San Mateo County Libraries

Agenda Item VIII.

To: JPA Governing Board

From: Anne-Marie Despain, Director of Library Services

Date: September 13, 2022

Meeting: September 19, 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 are leaders in establishing a foundation for early literacy and supporting exploration and growth at every stage of life.

Summer Learning Challenge

This year marked the return of in-person programs at our libraries and we couldn't be more thrilled! Visitors of all ages enjoyed shows and presentations that featured both fresh takes and familiar favorites and up-close encounters with fascinating insects, wild creatures and even bats. They participated in a puppet pirate adventure, explored culture through calligraphy, made bubbles while learning about chemistry, sang and danced along to music from various cultures (from South America to Africa and beyond), and more.

There were also opportunities for attendees to learn about the work of other County departments. In June, the Mosquito and Vector Control District gave us lessons in life drawing and scientific thinking. The Office of Sustainability distributed board games and reuse kits in July to divert things that might have otherwise gone to the garbage. The Parks Department rangers discussed biomimicry and animal engineering in August. Our little Library Explorers learned about STEM concepts from our staff through activities like making snow dough and kinetic sand, popsicle stick puzzles, chasing runaway tortillas, and taking the Tallest Paper Tower Challenge!

Naturally, there were also books! This summer, we have given out more than 35,000 books to our communities through school visits, special events, and book distributions in the libraries. We are incredibly proud to share the joy of reading with so many people this summer.

Libraries at Community Summer Camps

In partnership with the public-school districts in East Palo Alto, Millbrae and North Fair Oaks, staff were able to connect with hundreds of under-resourced youths enrolled in summer camps. The camp experience incorporated library strengths while integrating our creative focus and summer learning approach.

The six camp locations hosted engaging and exciting programs including a multi-media juggling extravaganza paired with a lesson on conservation and waste reduction, an interactive music-making workshop with Grammy nominated musician Andre Thierry, an engineering design process, a meet and greet with hardworking bees featuring an educational component on the importance and impact they have to our environment, a STEAM based performance utilizing magic and bubbles to present different scientific concepts, and joyful music and dance. All camp attendees received carefully curated Take and Make kits, were signed up for our Summer Learning Challenge and were given the option to select free books to continue learning at home. These kits reinforced STEAM concepts while allowing students to make music, explore their creativity, or start their own gardens.

Ready for Takeoff!

During the month of July, Atherton and Belmont libraries offered 3D Printing Summer Camps in collaboration with Dry Ice, a community robotics team of high school and middle school youth from Belmont. During the progressive weekly sessions, participants learned how to transform their ideas from a basic sketch to a 3D model using computer aided design tools. During the final week of the camp, participants used their knowledge of basic and complex shapes to create a model spaceship!

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

San Mateo County Fair

San Mateo County Libraries returned to the San Mateo County Fair in 2022! This is our biggest outreach event, and we occupied a sizable, highly visible spot at one of the entrances, making us impossible to miss. For its first public appearance since the pandemic, the Bookmobile and our welcoming crew greeted fairgoers as they arrived. We activated the space with a reading garden, a respite from the bustle of the fair where people could pull up a rocking chair and rest. Attendees also enjoyed building with the Imagination Playground and making crafts to take home with them. By the end of the Fair, over 5,500 kids had signed up for the Summer Learning Challenge and over 13,700 kids and families had participated.

Summer Meals at the Library

Summer meals were a huge success, with many compliments on the food quality of the 10,468 lunches we provided during June and July. Meals were provided at our libraries in East Palo Alto, Half Moon Bay and North Fair Oaks. Out in the community, we provided meals at the Colma Community Center and Pescadero Elementary School Big Lift Inspiring Summers camp, and we collaborated with other local agencies to provide meals for at the Boys and Girls Club of the Coastside, Casa Circulo Cultural, and Generations United. We also received a grant from the State Library to enhance the summer meal experience, which included giving families the opportunity to pick up sports equipment, bubbles, art supplies, gardening kits, and other fun things to do over the summer.

Our summer partnership with Second Harvest Food Bank brought Telemundo to the North Fair Oaks Library, which significantly boosted lunch program participation. Many Spanish-speaking families who saw the feature and learned about our free meal program visited the library.
Article at: Distribución de alimentos gratis para niños en los condados Santa Clara y San Mateo

Mental Health First Aid

"Most of us would know how to help if we saw someone having a heart attack — we'd start CPR or call 9-1-1. But too few of us would know how to respond if we saw someone having a panic attack..." Thanks to an effort by San Mateo County Health and the San Mateo County Mayors Mental Health Initiative to make mental health and substance-use training available to the public, we had 65 staff registered to attend the Mental Health First-Aid training in August. Much like CPR training equips you with the knowledge and skills to aid someone having a heart attack, Mental Health First Aid training teaches you how to assist someone who is experiencing a challenge or crisis with their mental health or use of controlled substances. We look forward to completing training for all public service staff, as well as certifying two employees to provide ongoing training to staff and the community.

Community Connections Grant Impact

San Mateo County Libraries received a Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grant to establish a resource access program at the North Fair Oaks Library, designed to provide multilingual service appointments and referrals for enrolled adult literacy/English as a Second Language (ESL) learners as well as the general public.

