



San Mateo
County
Libraries

Open for Exploration

2017-2018 Annual Report



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.

Director's Message

This year was full of proud moments and exceptional achievements that reflect the heart and connectedness of the communities we serve. Not only did we accelerate growth through exceptional programs and technological advancements, we also provided an inclusive sense of place for everyone to explore, create and learn by enhancing our library spaces and deepening community connections.

Opening the spectacular new Half Moon Bay Library was a significant milestone for the entire library community. For the first time in our system, we now have a dedicated makerspace. This vibrant space along with others in development will ensure that all our residents have access to the newest technology, helping to achieve our mission to bridge the digital divide.

With our new award-winning performance management system, we are creating a foundational shift in our organization by building positive relationships that translate into increased employee engagement and achievement. Receiving national attention for this innovative work is a wonderful validation of our commitment to creating a culture of learning and participation.

As you'll read in this report, we continue to shine in creating research and results-based opportunities for children and families. Our rigorously evaluated and high-quality summer camps served 1,200 youth, making significant progress in advancing literacy and academic performance in our most vulnerable communities.

Thanks to the support of our Library JPA Governing Board and Operations Committee, our incredible Friends of the Library groups and generous donors, and our phenomenal team of staff and volunteers, San Mateo County Libraries are able to disrupt traditional expectations, respond to community needs, and demonstrate how libraries are a critical portal to successful communities.

This report highlights some of the many outstanding accomplishments we have had this year. It brings me great joy to share with you our 2017-2018 Annual Report.



