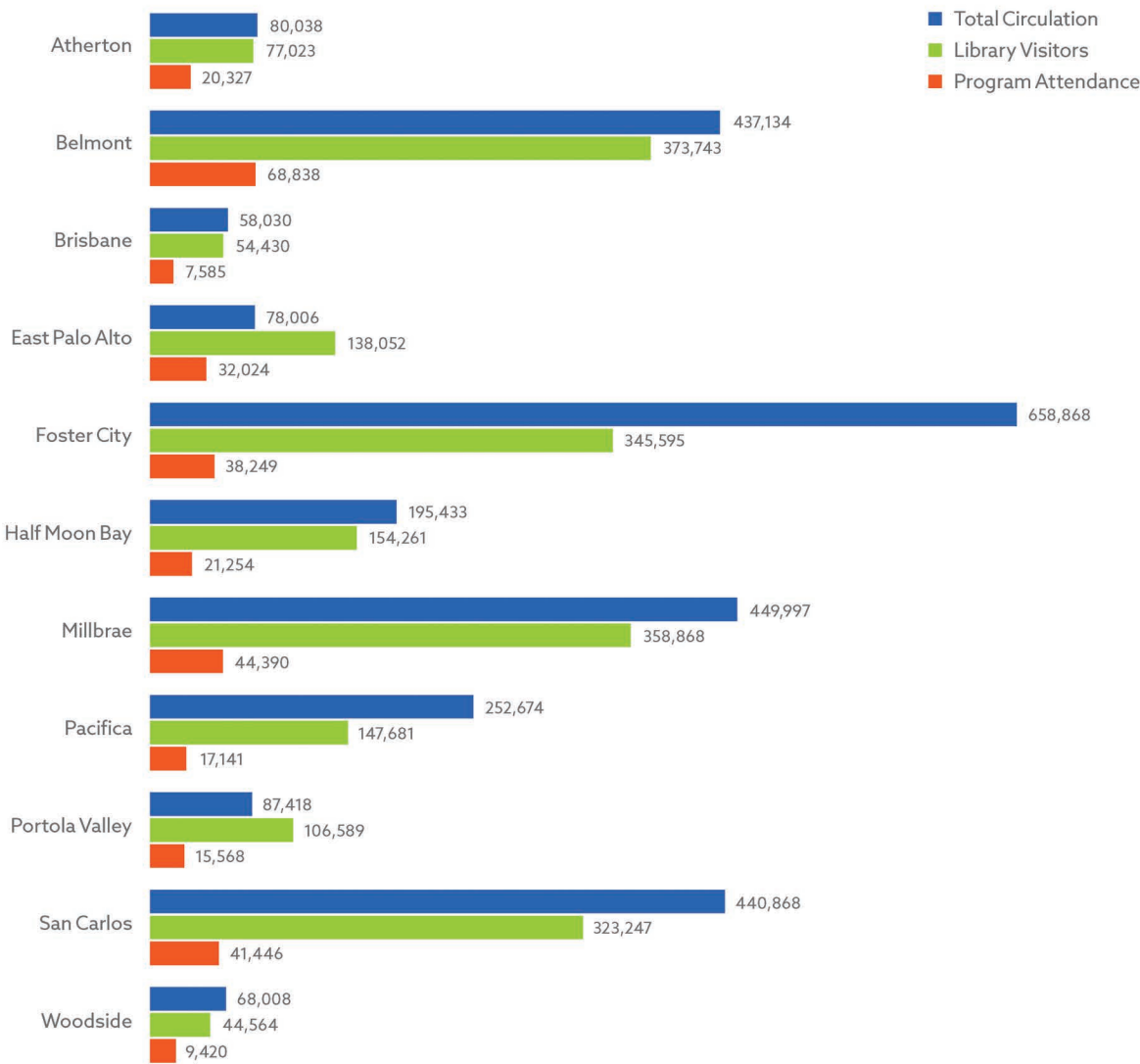
"I love how much the local libraries offer to the community. We love the 3D printing, the Ancestry.com class, the Lego league and storytimes. We appreciate it so much and I bring my children to the library almost on a daily basis. We love reading books and learning new things. We also love the dogs that are brought to the library to encourage kids to read aloud.

Everything is so much more convenient now. It's truly amazing and I love how the libraries are such a welcome place to read, relax, and learn. Thank you so much for all that you do.

