San Mateo County Libraries

Agenda Item VI.

To: JPA Governing Board

From: Anne-Marie Despain, Director of Library Services

Date: May 10, 2022

Meeting: May 16, 2022

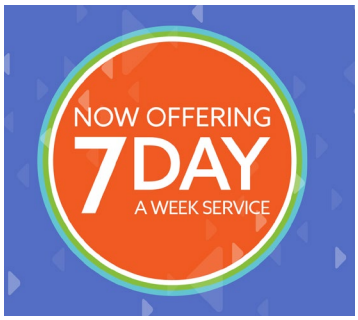
Re: Director's Report

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.

Expanded Library Hours

On Sunday, March 6, 2022, we were thrilled to expand library operating hours, adding additional evenings and Sundays. Hours at most locations are now Monday–Thursday 10:00am to 8:00pm and Friday–Sunday 10:00am to 5:00pm. This new schedule increases service hours beyond what was offered pre-pandemic and increases inclusive and equitable access to library services across the county.



The consistent system-wide hours have been clear and easy to promote to the public and direct feedback from patrons is proving to be universally positive. One family visiting a branch newly open on Sundays, told us "It's great that the library is open Sundays. So many of us are out and about going downtown on Sundays to eat and go to church. It's awesome that the library is part of that too." A student praised the new evening hours, saying "I got really excited when I heard the news! I'll be coming here to study at night." The Foundation also received a donation in honor of library staff, "To celebrate SMCL going back to being open seven days a week with extended hours."

Article at: San Mateo County Libraries To Expand To Seven Day A Week Schedule | San Mateo, CA Patch

Mobile App

Our new and improved mobile app will launch on May 9. The most exciting update is that users will be free to check out materials directly from their mobile devices. No more waiting in line at the desk or at the self-checkout machines. Instead, we will be able to offer the convenience and privacy of instantly checking items out from wherever people are. The new app will also allow people to manage their library accounts, scan ISBN barcodes on the back of books to check for titles, discover new events to attend, and continue to use the valued features our previous app offered.

COVID Test and Mask Distribution

We are grateful to have partnered with the County during a critical time of need to distribute rapid COVID tests and KN95 masks to our communities. Staff ingenuity and nimble thinking allowed us to swiftly mobilize and implement a systemwide distribution system within a day. Together, we successfully provided over 25,000 test kits and 10,000 packs of masks to our communities from February 12 through April 5. Some of the positive feedback we received:

- "Thank you! I have twins in school, and we need to take the weekly testing because I have a serious medical condition and I cannot be vaccinated. Sometimes we can't make it to the school testing times, so these tests will really be helpful for us."
- "This is great! My mother is in a care facility, and I cannot visit her without a negative test result more than 24 hours old. Sometimes when I get tested, I do not get the test results back in time, so these tests will really help me visit my mom."
- "Buying masks and rapid tests can be so expensive, so I am glad I am able to get them for free at my library. It was so hard to find rapid tests in the stores, so we are grateful to have them just in case when need them. Thank you!"

Library Bikes

Book-a-Bike service will now be available at all San Mateo County Libraries in May. Book-a-Bike allows patrons 18 and older to check out a bike for a week, for free, complete with a helmet, bike lock and first aid kit. Book-a-Bike began as a Pitch-It project and launched January 2020. The vision was to provide community members with an equitable, easy way to bike around their neighborhood for fun, convenience, exercise, or all of the above. Following a successful expansion this fall and receiving positive feedback from grateful library users, we'll now complete our fleet with bikes to borrow at every location.

State Park Passes

We were thrilled to begin offering free California State Parks passes for checkout beginning in April. The California State Library Parks Pass program is a partnership between California State Parks and the California State Library. This program will make it easier for all Californians to visit over 200 State Parks, lakes, beaches, and monuments and enjoy the benefits of outside exploration. Patrons will simply check out our Explore Our Parks Pack, a ready-to-use hiking backpack with the vehicle-day use hangtag pass, binoculars, magnifying glass, and hiking trails book all tucked inside! More passes and new backpacks are on the way, and soon every library will get a few Explore Our Parks Packs.

Voting at Libraries

We are continuing our partnership with County Elections to support voter access and participation in the electoral process by hosting Vote by Mail Ballot Drop Boxes in five planned community library locations: Brisbane, Half Moon Bay, North Fair Oaks, Pacifica Sanchez, and Woodside. In addition to the ballot drop off option, North Fair Oaks will also host a 4-Day Vote Center for in-person voting June 4-7.

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

Community Learning

As we transition to more in-person services, English Language Literacy efforts are expanding with English conversation clubs now offered at six of our locations. The Millbrae in-person group just increased by 50%. English Conversation clubs are one of our most popular volunteer activities and we are onboarding more volunteers to lead these rewarding programs with our many community members eager to practice and strengthen their English conversation skills.

Virtual English language development programs are also still in high demand. Online ESL Conversation Club and ESL Book Club are well-attended with approximately 20 participants per session. These virtual spaces are often the only places our patrons can access to practice their English conversation skills, as participants are not mobile, lack driver's licenses, or must stay home for other reasons. Virtual access provides significant equity dividends for many of our patrons.