Anne-Marie Despain
Director of Library Services

Joint Powers Authority Governing Board

Atherton

Rick DeGolia

Belmont

Charles Stone

Brisbane

Karen Cunningham

East Palo Alto

Donna Rutherford

Foster City

Catherine Mahanpour

Half Moon Bay

Rick Kowalczyk

Millbrae

Reuben Holober

Pacifica

Mike O'Neill

Portola Valley

Maryann Derwin

San Carlos

Cameron Johnson

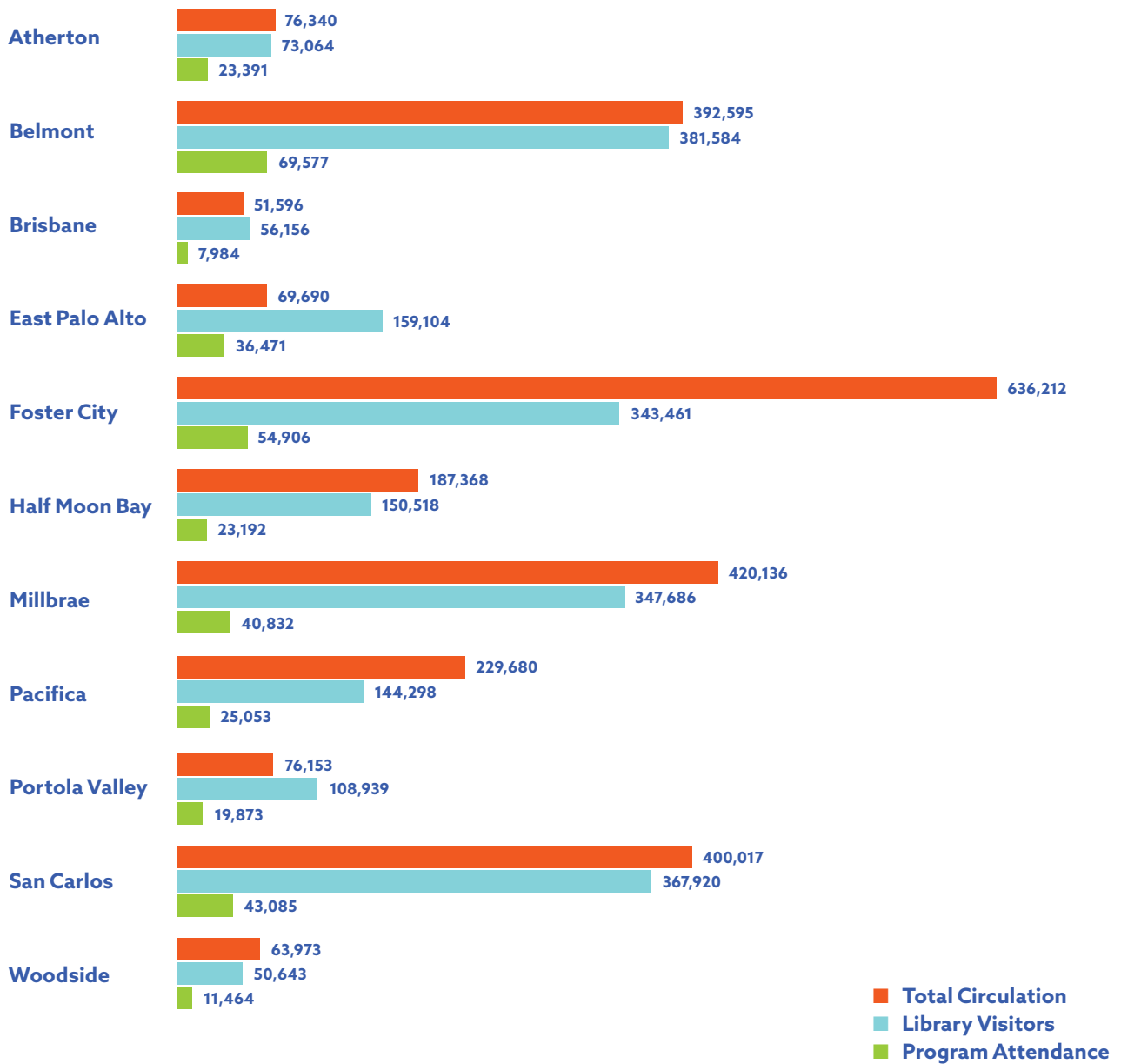
Woodside

Anne Kasten

San Mateo County

Carole Groom

Year In Numbers



3.4 M
Total Circulation




79%
Increase in Electronic Circulation

Library Programs By The Numbers

14,305

Library Programs

 **16%**
increase in programs
since last year

366,765

Library Program Attendance

 **11%**
increase in program
attendance since last year

“An elderly patron came to a virtual reality program and asked to view his hometown in China. As I helped him into the VR headset, he gasped in surprise and quickly began pointing out landmarks to his granddaughter. It wasn’t until he took off the headset that she and I realized he had been crying tears of joy. I’m proud to work for a library that provides technologies like this that not only bridge generations but make connections to personal histories.”

JC Escalante
Senior Technology Specialist



2.2 M
Library Visitors



3.8 M
eLibrary Visitors



Community

Award-Winning Approach To Accelerating Performance

In 2017, San Mateo County Libraries developed and led a County pilot program designed to improve employee performance. We made the most of replacing the outdated annual performance review with an evidence-based, future-focused approach rooted in regular check-ins and surveys. Using weekly surveys and check-ins enables managers and staff to increase and improve the feedback they get and give to each other, as well as supports library staff's growth and development. This significant organizational change has accelerated performance and earned us this year's Urban Libraries Council's Top Innovator Award.

The program has been successful, well-received, and data-rich with over 80% of library staff routinely participating in weekly surveys, 84% of supervisors holding weekly meetings with staff, and 93% of employees feeling valued at work. This new approach uses continuous feedback and open communication to build understanding, communicate expectations, and support the development of staff. Our new performance management system has produced remarkable changes in our culture, and we have seen a foundational shift in terms of the evidence on employee engagement and performance acceleration.

"Today's public libraries are bold and pioneering community leaders that play many roles, from educational institutions to technology centers and entrepreneurial hubs. I congratulate San Mateo County Libraries for illustrating a persistent commitment to realizing a groundbreaking initiative that has transformed their community."

Susan Benton
Urban Libraries Council
President and CEO

80%

of staff participate
in weekly surveys

90%

of customers satisfied

93%

of staff reported feeling
valued at work



Uplifting Communities Through Transformative Spaces

We strive to create beautiful state-of-the-art spaces for people to come together and collaborate with the goal of supporting discovery, enriching lives, and uplifting our communities. Our libraries are designed to be the heart of the community and a place for everyone to feel welcomed.