This grant funded project supported under-served community members to eliminate the barriers that can prevent them from accessing vital community resources, particularly in the areas of housing, health, nutrition, employment, and education. We offered regular drop-in hours and workshops led by program partners and staff were trained to confidently refer community members to the appropriate service agencies.

The service attracted new, non-library users, who were frequently recent Spanish-speaking immigrants with low levels of native literacy and little to no computer literacy. In daily drop-in sessions beginning in April 2022, the program connected over 2,000 members of the community to housing, health, nutrition, employment, and education assistance.

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

Library Outpost Update

We have an exciting new development towards the progress of the Pacifica Sanchez Library Outpost. On September 2, 2022 the City of Pacifica's Zoning Administrator approved the project to move forward making way for the City to go out to bid for a contractor. The first Library Outpost lending kiosk to be installed, will enable 7-day/24-hour access to a variety of library materials. Patrons can also place and pick up holds, download audio and eBooks, and browse the catalog from the kiosk. This innovative new service, which is anticipated to be implemented after the new year, will enhance the accessibility of library services well beyond our existing operating hours.

Brisbane Library

We are delighted to announce that the Brisbane Library was featured in Metropolis Magazine highlighting its unique design, versatility, and sustainability features.
"In Brisbane, California, a new library packs myriad user experiences into a small package, while delivering on sustainability."
Article at: A New Library Is a Living Room for a Whole Town

Staff Development Day

On August 25, we closed all libraries for the return of our annual Staff Development Day for the first time in 3 years! The Employee Engagement and Wellness Workgroup worked tirelessly to curate a fantastic day of enjoyment, food, growth, and connection. The event was held at the new Atherton Library which some staff got to visit for the very first time. Anneliese Singh, author of *The Racial Healing Handbook* was selected as the morning speaker by our Equity Workgroup. The much-anticipated return of Pitch-It and trying out the Makerspace and Digital Lab made up the afternoon's activities. The day ended with an ice cream truck to celebrate the end of summer and recognize all of the efforts staff put into summer learning activities.

Pitch-It!

Pitch It is a program that was created years ago to encourage and support staff creativity. Presenters pitch their ideas in a fun and casual atmosphere, and staff vote for their favorite idea to be funded and implemented. Pitch-it winners receive up to $5,000 to pilot their programs. Past successful pitches include book bikes, hiking backpacks, early literacy kits, ukuleles, sewing machines, Comic Arts Fest and many more! We intend to put all of the fantastic and creative ideas that were pitched this year – which are in line with our goals for equity and sustainability – to use!

Winning programs include:

- *Period Supplies for Everyone,* an initiative by Nicole Fernandez of the Brisbane Library to equitably distribute free period supplies in all library restrooms
- *Borrow the Unexpected: Karaoke Machine,* by Cloud Bell of Pacifica Libraries suggests lending karaoke machines to enhance accessibility to services and materials that patrons might not otherwise be able to access
- *Bug Out at the Library,* by Cherry Cruzat of the Belmont Library aims to encourage curiosity, lifelong learning and accessibility to science for everyone by expanding the successful and well-liked insect display launched at the Belmont Library
- *Art for Everyone,* by Lynne Fetter of the Belmont Library creates a designated art table or space in each of our libraries to promote creativity through art exploration
- *Pool for All,* by Kat Wiszowaty from Portola Valley Library intends to make public pool passes available for check-out in order to promote accessibility for all

FY 2021-22 Invoices and Contracts Over $50,000

The County's Open Data Portal (checkbook.smcgov.org) continues to provide an easily accessible view of library expenditures and activity data to both the public and policymakers. A list of invoices and contracts with a total amount of $50,000 or more that were paid or executed between January 1, 2022 and June 30, 2022 is provided below.

Vendor	**Amount**	**Description**
Invoices:		
Peninsula Library System	388,289	Passthrough of Measure K funds for Summer Learning program administration
City of Daly City	345,746	Annual payment for services provided to Broadmoor and Colma
Ross McDonald	322,323	Shelving for Atherton Library
Hoopla by Midwest Tape	240,000	Annual payment for digital content
Dell	219,400	Laptop replacement
Phoenix Motorcars	60,000	Makermobile payment for completion of chassis
Verizon	54,236	Monthly service for hotspots
Envisionware	93,112	Library Outpost lending machine 50% deposit

Contracts:		
ELS Architecture and Urban Design	179,200	Belmont and Millbrae Library architect services for new makerspaces
Dynamism	100,000	3D printer equipment and supplies
Demco	100,000	Library supplies including acrylics, book carts, and collection supplies
The Library Store	90,000	Library supplies including acrylics, book carts, and collection supplies
MatterHackers	50,000	3D printer equipment and supplies

Library Personnel News

We are excited to share the following personnel announcements:

Morelia Andrade has accepted a promotion to the position of Library Assistant at our Half Moon Bay Library. Morelia is bilingual in Spanish and previously served as a Library Aide at Half Moon Bay and an Inspiring Summers Facilitator. Morelia is currently pursuing an Associate degree in Public Health at Foothill College.