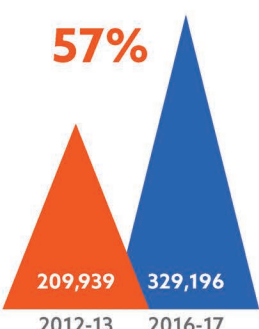
We really appreciate it!"

Library Patron

Community Library Statistics



Programs & Events



Attendance



"I am so impressed at the vitality of our library. The staff is upbeat and a good representation of Millbrae. I can't believe how many interesting events there are, including the movie nights and speakers, such as docents and authors. I am happy about how vibrant our library and staff are and how they are constantly interested in meeting the needs of our community."

Library Patron

We are leaders in establishing a foundation for early literacy and supporting exploration and growth at every stage of life

We are transforming the role of libraries in children’s lives. Our high-quality, research-based programs and responsive services are significantly improving children’s learning outcomes, which will benefit them for the rest of their lives.

This year, through our partnership with the Big Lift we halted summer learning loss for 1,297 low-income children through enriching, free summer camps. We greatly expanded participation in the communitywide Summer Learning Challenge, and launched a Youth Library Card program to forge an early and enduring connection between the Libraries and school-age youth.



Big Lift Inspiring Summers Interns

“Great program! I enjoyed being a part of a program that fosters positive growth and development.”

“This program has encouraged me to minor in education, I love it that much!”

“The children always looked forward to yoga and mindfulness; and learned to behave better. Academically, they certainly improved and their passion for reading grew!”

“I had a great time and I’m so honored that I got another opportunity to work with this program. Thank you is really all I have to say because every time I work with this organization I feel nothing but happiness.”

Big Lift Inspiring Summers

Currently, only 55% of San Mateo County kids read proficiently in 3rd grade; Latino, African-American and Pacific Islander kids are even further behind, with only 25% reading proficiently. The Big Lift is a countywide collective impact effort led by the County of San Mateo, San Mateo County Office of Education and Silicon Valley Community Foundation to help 80% of San Mateo County kids read proficiently in 3rd grade by 2020. Big Lift Inspiring Summers is focused on stopping the “summer slide,” the two-month loss in reading and math skills that low-income children often experience.

Funded primarily through County Measure K funds, Big Lift Inspiring Summers is the kind of rich academic and experiential learning camp that is usually out of reach for low-income families. Inspiring Summers consists of full-day, five-week camps, with San Mateo County Libraries’ interns

providing project-based, hands-on STEM learning activities.

Children in the 2016 Inspiring Summers program gained an average of one month of reading skills, a remarkable net gain of two to three months, and we expect the same profound impact in summer 2017 and beyond.



Big Lift Inspiring Summers Parents

“I appreciate everything about the program, my child loved going every day. He came home singing songs and his reading got better.”

“My kid is very happy about the field trips and yoga, things she hadn’t tried before.”

“My son loves all the books he brings home and gets to share with his little brother.”

“Mi hijo Brandon aprendió cosas nuevas e interesantes! que le serán útiles ahora que vaya al kínder. Muchas gracias por todo su apoyo.”

“My son Brandon learned new and interesting things that will be useful now that he goes to kindergarten. Thank you very much for all your support.”



Youth Library Cards

Libraries are ideal places for students of all ages to expand their knowledge, explore creative pursuits and build positive social connections. In the fall of 2016, we launched a special Youth Library Card, using distinctive artwork from four award-winning illustrators to encourage library card sign-ups. With the launch of these cards, we also eliminated fines, which have prevented youth from accessing the many life-changing library services we offer.

These new cards help youth celebrate and enjoy our libraries as places to discover an incredible array of activities and resources that will help them fulfill their potential in school and in life.