"It literally took my breath away. This is the most magnificent library in this County. Be very proud of it... This is not just a library though, make no mistake about it. This is the gem of the community."

Congresswoman Jackie Speier

New Half Moon Bay Library Opens Its Doors

After nearly 20 years of planning, perseverance, and collaboration, the new Half Moon Bay Library opened its doors to an eager community ready to explore the wealth of resources inside, encounter new experiences, and discover a destination to call home.

On August 18, hundreds gathered to see firsthand what the new Coastside Library has to offer. The official opening of the library commenced with five excited Summer Learning winners breaking through a banner across the open doors that read "Welcome! ¡Bienvenido!" The children were quickly followed by crowds of library enthusiasts from near and far.

Two years of construction gave way to 22,000 square feet of expanded services, collections, and shared community spaces that will better serve the Coastside community's needs. The new two-story building boasts an expansive children's room that opens to a children's garden, cozy reading areas that surround our expanded adult collection, a dedicated teen room with direct access to the new collaborative makerspace, study rooms, a tranquil quiet room, a large flexible community room, and an inviting outdoor patio. The new facility was designed to meet LEED Silver standards and is expected to be certified LEED Gold, as well as projected to be a net zero energy building.

Serving as a central hub for our Coastside communities, this project was made possible through our partnership with the City of Half Moon Bay and the County of San Mateo, with additional support and funding from the Friends of the Half Moon Bay Library and the community.





Exciting Changes For Our Communities

Brisbane

With design and construction plans finalized this past year, a community groundbreaking event was held in July 2018 for the new Brisbane Library. This new, 7,000 square foot sustainable facility will expand services and feature dedicated children and teen spaces, a beautiful native garden, and an impressive makerspace and community room that will support extended learning and collaboration. The new Brisbane Library is scheduled to open in the Fall of 2019.

Atherton

Construction of a new technology-rich Atherton Library is expected to begin in 2019. The project includes a 9,000 square foot new facility and renovation of the historic Town Hall. The library will feature engaging spaces for children, teens and adults to learn and create, including a digital lab, makerspace, study rooms and indoor-outdoor reading rooms.

Coming Soon

We continue to expand and revitalize all of our community spaces, ensuring they are inviting places for people to come together and celebrate shared experiences. Working in partnership with our member cities, much needed and exciting library projects are also in the planning stages in Pacifica and East Palo Alto.

Volunteers By The Numbers



777

Active Volunteers



38,597

Volunteer Hours



90%

of volunteers would
recommend volunteering

"I love to help others learn new things and it is a thrill to witness the sudden new comprehension. Once, I was teaching an adult the alphabet; she was looking at the letters on the table and said 'Oh, you can make all the words with those!'"

Carol Davies
Library Volunteer

Community Members Making An Impact

Our volunteers and Friends of the Library members are an inspiration to us all as they engage with our communities to extend our overall ability to ignite growth through transformative experiences. Whether they started last year or last decade, our volunteers create opportunities to build community and change lives by leading storytimes, facilitating conversation clubs, offering their expertise as tutors and technology coaches, raising funds for their local library, and supporting library services and programming.

During the past year, more than 700 passionate and dedicated volunteers provided 38,597 hours of valuable time. In Half Moon Bay and East Palo Alto, the adult literacy program had 64 active volunteers to support adult language learners. Over the years, many of our amazing volunteers have individually exceeded 500 hours of service with our community libraries. When we asked them to share their experience as a volunteer, 90% of our volunteers said they would recommend volunteering with the libraries.



A Welcoming Environment For Open Dialogue

In September 2017, we launched a year long, grant funded "Community Conversations" program bringing community members – of different walks of life and with differing views – to listen, learn, and discover common connections with one another in a safe space. Every month, we brought local experts together to reflect on community-identified topics and facilitated participatory discussions with the assistance of the Peninsula Conflict Resolution Center. Topics included conflict resolution, diversity, education, government, housing, immigration, local activism, sustainability, transportation, and women's rights.

