San Mateo County Libraries

Agenda Item VIII.

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To: JPA Governing Board
From: Anne-Marie Despain, Director of Library Services
Date: November 10, 2021
Meeting: November 15, 2021
Re: Director's Report

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This report summarizes significant library operations and program activities that have occurred since the last meeting of the Governing Board. Services and activities are aligned with our Strategic Plan Goals.

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

Welcoming Week

At the beginning of September, we partnered with the San Mateo County's Office of Community Affairs, Immigrant Services to hold Welcoming Week storytimes as part of the Welcoming America, Welcoming County efforts. Welcoming Week brings together people across lines of difference toward greater prosperity for all by fostering mutual respect and cooperation between new and long-time residents. Welcoming Week Storytimes were held at the Half Moon Bay Library and North Fair Oaks' Friendship Park where we shared stories about belonging and inclusion, and read books that highlighted the immigrant experience, what it feels like to be included, and that home is where you make it. Both events launched our first in-person storytimes with families and were a wonderful way to get the community excited about the library and the return of in-person storytimes. In September and October, 381 people attended our outdoor storytimes.

Flu Crew

The Stanford Flu Crew partnered with County Health and provided 185 flu vaccines at the Half Moon Bay Library on October 3. The line for vaccines included soccer players dropping by after their game, families on their way to the local food distribution, people walking by on their way to the beach and library patrons with bags full of books. 248 individuals were vaccinated at the Flu Crew event at the Belmont Library on October 9—200 more than last year! Thanks to our partners for providing our communities with this valuable service.

Voter Outreach

On September 28 we commemorated National Voter Registration Day with outdoor, in-person outreach with our partner, San Francisco Peninsula People Power (SFPPP). Volunteers tabled at five libraries: East Palo Alto, Foster City, Half Moon Bay, North Fair Oaks, and San Carlos and contacted 75 potential new voters.

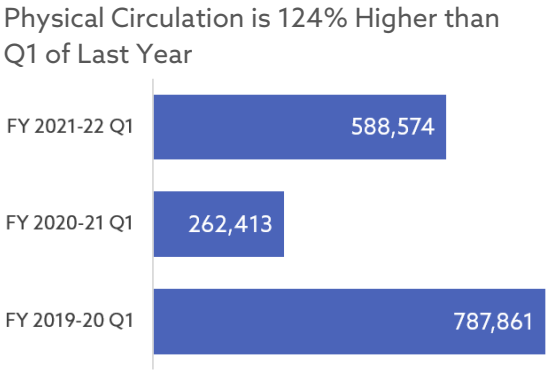
Elections

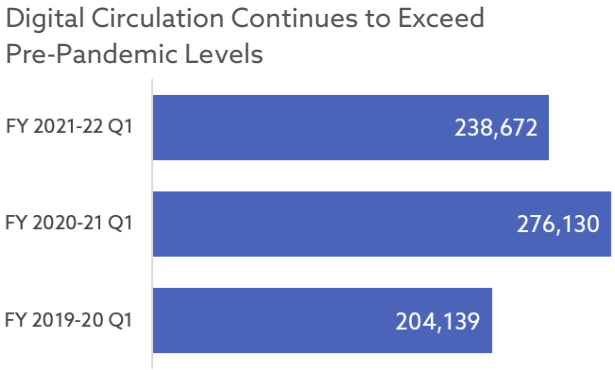
To increase voter access to the September 14 special election we worked closely with the County Elections Division and hosted ballot collection boxes at Brisbane, Half Moon Bay, North Fair Oaks, and Woodside libraries. The collection box at the Woodside Library remained to support their special election on November 2.

Growth in Circulation

Since reopening to the public in April, San Mateo County Libraries' overall checkouts have grown significantly. Physical circulation in the first quarter of this fiscal year is 124% higher than last fiscal year and is gaining ground toward pre-pandemic levels.

Branch checkouts increased by an average of 4.26% monthly from April 2021 to September 2021. The number of checkouts is likely to further rise when the libraries return to normal hours. In the first quarter of this year, our most popular children's item was Peppa Pig Phonics Kit, with 268 checkouts in the first quarter of this fiscal year.




Patron Survey Update

Working with EMC Research, additional patron surveys were sent out in September/October. Based on initial responses, the survey period has been extended and additional formats and outreach is being utilized to increase responses from our unincorporated areas including North Fair Oaks. The new survey data will be available and presented to the Strategic Plan Subcommittee, Operations Committee and Governing Board in early 2022.

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

English Conversation

We are pleased to be in the beginning stages of bringing back in-person English conversation to most branches. On October 5, the first English conversation club moved from meeting virtually to meeting in-person and outdoors at the Millbrae Library. A staggered roll-out of further in-person conversation groups will happen throughout the fall and winter.

Equity Through Art

Looking back at the history of San Mateo County from the lens of communities of color facing the inequities today is not just important, but necessary to chart a path towards equity. Our Equity Through Art Series in partnership with the County Equity Officer held two events in October.