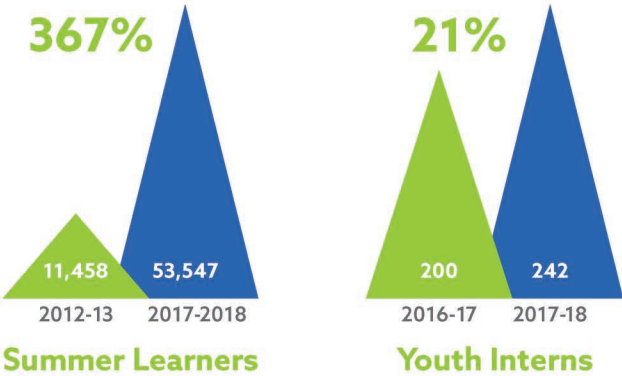


Summer Learning Challenge

Our Summer Learning Challenge engaged the vast majority of the children and youth in our service population through a robust outreach program and a wide range of learning activities to prevent and reverse summer learning loss. With support from County Measure K funds, we expanded our outreach efforts—exceeding our own ambitious enrollment goals. Every child received a free book to keep and a log to track progress. We kept them involved through exciting

programs that ranged from crafts and Lego engineering workshops to bilingual musical performances. At summer’s end, participants were entered into a drawing for one of eleven \$1,000 scholarships to support and encourage their college aspirations.

To support this communitywide program, dozens of high-school interns provided outreach and hands-on learning experiences.



25,507

summer meals served

10%

increase in youth library cardholders



Story of Impact: Supporting Families

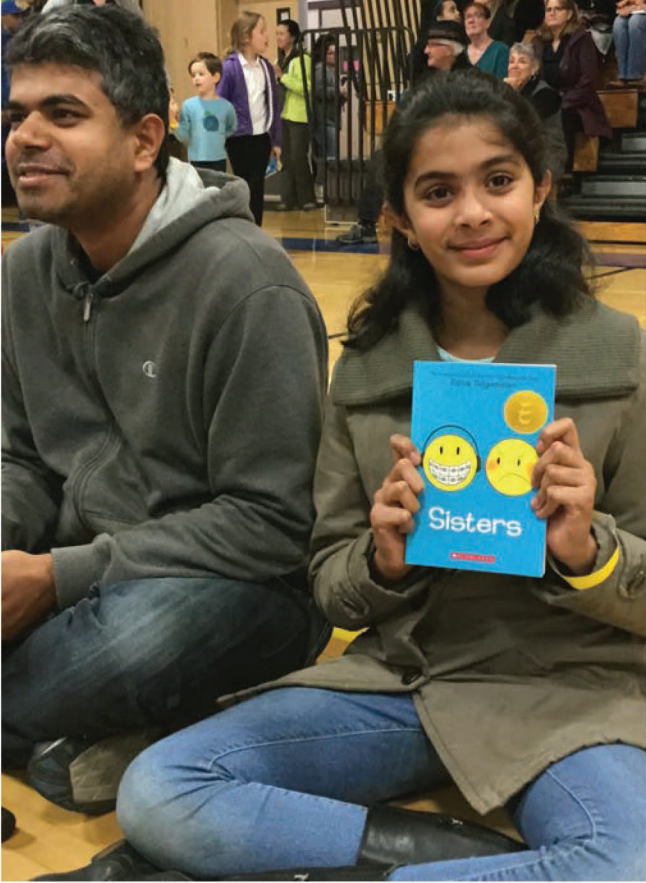
“Library summer programs have made a huge difference in our lives—there was nothing like this when I was young. We’re very grateful for the educational shows and the reading logs, and especially for being inclusive of all ages.

My husband was laid off last year and we appreciated the food—in a place where my kids felt great and it didn’t feel like it was a handout or embarrassment.”

Library Patron

We understand community needs and promote meaningful library services as solutions

We are empowering our community members to fully enjoy and contribute to our County's world-renowned culture of innovation through the expansion of our programs, collections and technology offerings. Highlights include the completion of a Makerspace Master Plan to meet the evolving maker needs of our entire community; the development of new, non-traditional collections to inspire learning by doing, making, and moving; and redoubled efforts to ensure that an ever greater portion of our community is part of the connected world through fast broadband, computer access, in-person assistance, classes and online resources.



Everyone is a Maker

Our Libraries are transforming into community workshops, laboratories, and studios where people come to activate their imaginations and build their capabilities as makers, inventors, artists and musicians. To provide the greatest opportunities for growth and exploration in these areas, we initiated a master planning process with support from Gyroscope, Inc.—a design studio that creates award-winning learning environments in museums and libraries. We surveyed 1,400 community members and convened four public meetings to develop a

comprehensive plan that includes dedicated and mobile makerspaces, flexible skills development and opportunities for all members of the community to be makers through collaboration, tools and the power of their imaginations.