Through these exchanges, we strengthened our community by providing a safe space for dialogue and a forum to understand the workings of local, state, and national governance. We offered a total of 55 interactive programs across all our community libraries, distributed over 800 U.S. Constitutions in English and Spanish, and enhanced the facilitation skills of 24 library staff for this program and future endeavors.

89%

of participants were more aware of issues in their community

87%

of participants were more aware of services provided by their library

Bridging Cultures And Strengthening Community

Our commitment to enriching our communities remained a priority this year. We hosted 14,305 free programs and events this year and attracted 366,765 attendees with opportunities to explore and grow.

We are proud to host programs rich in diversity that reflect and serve our communities. From docent-led lectures and exciting music and dance events to book clubs and folk craft workshops, we aim to provide inclusive and welcoming spaces that embrace the diversity of our patrons and nurture cultural literacy.

Our French Book Group, Nordic Noir Reading Circle, Día de los Muertos ofrenda projects, henna art, Maori dance, African Drumming, and Chinese Book Club are just a small example of the variety of programs we offer.



A lush green forest scene with a wooden bridge in the foreground. The background is filled with tall, thin trees and dense foliage. A large, semi-transparent green abstract shape is overlaid on the left side of the image. The word "Exploration" is written in white, bold, sans-serif font across the center of the image.

Exploration

Technology Impacting Lives

Our goal of bridging the digital divide has inspired us to improve and expand upon programs that offer our communities a firsthand experience utilizing high-tech equipment. Since launching our Makerspace Master Plan, we have expanded on the abundance of technology available to our communities. From 3D printers, to virtual reality, coding workshops, and DSLR camera kits, the options are endless for our users to create, innovate, and learn.

Retired patron Bob Tassan wanted to surprise his daughter with a unique, one-of-a-kind congratulatory gift for her new career path as an aeronautical engineer. For his special present, he decided to 3D print a spacecraft model that he had a personal connection with as a former

National Air and Space Museum volunteer who demonstrated how spacecrafts identify earth-like planets outside of our solar system. After searching for available private 3D printers, Bob soon discovered his idea of printing a 3D model of a NASA spacecraft was a larger undertaking because of the cost and skills required.

Eventually, Bob discovered that our libraries offer free 3D printing sessions with staff instruction, and it was there that he met Community Technology Specialist David Vargas. Over the course of many weeks, David developed Bob's 3D printing skills, helped him plan out his 3D model, and gave him the confidence that he needed to successfully fabricate the spacecraft for his daughter.



"Without the access and David's significant time and quality support, my gift would have been just another 'store bought' gift."

Bob Tassan
Library Patron

Your Library On The Move

We strive to cultivate an active presence and create spaces that support discovery, enrich lives and uplift everyone in our community. Our commitment to mobile services and outreach efforts enable us to redefine traditional expectations of library services, engage with patrons beyond our buildings, and deliver services, materials, and programs in new ways that promote equitable access. With a Bookmobile, a Lookmobile, four outreach vehicles and six book bikes, we have the flexibility to reach new people without being tied to a particular location and provide them with unexpected moments of exploration, discovery, and sense of community.

Our beloved Bookmobile and outreach staff deliver a rich collection of books, DVDs, magazines, programs and storytimes to people throughout the County, allowing us to address growing demand, serve rural residents, increase awareness, and maximize opportunities to engage with multiple communities.

The Lookmobile is a unique, interactive mobile learning lab conceived in partnership with the Exploratorium that is redefining how we perceive, interact with, and learn from our local San Mateo County environment and rich landscapes through hands-on exhibits. This year, the Lookmobile has traveled to 120 events and engaged almost 10,000 people.

We are able to hit the streets on our six book bikes, attracting new patrons and spreading the word about the many innovative resources and activities we offer. This fleet of fully-equipped mini libraries bring books, media, free WiFi, and even a portable 3D printer to parks, farmers markets, festivals, and health clinics with ease.





Bookmobile By The Numbers



341

Events



10,523

Miles Traveled



65,526

Patrons Reached



591

Stops



32,770

Items Borrowed



1,094

Hours of Service



"Riding bikes and reading books are my favorite summer pastimes, so it was a treat to see the library book bikes in action! I love the way it brings books and the joy of reading to families and showcases active, sustainable transportation. It looks like the staff enjoy using them, too—they always have big smiles on their faces as they maneuver the book bikes around the community!"