On October 7, community participants learned about the experiences of Japanese Americans who were interned in the camp via immersive interviews and archival footage from the documentary *Tanforan: From Race Track to Assembly Center*. Our post-movie discussion was moderated by Steve Hom in discussion with Steve Okamoto, former internee, and Foster City Council Member.

On October 12, San Mateo County Libraries welcomed Cathy Quon, a San Francisco born Chinese American mixed media artist to discuss her collage and assemblage artwork entitled "Silent No More: A history of anti-Asian discrimination," that was displayed at the Foster City Library during the month of October.

Career Online High School

Last month, four of our Career Online High School students who began the program shortly after the March 2020 shutdown graduated with their high school diplomas. All of these adult students applied for the program during that time of uncertainty with the aim of bettering their lives. We are so proud that they have persevered through the 18-month program despite the challenges brought on by the pandemic and that they can now begin a new chapter. Our recent graduates have plans to use their diplomas to apply for jobs or further their education in college. One graduate said, “this program helped me a lot to prove to myself that I can do anything that I want to accomplish.”

Summer Movie Series Partnership

We joined CuriOdyssey, Coyote Point Recreation Area, and San Mateo County Parks for their monthly Summer Movie Series at Coyote where we delighted families with the Imagination Playground creative play and provided books for youth to enjoy prior to the start of each film. Over 100 families have regularly visited the Library area and have expressed much appreciation for our giveaway books and the library system returning to the community after COVID-19. The final film, “Cruella”, was featured on Saturday, October 30.

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

Brisbane Library Grand Celebration

The new Brisbane Library Grand Celebration was a great success! We partnered with the City of Brisbane and the County to invite community members for a special all-day event on October 23 to officially mark the new library's opening, complete with a popular photobooth to document it all.

Distinguished ceremony speakers County Board of Supervisors President David Canepa, Brisbane Mayor Karen Cunningham and City Manager Clay Holstine helped kick off the day of activities, while a string quartet and a staff led ukulele performance continued the fun by filling the new space with joyful music.

Patrons checked out the Makerspace to try out 3D printing, Glowforge laser cutting, virtual reality, sewing and more. Little ones, teens and adults all enjoyed storytime, arts and crafts as well as a special architect led tour of the impressive new spaces. When library opening activities wrapped up in late afternoon, the festivities transitioned seamlessly into a celebration of the City of Brisbane's 60th anniversary, further showcasing the new library's offerings and its ability to host a variety of community events.

New Atherton Library Project

In addition to the challenge of combatting the Covid-19 pandemic, there have been world-wide shortages in goods large and small, labor disruptions, and obstructions in shipping. Unfortunately, construction has been impacted and slowed by these consequences—yet work continues on the interior walls, flooring, and mechanical/electrical systems for the new library. The contractor continues efforts on the beautiful decking/front porch that will connect the Library with the restored Historic Town Hall.

The Temporary Library will need to close on Saturday, December 4 and we anticipate coordinating the furniture and equipment installation and collection move into the new library in early 2022. Additionally, based on feedback from a survey that was recently sent to Atherton cardholders, we have started planning for the new makerspace, maker yard and digital lab. Very exciting!
Project webcam: https://www.ci.atherton.ca.us/519/Project-Webcams

North Fair Oaks Library

It has now been six months since North Fair Oaks, our newest community joined San Mateo County Libraries. New staff has been hired and the team has been working hard to get to know the community better and communicate all the wonderful services we offer.
New services such as Library Explorer's camp, after school meals, on demand tech help, Spanish literacy, ESL Conversation clubs, Take and Make kits and STEAM activities have all been launched. We are working with our County and City site partners, Human Services Agency, and the Fair Oaks Community Center to coordinate services at this busy location.
In March, the Board of Supervisors approved $500,000 in Measure K funds to support a library building refresh. In October planning kicked off with County staff and architects from Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM) to start imagining future facility improvements. Finally, we have extended our survey work with EMC Research to ensure we get a robust response from North Fair Oaks residents to learn what programs, services and hours are important to them.

Library Personnel News

We are excited to share the following personnel announcements:

Carmen Letona-Adams has accepted a promotion to the position of Branch Manager at the North Fair Oaks Library and is starting her new role this week. Carmen joined SMCL as a Youth Services Librarian in 2016 for San Carlos Library, and in February 2020 was promoted as Senior Librarian for the Half Moon Bay Library. Most recently, Carmen served as the Senior Librarian for the North Fair Oaks Library. When SMCL transferred operational oversight in March 2021, Carmen was excited for the opportunity to bring impactful services and programming to a community she grew up in. Carmen brings with her a diverse skillset, including but not limited to inclusive program planning, community outreach experience,

and a passion for mentoring future library professionals. Carmen holds a MLIS from San Jose State University, a master's in English from Notre Dame de Namur University, and a bachelor's in English from UC Berkeley. Carmen is bilingual in Spanish.