Together, we arrived at the shared vision that “Everyone is a Maker.” We are excited to bring hackers, tinkerers, artists and crafters of all backgrounds to our Libraries to build on this incredible movement of learning by creating.

Our role in the Maker Movement:

“The Libraries can provide spaces to revitalize our skills and do something creative and fun—whether it’s furniture making or flower arranging.

Participating in the makerspace focus group really opened my eyes to what a makerspace is. It puts the emphasis on community service. Our makerspaces can be a social space and an opportunity for the community to work together. Change DIY to DIT, do it together.”

Mike O’Neill, Pacifica Mayor and San Mateo County Libraries Governing Board Member

“We know that electronic information and information technology are transforming our society and the library. San Mateo County Libraries are a leader in managing these areas.

Building makerspaces is really important to both give opportunities to our residents, especially students, and to bring additional tools and technology into the libraries.”

Rick DeGolia, Atherton Councilmember and San Mateo County Libraries Governing Board Member





100
ukuleles

70
water/energy
savings toolkits

750
WiFi hotspots

Innovative Collections

This year, we increased our innovative, non-traditional collections that reflect our community's dynamic interests and learning styles. Hiking backpacks—equipped with a compass, field guides, trail maps, and binoculars—facilitate outdoor, experiential learning. We complemented the backpacks with San Mateo County Park Ranger-led hikes that offered naturalist and historical content. Ukuleles at all of our libraries promote musicianship at every level and are provided along with classes and singalongs. In addition to the physical, emotional and cognitive benefits of hiking and music, these two collections promote shared learning and positive community experiences. We also partnered with San Mateo County's Office of Sustainability to offer water and energy saving toolkits, which help households save money while reducing our community's carbon footprint.



Bridging the Digital Divide

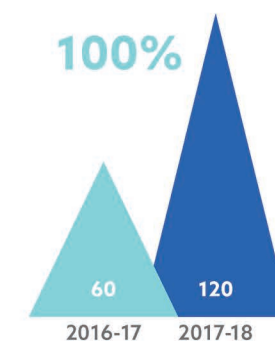
We are the leading provider of free bandwidth and technology to our communities—ensuring that all of our residents have access to the opportunities that are only available in a connected world.

Using national technology benchmarks for public libraries, San Mateo County Libraries have made significant, measurable gains in improving public technology services in the community. Our 2016 assessment showed robust growth and gains in the vast majority of assessment areas, with a 27% improvement in our overall score.

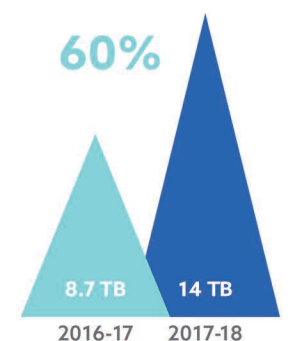
These gains are the result of new and continued services, such as public availability of maker equipment like 3D printers, robotics, music recording and Arduino boards; early literacy technologies; programs for kids and teens in video game creation and coding; online access to technology training videos, language computer



classes, test preparation courses and a high school diploma program; our innovative technology lending program which includes WiFi hotspots, laptops and tablets; and finally, our free bandwidth, which exceeds the highest benchmark set by the national assessment.



Devices in Laptop Vending Machines



Monthly Hotspot Data Usage

Story of Impact: Rising Together

When Veronica and her family fell on difficult financial times, they were not able to fix their computer when it broke. Our technology programs and services helped them manage this challenging time in their lives.

This is especially true for Veronica's two children in high school and college, who have homework that requires access to a computer and the internet. Through our laptop and hotspot lending program, as well as our public computers, both students were able to complete their homework, conduct research, participate in online classrooms, communicate by email and strengthen their computer skills. As a result, both students are succeeding academically and their parents couldn't be prouder.

We cultivate an active presence and create spaces that support discovery, enrich lives and uplift the community

Highlights from this year include the launch of the extraordinary Lookmobile, which, along with the Fog Tricycle, is redefining library services, our new Book Bike fleet that brings the Libraries to community spaces, and our partnerships with cities and towns to build and update library facilities and spaces.



