San Mateo County Libraries

Agenda Item V.

To: JPA Governing Board
From: Anne-Marie Despain, Director of Library Services
Date: November 8, 2022
Meeting: November 14, 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.

Flu Crew

We offered three Flu Crew events throughout October, expanding to establish North Fair Oaks as a key new location. Flu Crew has historically been a partnership with Stanford Medical School and the County of San Mateo and hosted at Belmont and Half Moon Bay Libraries. At Half Moon Bay Library, people were lined up before the program started and enjoyed a dance performance with Filipino dance troupe Parangal while they were waiting. Staff also gave out stickers and free books to 141 people who received vaccinations. Belmont hosted Saturday storytime for newly vaccinated families to enjoy and vaccinated 130 people this year.

We ended the series on October 29th at North Fair Oaks Library. In partnership with the Student Nurses of College of San Mateo, we vaccinated over 60 people. Families expressed gratitude as they were having trouble finding appointments elsewhere and shared concerns about the rise of flu and RSV in children. Our partner has hosted similar past events in North Fair Oaks and was thrilled to administer their highest number of vaccinations in recent years, almost doubling their impact from last year.

Voter Support

We are continuing our successful partnership with County Elections. To support convenient voter access and participation in the electoral process, we are hosting Vote by Mail Ballot Drop Boxes in five community library locations: Brisbane, Half Moon Bay, North Fair Oaks, and Woodside. Ballot drop boxes will be available to the public October 10 to November 8, 2022 (Election Day) for the November General Election.

Drop-In Legal Immigration Clinic

On the weekend of September 17-18, in partnership with the Office of Community Affairs, North Fair Oaks and Half Moon Bay libraries hosted two days of Drop-In Legal Immigration Clinics. Lawyers were able to meet with up to 22 clients at the two locations, some of whom were waiting outside the library before the library opened to secure a spot with an attorney. While a few clients had simple questions, or needed advice on next steps for their cases, several clients were victims of fraud. Lawyers at the drop-in clinic were able to successfully refer people or take on the cases themselves.

Free Copying

We are pleased to offer the public a new service – free copying. Single-unit printing, copying, and scanning stations are now available at every library location enhancing our existing free printing and scanning services to include copying. Equity is a top priority for San Mateo County Libraries, and we understand that not all patrons have access to printing and copying when they need it most. With the help of this free service, patrons will be able to print crucial documents like resumes, applications for jobs, and assignments without worrying about the cost. By limiting this service to 25 copies, we can maintain our focus on sustainability while providing support in situations where a paper copy is the only alternative.

Featured Digital Resources

We now offer PressReader, which unlocks 3,000 newspapers and 4,000 magazines, including high-quality content from more than 120 countries in over 60 languages. Catch up on national news from major newspaper publications like the *Chicago Tribune*, *Dallas Morning News* and the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. Top magazines include *Newsweek*, *Vogue*, *Smithsonian*, *Top Gear* and *Popular Science*.

Calm, our online service that provides guided meditations, courses, stories, music, and other helpful tools to manage stress and mental health, is now easier to use than ever. Full unlimited accounts are now available without a need for renewal. Patrons and staff can also add up to four family members to their account. Once added, each family member can create their own profile.

We are extending free access to vital tools for workforce and academic success. Valuable job and career resources will continue to be offered with the support of the California State Library. Brainfuse HelpNow is also now funded through the California State Library with significant enhancements including 24/7 support for tutoring in math, reading, and writing as well as bilingual tutoring support in Spanish, Cantonese, Mandarin, Tagalog and Vietnamese. All school-aged youth now have more equitable and accessible academic support thanks to these exciting improvements.

Author Talks

Following on the September success of *Mooncakes and Milk Bread* author Kristina Cho's live virtual mooncake demonstration, we hosted another cook-along on October 20. Vashanti Bahadkamar-Balan, Foster City resident and local author of *Authentic Indian Cooking with Your Instant Pot: Classic and Innovative Recipes for the Home Cook* led 66 attendees through a popular virtual cooking demonstration. Another October author was Abigail Hing Wen, for *Loveboat Taipai*, and our November authors are Mallory O'Meara for *Girly Drinks* and Priya Fielding-Singh for How the *Other Half Eats*, which will be hosted by JPA Governing Board member Maryann Derwin. Our final December talk of the year will be local author Nina LaCour discussing her latest book *Yerba Buena*.