Stephanie Saba has accepted a promotion to the position of Branch Manager at our Pacifica libraries and will transition to her new role over the next few months. Stephanie has been with SMCL for over 17 years, working at nine of our thirteen branches as a Library Aide, Library Assistant, Community Services Librarian, Senior Librarian, and most recently as a Community Program Supervisor. As a library assistant at the Pacifica Libraries, Stephanie started a 20-30 Something Book Club and her love of books has continued. In 2019, she co-authored *Book Club Reboot: 71 Creative Twists* with Sarah Ostman for ALA Editions and was excited to see the book in our catalog! For the last six years she's has played an integral role in the operations of Big Lift Inspiring Summers, including hiring 130-180 interns every year. Stephanie received her MLIS from San Jose State University and her bachelor's in English Literature from San Francisco State University.

Ramses Escobedo has accepted the position of Branch Manager at East Palo Alto and will join us mid-November. Ramses comes to us from San Francisco Public Library where he most recently served as Branch Manager for the Excelsior Branch. Ramses has held many different roles in the library including library page, clerk, librarian (including here at SMCL) and he has also acted as the South West District Manager providing oversight to the Ingleside, Ocean View, Parkside, and West Portal branch libraries. During the pandemic, Ramses assisted with San Francisco's contact tracing efforts in the Spanish speaking communities as a Case Investigation Team Lead. He brings with him skills in project management and budget. Ramses holds an MLIS from San Jose State University and a bachelor's degree in Psychology and Spanish from San Jose State University. Ramses is bilingual in Spanish.

Jess Koshi-Lum has accepted the position of Branch Manager at the San Carlos Library and will join us mid-December. Jess comes to us from Renton Technical College where she most recently served as Associate Dean of the Library as an administrator overseeing adult services in the library. Jess's experience includes serving as an Instruction Librarian where she provided instructional support for faculty, students, and staff in Allied Health, English Language Acquisitions, High School Equivalency and General Education. Jess has a passion for equity and inclusion and has served on the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Learning Councils. She has also participated in collection development by helping to ensure that diverse student populations are represented in the library's collection. Jess holds an MLIS from the University of Hawaii at Manoa and a bachelor's degree in English/Japanese Language and Literature from the University of Hawaii at Manoa. She is bilingual in Japanese.

Liz Garcia has accepted a Librarian position at the Half Moon Bay Library. As a former Graduate Assistant Archives Specialist at the University of Arizona Special Collections, Liz processed archival collections related to politics, diverse communities, and environmental history and created and maintained electronic access/finding aids and metadata. Most recently, Liz was the Archival Description Intern at Cline Library Special Collections and Archives where she assisted the library in editing and updating their archival finding aids to better adhere to the Protocols for Native American Archival Materials. Liz earned a bachelor's in Psychology and History, MLIS and a graduate certificate in Archival Studies from the University of Arizona. Liz is bilingual in Spanish.

Beatriz Sanchez has accepted a Librarian position at the North Fair Oaks Library. Beatriz has previously worked at various library branches throughout San Jose and has experience implementing programs that offer safe spaces for young children and families to learn and play together, as well as programs for adults such as a Citizenship study group for Spanish speakers, a bilingual computer class, an ESL class, and Resume and Job Search help. Beatriz has a bachelor's in Child and Adolescent Development and a MLIS from San Jose State University. Beatriz is bilingual in Spanish.

Welcome, best wishes, and congratulations to all of these Library Champions!

Labor Negotiations

The County is in the process of negotiating a new labor contract with SEIU, the union that represents San Mateo County Libraries' non-management employees. The current contract expired on October 4, 2021. Negotiation meetings are currently taking place two to four times a week to work towards an agreement. It is anticipated an agreement may go to the County Board of Supervisors in December for approval.

Library Holidays and Closures

Since 2003, the Library has incorporated several additional days into the regular holiday closure schedule based on the calendar year and usage patterns. All library closures are posted for public notice well in advance of a scheduled closure. In 2005, the Governing Board determined a permanent continuation of this practice was prudent and should be communicated through the Director's Report. Based on current County holidays and operational hours, 2022 holiday and closure dates include:

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| Saturday, January 1 | New Year's Day Holiday |
| Sunday, January 2 | Library Closure |
| Sunday, January 16 | Library Closure |
| Monday, January 17 | Martin Luther King, Jr., Holiday |
| Sunday, February 20 | Library Closure |
| Monday, February 21 | Presidents' Day Holiday |
| Sunday, April 17 | Easter Holiday |
| Sunday, May 29 | Library Closure |
| Monday, May 30 | Memorial Day Holiday |
| Sunday, July 3 | Library Closure |
| Monday, July 4 | Independence Day Holiday |
| Sunday, September 4 | Library Closure |
| Monday, September 5 | Labor Day Holiday |
| Sunday, October 9 | Library Closure |
| Monday, October 10 | Indigenous Peoples' Day Holiday |
| Friday, November 11 | Veterans Day Holiday |
| Thursday, November 24 | Thanksgiving Day Holiday |
| Friday, November 25 | Day after Thanksgiving Holiday |
| Saturday, December 24 | Library Closure |
| Sunday, December 25 | Christmas Day Holiday |
| Monday, December 26 | Christmas Day Holiday (observed) |
| Saturday, December 31 | Library Closure |