"The Lookmobile is amazing—it is the start of wonderful new ways of learning. Our Libraries are with you as you explore all the wonders of life, with old tricks and new tools, like the Lookmobile, a fascinating, interactive museum on wheels, just waiting to be explored.

I am so proud of San Mateo County Libraries—they just get better and better and better every year. It gives me great hope for the future in these times which can be so trying, to know that the library is right here with us, opening doors for everyone in the community.

The future starts with knowledge, sharing and community. Come to your local library and experience the excitement."

Anne Kasten, Woodside Councilmember and San Mateo County Libraries Governing Board Chair



Pedal-Powered Libraries

Our six Book Bikes are fully-equipped mini-libraries with books, media, WiFi and even 3D printers and musical instruments. These outreach vehicles are met with delight as they travel to popular community spaces like parks, festivals and even health clinics. They reactivate people's interest in libraries and open the door to all the exciting, diverse programs and services we offer.

Lookmobile and Fog Tricycle

In December 2016, we launched the Lookmobile, our first interactive outdoor learning space, which, along with the Fog Tricycle, transforms outdoor public spaces and activates the imagination of visitors through hands-on learning experiences.

Designed in partnership with the Exploratorium, this mobile learning lab has redefined not only where, but how we serve our many communities. The Lookmobile offers a variety of activities that promote inquiry-based learning including: perspective drawing windows, a pinhole camera wall, a periscope

and maps of our region's physical, social, and cultural landscapes.

The Fog Tricycle reproduces our region's distinctive fogbelt on a portable scale. Visitors blow, push and swirl thick clouds of water vapor, replicating the fog formations that cling to the San Mateo County coastline.

The Lookmobile and Fog Tricycle have traveled to all of our communities and Big Lift Inspiring Summers sites and are helping reimagine libraries as providers of creative, cutting-edge learning experiences.

Major Construction Projects

In partnership with our member cities, we are transforming communities through new library spaces and facilities.

Each of these projects is the culmination of many years of hard work, collaboration, and a dedication to the vision of providing spaces that celebrate and support our communities.

Half Moon Bay Library

In 2016, we said goodbye to the old library that had served the community for 45 years and broke ground on the new 22,000-square foot Half Moon Bay Library.

When the new Library opens in late summer 2018, it will provide technology and flexibly designed spaces to fulfill a wide range of needs including: large children’s activity and reading areas, teen room, a dedicated makerspace, quiet reading room, indoor/outdoor gathering places, improved flow and access to unparalleled reading and learning materials, and spaces to provide arts, entertainment, and cultural programming as well as literacy services, job training, wellness workshops and expanded technology offerings. Designed with the Coastside’s long-term needs in mind, the project uses sustainable building practices, and includes solar panels to reduce the library’s carbon footprint.



Atherton Library and Brisbane Library

In 2018, we also look forward to breaking ground on the new 9,000-square foot Atherton Library as part of the Town’s Civic Center project and beginning construction on the new 7,000-square foot Brisbane Library.



San Mateo County Libraries

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|--|---|---|
| 1 Atherton
2 Dinkelspiel Station Lane
Atherton CA 94027 | 5 Foster City
1000 East Hillsdale Boulevard
Foster City CA 94404 | 9 Pacifica Sharp Park
104 Hilton Way
Pacifica CA 94044 |
| 2 Belmont
1110 Alameda de las Pulgas
Belmont CA 94002 | 6 Half Moon Bay
225 S. Cabrillo Highway #104B
Half Moon Bay CA 94019 | 10 Portola Valley
765 Portola Road
Portola Valley CA 94028 |
| 3 Brisbane
250 Visitacion Avenue
Brisbane CA 94005 | 7 Millbrae
1 Library Avenue
Millbrae CA 94030 | 11 San Carlos
610 Elm Street
San Carlos CA 94070 |
| 4 East Palo Alto
2415 University Avenue
East Palo Alto CA 94303 | 8 Pacifica Sanchez
1111 Terra Nova Boulevard
Pacifica CA 94044 | 12 Woodside
3140 Woodside Road
Woodside CA 94062 |

"We couldn't be more thrilled about the new Half Moon Bay Library, which will serve the entire Coastside from Montara to Pescadero and will finally meet the needs of our diverse community!"

Hope Atmore, President of the Friends of the Half Moon Bay Library



San Mateo
County
Libraries

Always open at smcl.org