Ismael Betancourt has accepted a promotion to the position of Librarian at our Atherton Library. Ismael is bilingual in Spanish and previously worked as a Community Technology Specialist and Library Assistant. Ismael holds two Associates degrees from Foothill College – one in public speaking and the other in Graphic Design. He also holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Digital Media, and a MLIS from San Jose State University.

Araceli Efigenio has accepted the position of Community Program Specialist in our Outreach and Programming Division. Araceli previously worked as a project manager at a small consulting group. Prior to that, Araceli was a case manager at Casa de los Amigos where she helped reunify unaccompanied minors with their families. Araceli holds a Master's in Social Work and a Bachelor's in Spanish and Psychology from the University of Washington.

Rosali Jurado has accepted a promotion to the position of Library Assistant at our Atherton Library. Rosali is bilingual in Spanish and previously served as an Extra Help Library Assistant across our system. Rosali holds a Bachelor of Science in Psychobiology University of California, Los Angeles.

Kat Kong has accepted the position of Librarian in our Communications Division. Kat previously worked at the Alameda Free Library as a teen librarian. Kat holds a Bachelor's in International Relations from UC Davis and a MLIS from San Jose State University.

Chris Lu has accepted a promotion to the position of Senior Librarian at our Belmont Library. Chris previously worked as a Librarian at Belmont. Chris holds a Bachelor's in English Literature and a MLIS from the University of Washington.

Jeneen Nammar has accepted the position of Librarian at our Portola Valley Library. Jeneen previously worked at the San Fransisco Public Library as a Children's Librarian. Jeneen holds an MSI from the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor and a Bachelor's in English from the University of California, Los Angeles.

Gary Ransford has accepted a promotion to the position of Senior Community Program Specialist in our Information Technology Division. Gary previously served as a Community Technology Specialist and a Library Assistant at our San Carlos Library. Gary is currently pursuing a certificate in Technical Communication from UC Berkeley Extension.

Lee Ming Yeh has accepted a promotion to the position of Library Assistant in our Access Services Division. Lee previously served as a Library Aide at our Belmont Library. Lee holds a Bachelor's in Psychology from Stanford University and is currently in library school.

Please join me in congratulating Gary, Lee, Chris, Rosali, Ismael and Morelia and welcoming Janeen, Kat, and Aracelia to San Mateo County Libraries!

State Library Updates

Governor Newsom announced this week that every Californian can now access free online tutoring available 24/7 through a new initiative offering homework help in every K-12 subject and skill-building resources for adult learners. Live, real-time homework assistance from tutors familiar with state curriculum and standards is available 24 hours a day by laptop, tablet, or phone from tutors familiar with state curriculum and standards. The State Library is working with the Pacific Library partnership to make "HelpNow" by Brainfuse available throughout the state. The pilot program led by the State Library offers assistance in Math, Language Arts, and other core K-12 subjects in English, Spanish, Mandarin, Cantonese, Vietnamese, and Tagalog. There's no age limit to who can use the service. Adult learners can also access writing assistance, citizenship resources and other tools.

The Governor also announced $254 million in grants to public libraries in 172 cities across 34 counties to renovate and improve facilities across the state. The State Library received 275 applications for Round One. This is the first round of the California State Library's $439 million Building Forward Library Improvement Grant Program – the largest investment in public library infrastructure in California history. Applications submitted for East Palo Alto Library, North Fair Oaks Library and Pacifica Libraries were not awarded funds in this first round of public library infrastructure grants but are still under consideration for funding in Phase Two of Round One.

"Public libraries are the hearts of communities across the state and our hubs of learning, discovery, and oftentimes – safety," said Governor Newson. "While states across the nation are banning books, California is awarding $254 million in grants for our historic public libraries – an investment to make books more accessible by repairing and modernizing libraries throughout the state."

The 234 projects in this initial round of funding under the Building Forward Library Improvement Grant Program range from $14,300 to $10 million and include efforts to make libraries safer and more accessible, including their ability to be cooling centers for underserved communities. A full list of projects to be funded in this round of grants under the Building Forward Library Improvement Grant Program can be found here.

Annual Report

Finally, we are pleased to present the 2021-2022 Annual Report! Our accomplishments would not be possible without the strong support of the Governing Board and Operations Committee, our volunteers, Friends and Foundation members, and our phenomenal team of staff. This wonderful, attached report will be shared with the community and is available online at: https://smcl.org/annual-reports/

San Mateo County Libraries

Open for Exploration

Annual Report 2021-2022

OUR MISSION

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

OUR VISION

San Mateo County Libraries ignite growth through transformative experiences.

Exploration at San Mateo County Libraries extends outdoors as kids enjoy a bubble program.

Director's Message

At San Mateo County Libraries, we're champions of learning, sharing and exploration – of open minds, new ideas and bright futures. In the pages of this report, you'll see how our 13 libraries are welcoming, inclusive places that inspire curiosity and sustain community connection.

Through ongoing recovery efforts, we became experts at adapting to meet critical needs and never wavered in our commitment to provide equitable library services.