We also strive to support communities beyond English Language Learning bias by providing relevant education in non-English languages. LEAMOS is a program that helps native Spanish-speaking patrons develop their reading and writing skills in Spanish with a supportive group. Demand for this program is increasing at our North Fair Oaks Library and we are expanding it due to its popularity.

Our Career Online High School program is also drawing more participation. In this program, adult students earn a fully accredited high school diploma—not a GED— and a career certificate in one of ten high-growth, high-demand fields. We are currently supporting eight active participants in pursuing their educational goals and are looking to enroll more qualified residents in this life-changing program.

Summer Learning Programs

Summer 2022 will be a joyful season of robust opportunities for all youth to thrive.
The Big Lift Inspiring Summers, our Measure K funded and research-based summer camp program at six school districts, is designed to accelerate reading skills and gains towards reading on (or above) grade level. This year, our goal is to serve up to 1,215 rising K-rising 3rd graders, which is a 24% increase in youth served from last year. The most significant growth in the program is projected for coastside youth attending Cabrillo Unified and La Honda-Pescadero Unified school districts.

We will be launching a new summer camp partnership with the Boys and Girls Club in East Palo Alto and North Fair Oaks to support a projected 1,190 K-8th graders attending the free program at five public school sites. Staff will be activating several days of the camp with enriching projects and experiences, take-home kits, and books. Our participation in the return of Family Engagement nights will be a highlight in building strong community and library connections. The opportunity to leverage library strengths to enhance these summer camps for youth attending under-resourced schools with low reading scores in the county is exciting.

This summer, we are delighted to introduce a grant-funded Urban Library Council (ULC) initiative, Amplify Summer Learning, to intentionally create engaging learning opportunities for middle school youth historically excluded from STEM opportunities. Each community location will be working to engage under-represented and under-resourced youth to reinforce the library as a place in the community for equity and inclusion.

Finally, Library Explorers marks a powerful return to an integrated library presence in our communities and a full schedule of activities in our spaces. Schools are now allowing library staff to visit for the first time since the pandemic began so we are visiting classrooms, distributing engaging summertime reads, and connecting youth with their libraries.

We will be offering hundreds of programs, hands-on interactive experiences, self-directed activities, and Take and Make kits. Everyone is eager to wow our returning library users and introduce a new generation of community members to the magic of summer with San Mateo County Libraries.

Raising-A-Reader

Through the implementation of the Raising-A-Reader research-based model, staff are continuing to work hard to support parents and caregivers in the most important activity to ensure lifetime success – sharing books together every day.

This program allows us to serve children and families at 70 Big Lift and subsidized preschool locations throughout the county. We are grateful for this partnership to deliver the best early literacy experience possible for families.

Janelle Brown Author event

On Sunday May 1, we hosted bestselling author, Janelle Brown at the Woodside Library. Janelle read from her new book, I'll Be You, answered questions from the audience and signed books for those in attendance. Co-hosted by the Friends of the Woodside Library and the Foundation, it was a wonderful way to kick-off our first in-person adult program and spend the afternoon in the company of others.

Check out a recording of the livestream here: https://fb.watch/cK-7_8CdyF/

National Library Week

This year for National Library Week and Library Workers Day we wanted to show staff our appreciation and gratitude for all of the wonderful work they do to support communities and each other by highlighting the importance of wellness. During challenging times, rest, recovery and being healthy in both mind and body is paramount – so we encouraged staff to take a break and enjoy a healthy snack. With generous support from the Foundation, a monthly subscription from Farm Fresh to You will be sent to each location staring the first week of April to help nourish the body and feed the soul through organic fruits and coffee.

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

County Fair

Our partnership with the County Fair returns June 4 through June 12. We are delighted to be part of the festivities which include days dedicated to Pride, farmworkers, Pacific Islanders, and more. We will be activating the space with our bookmobile and offering up an assortment of fun library activities for all attendees. Fair staff are projecting record crowds and we are excited to meet people over the 7 days to engage them in all the wonders our libraries have to offer.

Brisbane Library Awarded 2022 AIASF Design Award

We are thrilled to share that the Brisbane Library won the AIASF People's Choice Award for projects under $10 million! The 2022 AIASF Design Awards program honors 20 projects in the categories of architecture, interior architecture, unbuilt design, and people's choice with commendations in the areas of historic preservation, social responsibility, urban design, and environmental campus design. Thanks to Siegel and Strain Architects and Karin Payson architecture + design for their phenomenal design and to Cesar Rubio for the stunning photographs.

Atherton Library Grand Opening

We have a date for the Atherton Library Grand Opening! Mark your calendars and join us to celebrate this amazing new library on Saturday, June 4 from noon to 5 p.m. After three years of construction, the elegant 9,600 square foot library is ready to dazzle residents. WRNS Studio designed the building working closely with a Civic Center Advisory Committee and other stakeholders and the Friends of the Atherton Library and library staff selected the interior furniture. The library will feature a quiet room, dedicated spaces for children and teens, a makerspace and digital lab as well as a program room in the Historic Town Hall, which will be used for story times, performances, workshops, cooking demonstrations, author events and other activities. Decks at the front and back of the building will offer pleasant community gathering spaces and local French patisserie Mademoiselle Colette will run the soon to be open café this fall.