Ann Jasper

Program Director, Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition



Discovery 99 Years In The Making

On August 21, 2017, a total solar eclipse crossed the entire continental United States and the Bay Area was treated to a partial solar eclipse. San Mateo County Libraries offered our communities a once in a lifetime opportunity to enjoy this phenomenon, which hasn't happened in 99 years. Leading up to the event, our libraries gave out over 9,000 safety certified eclipse viewing glasses and led programs that allowed patrons to make their own pinhole cameras for viewing the eclipse.

A remarkable 2,000 people joined our fun viewing parties which included live streaming and eclipse-themed activities and crafts. After the eclipse, we participated in Astronomers Without Borders' donation program to support sustainability efforts and provide access to this transformative experience for others. Eclipse glasses were sent to schools and other institutions in South America and Asia, where they are needed but are not available, for re-use when eclipses cross those continents in 2019.

"The San Carlos Library was an especially brilliant location to view the solar eclipse. The perforated dome over the rotunda created the effect of hundreds of pinhole cameras that projected the eclipse's shape onto the walls and our patrons."

Ally Garcia
Branch Manager





Painting by
Smitha Soman

"The likeness he created exudes warmth and really captures the library as the literal and figurative light in the darkness."

Theresa Saito
Librarian

Uncovering Hidden Talents

Our ever-growing selection of maker programs grows a culture of learning and participation, and encourages exploration at every stage of life. Programs like our "Paint Like..." series are empowering our community members to discover new artistic talents and find inspiration for their creative works, including the beautiful architecture of the library spaces around them.

Growing up in Japan, Masa was criticized harshly as a child for the way he held a brush, discouraging him from painting altogether. Even though he drove his wife and mother-in-law to "Paint Like..." programs at our libraries, Masa would only sit to the side until the event ended. One night, library staff encouraged him to join in on the fun. Hesitantly, he participated and completed his first art project, drawing inspiration from a familiar place – the library. Now, with a new sense of accomplishment and an awakened creative spark, Masa continues to paint and excels in style and technique.



The background image shows a coastal scene with a lighthouse and several buildings situated on a rocky cliff overlooking the ocean. The scene is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter and large, abstract geometric shapes in a lighter shade of blue. The word "Opportunity" is written in a large, white, sans-serif font across the center of the image.

Opportunity

Steps To Success

Libraries are ideal places for adults to expand their knowledge and grow their career. Our innovative online high school program enables County residents who are 19 years old and up to earn an accredited high school diploma while gaining real-world career skills. The program has three graduates and seven more students slated to graduate by the end of the year.

"I'm inspired by the dedicated adults balancing work and family commitments while pursuing a high school diploma," shared Anne-Marie Despain, Director of Library Services. "San Mateo County Libraries are proud to support these hardworking individuals and invest in the positive impact high school graduation has on future employment and earnings potential."

In November, we celebrated the accomplishments of Heather Robbins, our first online high school graduate. In early 2017, Heather discovered our program while searching for educational opportunities online. Heather learned she could earn an accredited high school diploma through our online adult learning program and obtain a certificate in a high-growth career track. It took Heather exactly nine months to complete the program - from the moment she first inquired to the day she officially obtained her Accredited Diploma and Career Certificate in Homeland Security.

Heather's plans for the future include studying criminal justice through an online bachelor's program, and eventually obtaining a career in government cyber security.



"I am so thankful for the opportunity to complete my high school education! I accomplished my goal by dedication and hard work."

Heather Robbins
First Online High School Graduate

Summer Fun And Learning

We checked off another year of fun, engaging programs and learning experiences aimed at preventing summer learning loss for youth and adults with our Summer Learning Challenge. Entering the Summer Learning Challenge was even easier this year with the launch of a new digital platform. Using the new online resource, participants earned badges by reading and completing activities, and even received recommended reading lists tailored to their reading level and pleasure.