Our accomplishments would not have been possible without the valued support of our Library JPA Governing Board and Operations Committee, our generous donors, incredible Friends of the Library and Foundation for San Mateo County Libraries, our volunteers and of course our extraordinary staff.

Together, San Mateo County Libraries continues to provide award-winning services and work in partnership with our diverse communities to build upon our 110 years of success and relevance.

ANNE-MARIE DESPAIN
DIRECTOR OF LIBRARY SERVICES

1st
IN CALIFORNIA STAR LIBRARY RATINGS

3rd
IN NATIONAL STAR LIBRARY RATINGS

110th
ANNIVERSARY AS A COUNTY FREE LIBRARY

Library Governing Board

Atherton
Rick DeGolia

Belmont
Charles Stone

Brisbane
Karen Cunningham

East Palo Alto
Regina Wallace-Jones

Foster City
Sanjay Gehani

Half Moon Bay
Deborah Penrose

Millbrae
Reuben Holober

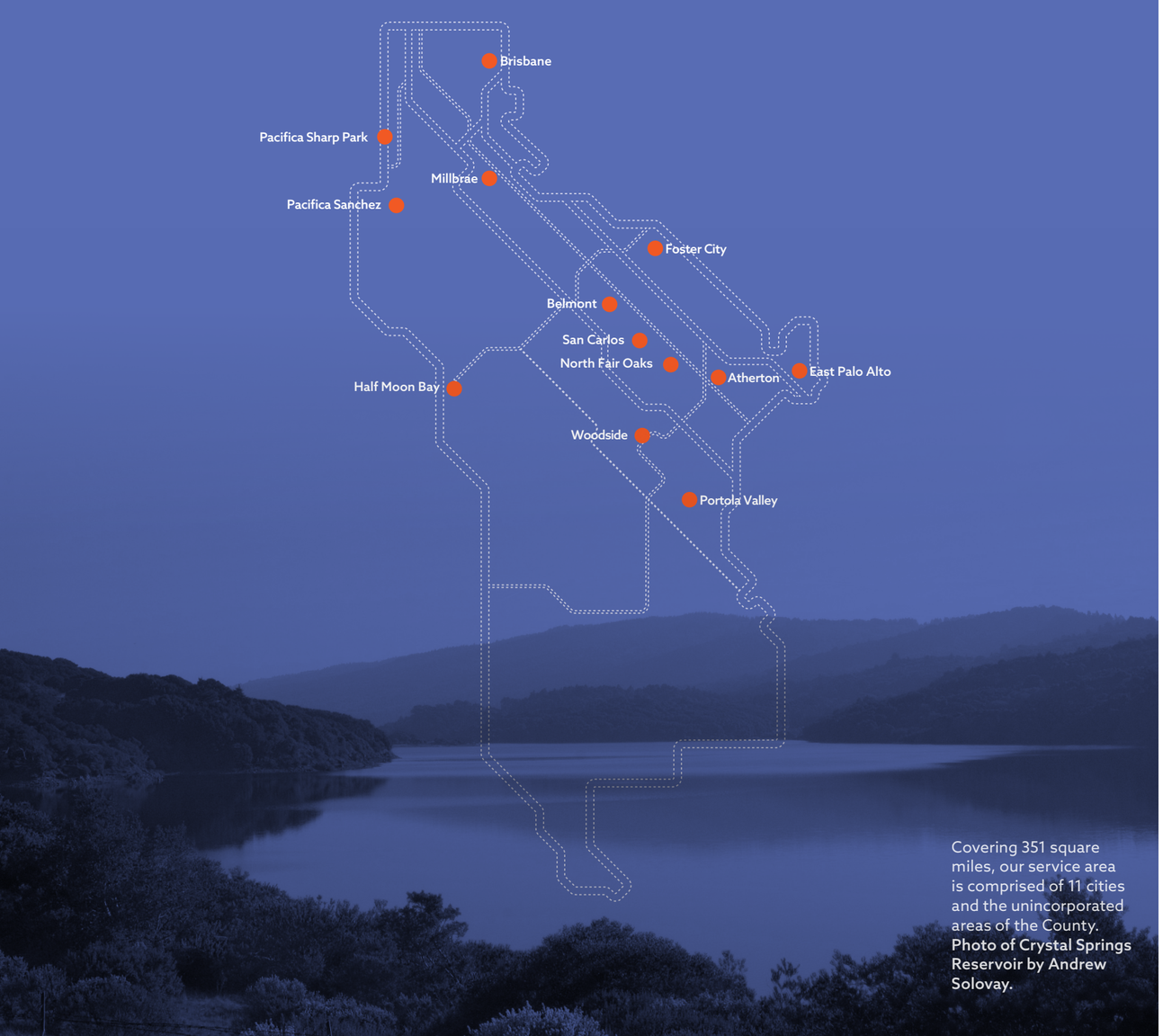
Pacifica
Mike O'Neill

Portola Valley
Maryann Derwin

San Carlos
Sarah McDowell

Woodside
Dick Brown

San Mateo County
Carole Groom



Covering 351 square miles, our service area is comprised of 11 cities and the unincorporated areas of the County. **Photo of Crystal Springs Reservoir by Andrew Solovay.**