New SEIU MOU

The County recently negotiated a three-year agreement with SEIU for permanent staff, which will be in place until October 5, 2024. The new agreement provides an immediate 3% pay increase that went into effect on April 17,2022. Staff will also receive two cost of living adjustments including 3% effective October 2, 2022, and 4% effective October 1, 2023. Other highlights include: a one-time lump sum payment of $2,000 for full-time employees; an additional paid holiday on June 19 in celebration of Juneteenth; and three days of Winter Recess paid holidays in December 2022 and December 2023. The County is still in the process of negotiating an agreement for SEIU Extra Help and limited term employees.

Updated Holidays and Closures

We are updating our holidays and closures calendar to include the Juneteenth holiday and Staff Development Day. As part of the recent labor agreement between San Mateo County and SEIU, Juneteenth on June 19 is a new observed holiday. In addition, after more than two years off due to the pandemic, the library will be closed on Thursday, August 25 to hold Staff Development Day. Staff are looking forward to reconnecting with each other while learning new skills that will help improve service to our communities. All library closures are posted for public notice well in advance of a scheduled closure. Remaining 2022 Library holiday and closure dates include:

Sunday, May 29	Library Closure
Monday, May 30	Memorial Day Holiday
Sunday, June 19	Juneteenth Holiday
Monday, June 20	Juneteenth Holiday (observed)
Sunday, July 3	Library Closure
Monday, July 4	Independence Day Holiday
Thursday, August 25	Staff Development Day
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

Library Personnel News

We are excited to share the following personnel announcements:

Rosemary Jorde was recently honored for her amazing 30 years of service at San Mateo County Libraries. Rosemary began her career as a Library Assistant at the Portola Valley Library in 1992 and quickly became a well-rounded and versatile member of the team. She currently works at the Belmont Library as a Senior Library Assistant. Congratulations Rosemary!

Nancy Analco accepted the position of Librarian at the Half Moon Bay Library. Nancy joins us from the Redwood City Library, where she enjoyed community outreach and facilitating book clubs in English and Spanish. Nancy holds a B.A. in Language Studies from the University of Santa Cruz, and a Master's in Library and Information Science from San Jose State University.

Robert Zamudio accepted the position of Librarian at the San Carlos Library. Robert previously worked as an Admissions Attendant at the San Francisco Asian Art Museum. Robert is bilingual in Spanish and received his B.A. from San Francisco State University and Master's in Library and Information Science from San Jose State University.

Marcia Lee has accepted a promotion to the position of Librarian at the Millbrae Library. Marcia previously served as a Library Assistant at the Atherton Library. Marcia received a Bachelor's in Fine Arts and English from Bryn Mawr College and Master's in Library and Information Science from San Jose State University.

Irma Ramos Arreaga has been promoted to the position of Library Assistant at the North Fair Oaks Library. Irma is bilingual in Spanish and previously worked as an Extra-Help Library Assistant and an Inspiring Summers Facilitator. Irma holds a B.A. from Humboldt State University and is currently completing her Master's in Library and Information Science at San Jose State University.

Emmanuel "Manny" Serrano has accepted the position of Library Assistant at the Pacifica Libraries. Manny previously worked as a sales consultant and brings a wealth of customer service experience. He is bilingual in Spanish and looks forward to using his language skills to support community outreach and programs.

Jessica Ellwood has accepted the position of Fiscal Office Specialist. She holds a Bachelor's in Finance from Menlo College. Jessica previously worked as an Extra-Help Library Assistant assisting with procurement and finance activities. She also has supported our sustainability goals by assisting with the sustainability policy, Green Business Certifications, and improving our green purchases list.

Clarie Huysentruyt has accepted the position of Library Assistant at the Pacifica Libraries. Claire previously served as an Extra-Help Library Assistant and Inspiring Summers Facilitator. She holds a Bachelor's in American Studies from UC Santa Cruz and is currently working on her Master's in Library and Information Science from San Jose State University.

Elexis Fontanilla has accepted the position of Library Assistant at the San Carlos Library. Elexis previously served as an Extra-Help Library Aide in our Pacifica Libraries and Inspiring Summers Facilitator during the summer.

Katie Woods has accepted the position of Library Assistant at the Foster City Library. Katie previously served as an Extra-Help Library Aide in Access Services. Katie received a Bachelor's in Writing, Literature and Publishing from Emerson College and a Master's in Fine Arts from the University of Colorado.

Maricris "Cris" Reyes has accepted the position of Library Assistant at the Atherton Library. Cris holds a Bachelor's degree in Psychology from Emilio Aguinaldo College. Cris previously served as an Extra-Help Library Assistant and Library Aide and is trilingual in Tagalog and Spanish.

Welcome and congratulations to all of our Library Champions!