San Mateo County Libraries provided over 51,000 free books to children who signed up for the program, from baby board books and young adult novels to Spanish and Chinese bilingual selections. Continued County Measure K funds supported the hiring of 55 student interns, free giveaway books, and nineteen \$1,000 college scholarship prizes for program finishers.

This year's Summer Learning Challenge also included our first ever Instagram giveaway contest. Participants showcased their enthusiasm for the challenge by commenting or sharing photos and videos that demonstrated their excitement for signing up, their creativeness in captioning photos from programs, and their favorite summer experiences. Since the start of the contest, we have increased personal engagement with patrons and online followers, and ignited relationships filled with enthusiasm for our programs and services.

Summer Learning By The Numbers

49,925

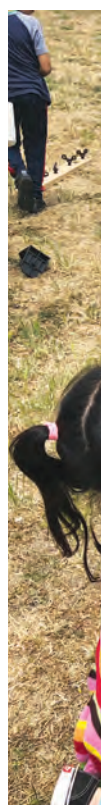
Summer Learners

69%

of youth population reached



Instagram submission
by @j_bird_lucas





Big Lift Inspiring Summers

Our summer learning camps, Big Lift Inspiring Summers, are a partnership between San Mateo County Libraries, seven school districts, and the national nonprofit BELL (Building Educated Leaders for Life), and currently serve children entering kindergarten through second grade. During the morning program, credentialed teachers from the school districts lead an academic literacy program following the BELL program model. San Mateo County Libraries lead the afternoon program with 131 college interns using curricula that incorporate yoga and mindfulness, active engagement, literacy, and STEAM learning.

In summer 2017, we engaged an external evaluator to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of our Big Lift Inspiring Summers program. Findings showed that our programs are of high quality. Overall the evaluation found that the program is strong, and will benefit from ongoing efforts to maintain and improve it. In summer 2018, parent feedback was also overwhelmingly positive. Nearly all parents reported that their child enjoyed the program (93%), felt safe and comfortable (98%), and would recommend Big Lift Inspiring Summers to other families (99%).

Through the generous support of County Measure K funds, this year's Big Lift Inspiring Summers served 1,200 children at nine school sites throughout the County who are now ready to succeed during this new school year.



"I am proud that the Library is a partner of The Big Lift and excited that their remarkable work and impressive results have been recognized nationally with a Bright Spot Award from the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading."

Supervisor Carole Groom
San Mateo County Libraries Governing
Board Member

Increasing Access

San Mateo County Libraries recognize that library fines can be a significant barrier to library access, particularly among individuals with low or fixed incomes or those who have limited transportation options. By removing this barrier, we hope to improve access to our collections and services as well as increase social connectedness, patron satisfaction and convenience.

 **50%**
increase in youth
circulation since launch

 **8%**
increase in senior
circulation since launch

Uplifting News For Seniors

We kicked off the new year with exciting news for our senior patrons. In January, we launched our Fine-Free Senior Library Card program to make our libraries more accessible for individuals 62 years old and up. Much like our Youth Fine-Free Cards, which launched in July of 2016, this program has become widely popular amongst our community, and has even surprised a few unknowing seniors who are grateful for one less financial burden.



"I helped a gentleman today who came in to pay his fines, and I told him that we didn't have his birthday in the system. I was delighted to tell him that he didn't have to pay his fines. It is just nice to make someone's day when they least expect it!"

Andrea Lumanlan
Circulation Supervisor

Offering Seamless Services



Library users can now enjoy library materials a little longer with our new automatic renewals pilot program. This innovative service helps patrons save time and avoid late fees. When library items are close to their due date, patrons receive an email letting them know that their items have been automatically renewed. San Mateo County Libraries strive to enrich patrons' experiences and make our libraries welcoming and accommodating; we believe that the automatic renewal pilot supports these goals.

"I'm a stay-at-home mom with two kids, and sometimes the busyness of life gets in the way, and we start to accumulate fees for our checked-out books. My kids are excited to go to the library and have new books to read, but the fees from forgetting to renew make it a challenge financially. Thank you for helping a mother out!"

Library Patron



San Mateo County Libraries

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



San Mateo
County
Libraries

Always open at smcl.org