Demographics

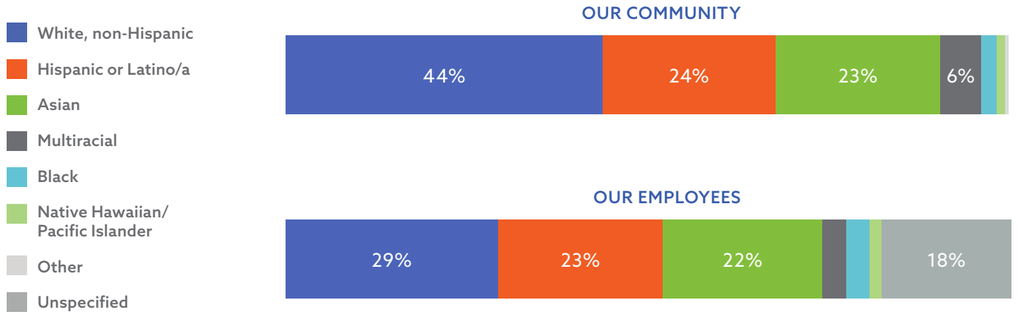
283,000 people live in our service area

76% of our service population has a library card

Households in our service area are **78%** suburban, **15%** urban and **7%** rural

25% are enrolled in school, **45%** of whom are in grades K-8

At home, **16%** of our community speaks Spanish, **8%** speaks Chinese and another **15%** speaks another language other than English



Year in Numbers

"SMCL always surprises me with how much is offered to the community. We are so grateful for the variety in services and the role the library plays in our community."

2M
ITEMS CIRCULATED

30,384
CUSTOMER CARE CONNECTIONS

2,348
PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

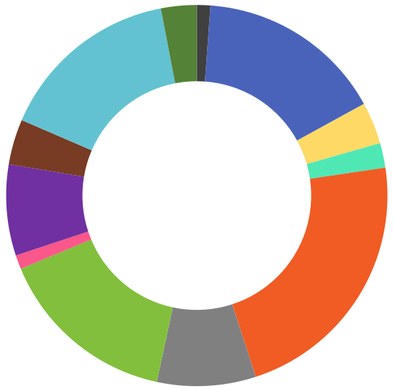
1.67M
WEBSITE VISITORS

4.1M
WIRELESS SESSIONS

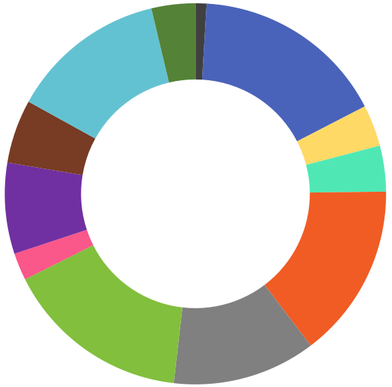
12,729
LAPTOPS CIRCULATED

The much anticipated new Atherton Library and renovated Historic Town Hall opened on June 4, 2022.

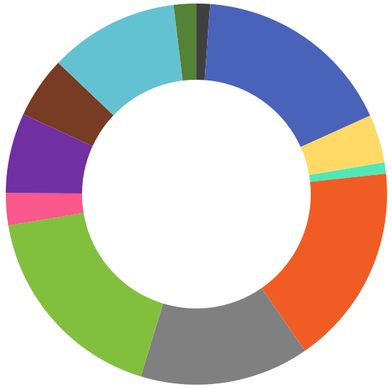
ITEMS CIRCULATED



LIBRARY VISITORS



PROGRAM ATTENDANCE



- Atherton
- Belmont
- Brisbane
- East Palo Alto
- Foster City
- Half Moon Bay
- Millbrae
- North Fair Oaks
- Pacifica
- Portola Valley
- San Carlos
- Woodside

Staff pride themselves on connecting with our library users one on one to offer personalized support.

Here for You

"An excellent and valued community resource that has proved of even greater value during these strained times for me and my family. Thank you."

EXPANDED HOURS

This year, we've focused on providing places for added exploration by expanding hours and opening our new, vibrant, technology-packed Atherton Library. In 2022, we were excited to establish 7-day-a-week service in all of our cities for the very first time. Expanding evening hours and reopening our libraries on Sundays allows the community more opportunities to visit our libraries to borrow materials, check out technology and enjoy inviting spaces.

Increased hours help ensure people can access the library when they want and need to. Community members expressed their excitement about the new hours, "This is such welcome news," one patron said. "We often want to go on Sundays." Many library users made it clear how much they appreciated our careful approach to reopening and how delighted they are to return for more in-person services.

935,621

TOTAL IN-PERSON VISITS

29,749

TOTAL NUMBER OF HOURS OPEN

Patrons enjoy browsing our diverse collections.

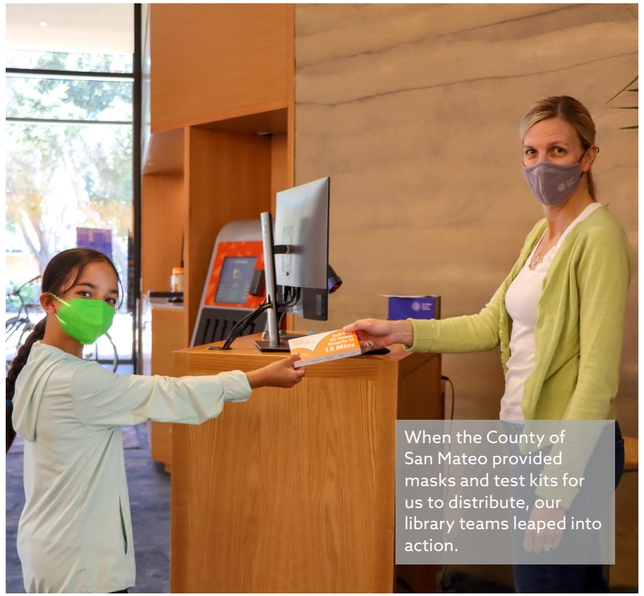
PROGRAMS RETURN

Library staff were thrilled to begin hosting programs again at each of our libraries. Welcoming back patrons to such beloved library activities as storytimes and author talks was an encouraging moment for community members, who look forward to these curated events.

We've had 57,574 attendees at our in-person and virtual programs this year. Families were delighted to join together again inside library spaces or outside in library gardens and nearby parks. Several other events have also returned in person including STEAM offerings, conversation clubs and art classes.

"I have fond memories of going to the library myself and am happy to pass on the love of reading to my daughter."

Our beloved in-person storytimes returned in fall 2021.



When the County of San Mateo provided masks and test kits for us to distribute, our library teams leaped into action.

FREE MASKS AND TEST KITS

San Mateo County Libraries is committed to supporting community members through the continued challenges of the pandemic. In February, we offered free masks and at-home test kits provided by the County of San Mateo. During a time when valuable test kits were not always easy to find, the masks and kits were available to pick up at all of our libraries. Providing free masks and test kits removed a barrier for community members who were most in need.

10,000
MASKS DISTRIBUTED

25,000
TESTS DISTRIBUTED

Expanding Meals Service

As an important venue for community resources, we have been offering free meals since 2015. The program began at East Palo Alto Library, then expanded to Half Moon Bay Library. In 2021, we added the free meal service to North Fair Oaks Library. Since then, we've served more than 9,300 meals at that location alone. These nutritious, fresh meals support community members who are experiencing food insecurity. They provide an after-school meal option for local students and connect people to the library who otherwise might not have known about some of our services. The meals are easy to reach just outside our libraries, so that people receiving them can choose to just stop by or head inside to explore our other offerings.

32,356
MEALS SERVED

Empowering Community

"Thank you SMCL for leading with compassion and kindness for all."

Kids rushed inside the new Atherton Library to mark its opening, a symbol of our spirit of exploration.

The new Empower Card features fun designs that encourage reading.

STUDENT EMPOWER CARD

We launched a new kind of library card this year for students in San Mateo County called the Empower Card. The Empower Card simplifies student access to online resources across all libraries.

A student can use their Empower Card to access an encyclopedia for a school project, watch professional crafting tutorials, stream movies, check out eBooks and audiobooks in Spanish and Chinese, and so much more.

The Empower Card is the successful result of a pilot launched in March 2022. "Empower Cards break down barriers to library access and address inequities in resources by sending library cards directly to families," San Mateo County Supervisor Warren Slocum said. "These cards will open the door to an incredible amount of online and in-person resources."

7,449

EMPOWER CARDS ISSUED

6

SCHOOL DISTRICTS ENROLLED

Visitors could cool off and participate in arts and crafts while exploring our booth at the San Mateo County Fair.

SAN MATEO COUNTY FAIR

This year marked our big return to the County Fair. Each year, many fairgoers look forward to seeing our library staff and bookmobile among the smell of kettle corn and the sound of live music. We love the opportunity to share this annual event with the community and spread the word about our services. Our reading garden gives fairgoers a perfect place to slow down and rest, take fun photos, check out a book or try some easy, fun arts and crafts. This year's County Fair was a big success—we connected with new users, promoted our Summer Learning Challenge and gave away 5,500 books in seven days.

96%

FAVORABILITY RATING

TREASURED RESOURCE

Libraries are keepers of local history and community memories. At the Half Moon Bay Library, this includes past high school yearbooks, which came in handy for an amateur detective. More than 30 years ago, Lucy Rodriguez's father found a 1987 class ring while walking on the beach, according to The Half Moon Bay Review. This year when Lucy was reminded of the found ring, she picked up the unsolved case with one clue in hand – the initials "PRS" engraved on the ring.

She headed to the Half Moon Bay Library for the 1987 yearbook and scoured it to find any seniors whose initials might match. Finally, she came across Peter Sabie, found him on social media and asked him to identify any details on a ring he may have lost. When Peter shared his initials "PRS," Lucy knew she had found the ring's owner with the library's help.

"Thanks to our local libraries for being such a great asset and valuable resource."

PROMOTING WELLNESS

We understand the impact mental health has on people and how its effects reach into our communities. Staff responded with a Mental Health Resources webpage that provides easy access to San Mateo County information and resources, relevant books in our collection, upcoming related events, like yoga and tai chi, and more. The page also highlights our partnership with Calm, a mindfulness app and service. As the first public library to partner with this app, we are providing a free, accessible way to practice mindfulness anywhere. In a time when stress is high, we are happy to offer resources to help our communities learn to take care of their mental health.

Tai Chi classes at our libraries help participants connect physical movement to internal energy to reduce stress.

"It is a joy to attend the Tai Chi class and I appreciate joining each week."

Equity Through Art

In partnership with the County's Office of Equity and Social Justice, we offered a series of well-attended library programs this year called Equity Through Art. We took a look at both the history and current state of race through art to highlight the complex relationship Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) have had living and trying to thrive in the County. For these programs, we were honored to bring in powerful voices from diverse communities across the peninsula, discussing photography, mixed-media art, documentary, storytelling and cultural movements. Each program elevated the voices of speakers and community members to help us better appreciate the issue of racial equity and understand the history and pain that continues today. We culminated the series with youth to share their vision of the future of BIPOC in San Mateo County.

People relax, play and read inside Brisbane Library. Metropolis Magazine called the new library "a living room for a whole town." Photo by Cesar Rubio.

Imaginative Thinking

"The library has been the most important part of my kids' education and well-being... rising to the challenge of providing services during the pandemic. A forward-thinking leader in the county/state."

40,000

NEW eLEARNING COURSES

700,444

DIGITAL DOWNLOADS

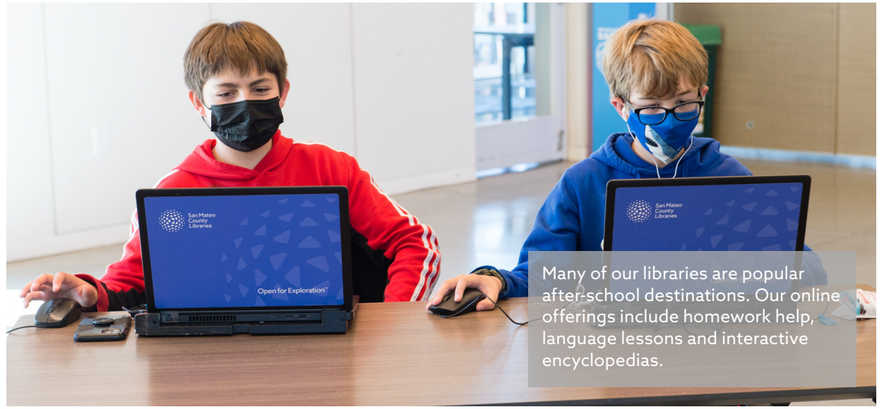
GROWING OUR ONLINE RESOURCES

There is something for everybody in San Mateo County Libraries' online resources, including new materials for readers, writers, jobseekers and students. Picture books come to life with our new innovative picture book streaming service, offering animated videos and read-along audio in English, Spanish and Mandarin. Readers and audiobook listeners can also find our diverse collection of eBooks and eAudiobooks in a single place with a convenient, updated mobile app.

Aspiring authors and seasoned local writers can now publish their own eBooks through San Mateo County Libraries. We have also partnered with the Indie Author Project, a national initiative to help broaden the reach of our local authors.

We've always supported career development and lifelong learning. This year, thanks to a generous program through the California State Library, our community gained access to six added resources. Learners can attend university-level virtual classes, brush up on technology skills, prepare for job, citizenship and educational exams and much more.

"I am 82 years old and read a lot. Now I do all my reading on eBooks from the library."



Many of our libraries are popular after-school destinations. Our online offerings include homework help, language lessons and interactive encyclopedias.

SUMMER LEARNING CHALLENGE

This summer brought us together, marking a joyful return to vibrant Summer Learning Challenge experiences. The program activates imaginations, beginning with a free book to unleash a world of possibility and inspire further reading and discovery.

We connected kids to more than 35,000 free books in record time, books that serve as an invitation to build curiosity and community all summer. That invitation was enthusiastically accepted by community members who joined us in communing with farm animals, learning how to move our bodies to the music of the world, collaborating to make art with upcycled materials and so much more.

Being in the same spaces, meeting community members, making friends and building interests in the world we all live in has never felt more powerful.

"San Mateo County Libraries offer great activities, special events and resources for families."

Many of our programs like the Summer Learning Challenge aim to get whole families and users of all ages in on the fun and discovery.

BIG LIFT INSPIRING SUMMERS

This year has provided another uplifting session of The Big Lift Inspiring Summers day camps, where children benefit from evidence-based lessons and fun-filled days of learning and discovery. Serving eight school sites across six of our partner school districts, Inspiring Summers focuses on building early literacy and social-emotional skills. New program findings demonstrated strong positive academic gains in literacy and math. On average this summer, youth gained 1.5 months in literacy – matching our highest gain in the history of the program.

Students of our Inspiring Summers program enjoy a sense of routine while learning and playing over summer.

954

STUDENTS ENROLLED

149

YOUTH HIRED

Introducing Middle Scholars

We launched a new STEAM-focused program this year called Middle Scholars which caters to middle schoolers eager to explore. STEAM stands for Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math — academic subjects where student engagement from an early age is important. Pre-teens sometimes find themselves stuck between being under-challenged by elementary school offerings and too young for teen ones.

Middle Scholars aims to fix that by engaging sixth through eighth-graders with age-appropriate curriculum and hands-on activities. Middle school students hear from professionals in STEAM-related fields and then apply what they learned to fun, engaging projects.

"This is so cool. We never get to craft like this anymore."

Exploration and Growth

"The libraries are light and bright and wonderful spaces for adults and children!"

Children enjoy learning through our many hands-on programs that connect education with real-world information and ideas.

STATE PARKS PASSES

Part of the magic of the library is how often we can offer access to things and places beyond our walls. With the help of the California State Library and California State Parks, we rolled out our Explore Our Parks Packs—hiking backpacks that include a California State Parks day-use pass for users to explore many of our beautiful public parks without charge. This new program eliminates financial barriers and gives everyone the chance to visit many state parks, lakes, beaches and monuments across the state. The backpacks are available at all libraries and include additional hiking items including binoculars and nature identification guides. We're proud to be a part of this statewide program and give more San Mateo County residents the chance to visit their California State Parks.

"The library has evolved from a place for books, music and movies to a place of learning in so many forms."

We launched the new California State Parks pass offering with hiking backpacks so users would feel ready to hit the trails.

43

EXPLORE OUR PARKS PACKS AVAILABLE FOR CHECKOUT

200

CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS, LAKES, BEACHES AND MONUMENTS TO ACCESS

NEW ATHERTON LIBRARY

On June 4, hundreds of community members attended the grand opening of the new Atherton Library and celebrated the completion of a project that was years in the making. Old-growth trees surround the building, adding to its inviting feel, and decks extend the library space outdoors. With a building design focused on flexibility for a variety of services and events, the library stands at the heart of the Town's new civic center.

At 10,000 square feet, the new library is our first location to offer a digital lab in addition to a state-of-the-art makerspace. Just as makerspaces provide high-tech machines intended for production and making, digital labs offer equipment designed to produce digital creations. Using the special recording equipment, patrons can try out making their own podcast or creating music. At Atherton Library's opening day, one patron recorded the first song on the new equipment, singing part of Frank Sinatra's hit "My Way." We can't wait to see what others create in the space.

"With its many new, up-to-date amenities and impressive tech offerings including a large indoor-outdoor makerspace and a state-of-the-art computer training room, the library offers a place for new experiences. I am excited to see our residents come together here to learn and create."

ATHERTON MAYOR RICK DEGOLIA

9,912

STEAM AND MAKER EVENT ATTENDEES

1,553

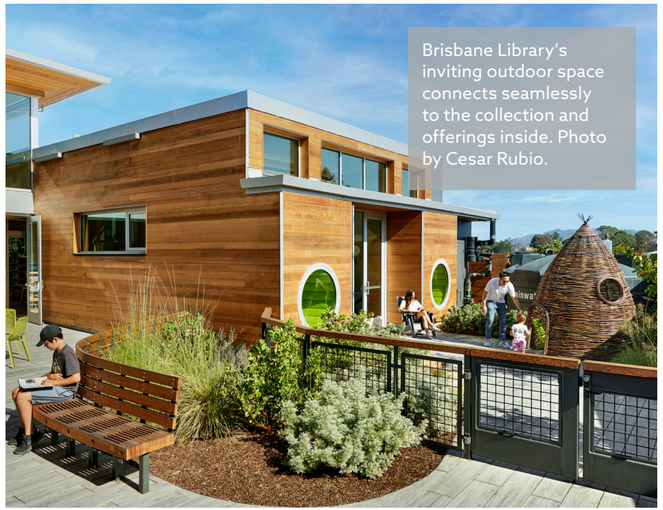
3D PRINTING HOURS

Staff love helping residents express their passions and creativity.

AWARD-WINNING BRISBANE LIBRARY

The Brisbane Library was awarded a 2022 People's Choice Award from the American Institute of Architects San Francisco. The award is proof of how much our community loves and appreciates the new building and all its incredible features.

We celebrated the opening of the Library with a special all-day event in October. Though the journey to opening slowed with the pandemic, the community has wasted no time making memories with silly storytimes, fun maker programs and shared time in the gardens.



Brisbane Library's inviting outdoor space connects seamlessly to the collection and offerings inside. Photo by Cesar Rubio.

Makerspace Leader

Selected to be a national leader of the New Face of Library Makerspaces Collective, San Mateo County Libraries was recognized as an innovator in the design and creation of makerspaces in libraries. In recent years, we successfully opened new makerspaces that include special programming, 3D printers, laser cutters, virtual reality, sewing machines and more. By joining the Collective, we will explore, share and grow together with other members and strengthen makerspace roadmaps for libraries across the United States.

"One of the main reasons I like coming to the San Mateo County Libraries is the makerspaces. There's a lot of equipment I can't get otherwise."

San Mateo County Libraries

Always open for exploration at **smcl.org**