County Parks Passes

San Mateo County Libraries is thrilled to bring additional opportunities for exploration to our communities. Now, patrons can discover the natural beauty of the San Francisco Peninsula with free access to San Mateo County Parks. In partnership with San Mateo County Parks, all 13 of our libraries will soon offer County Park passes for checkout. Passes will be bundled with a map of the 22 County Parks, all ready to go in our new hiking fanny packs. Our new County Park passes waive vehicle entry fees, allowing borrowers and their friends and family into the park at no additional charge. With these passes for checkout, our goal is to encourage community members to visit and appreciate County Parks and the land we live on. Plans to launch this new offering will take place later this month.

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

Power Up Afternoons

On October 17, we launched Power Up Afternoons, enriching and activating afternoons at all our locations. Power Up Afternoons is offered every day after school for kindergarten through high school students. Experiences center mental wellness, art and self-expression, and STEAM, lifting up the many different voices and perspectives in our communities. In Power Up Afternoons, youth are invited to relax with art activities like still life painting or DIY projects. These are opportunities to recharge during a study break and participate in mindfulness or engage in STEAM activities like exploring with microscopes and learning coding with robots. Our staff are fostering connections between youth, encouraging project-based learning in the library, and offering project-related books and online resources to continue exploration at home. Over the first two weeks of Power Up Afternoons, more than 1,800 participants were engaged across all our locations.

Raising A Reader

Raising a Reader is a national program that promotes early literacy through the love of books. During the academic school year, families from 165 Big Lift and subsidized preschool classrooms across the county rotate bookbags filled with four different books every week to develop a shared love of books.

Unfortunately, during the pandemic, the number of books going into children's homes significantly declined or stopped entirely. Staff worked with sites to provide education and allay safety concerns – by April 2022, 97% of our 2,400 youth were again receiving new books every week.

129 preschool teachers attended the two staff development sessions we offered emphasizing the importance of age-appropriate early learning techniques and how to teach them to families. At the end of the school year, every child signed up for the Summer Learning Challenge and families were invited to visit their local library over the summer to continue sharing books together. Graduating preschoolers received their book and log inside a brand-new library bookbag with ample room to fill with a bounty of books from the collection.

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

National Night Out

Many of our libraries participated in National Night Out, an annual community-building campaign that promotes community partnerships and neighborhood comradery with the goal of creating safer and stronger neighborhoods. The Belmont Library functioned as the official City Site for National Night Out, covering the Carlmont neighborhood. Major departments displayed their vehicles, provided information on their services to the community, and offered many giveaways while the library hosted and offered live musical entertainment. In Atherton, Half Moon Bay, and North Fair Oaks, staff joined in the fun by distributing free books, engaging new summer learners, highlighting upcoming fall programming, and providing 3D prints.

Peninsula Clean Energy Green Backup Generators

At the September 19 JPA Governing Board meeting, staff were asked to gather information on whether there are options for emergency power generated from renewable sources through Peninsula Clean Energy (PCE). In January 2020, PCE published a Resiliency Strategy report that outlines their plan for building reliable, clean, and economic alternatives to diesel generators for energy resiliency. Staff have reached out to PCE to better understand what options for greener emergency power might be available for library facilities. PCE has responded that they are currently working to install their first round of systems, but that they will soon be looking for projects for their next round. PCE is going to reach back out to staff in the coming weeks to provide more information on the systems and the process to be included in the next round. We will continue to update the Governing Board and Operations Committee as we receive additional information.

Atherton Library

We are honored to announce that the 2022 AIA (American Institute of Architects) California Design Awards Jury has selected the Atherton Library to receive a Climate Action Award. Designed by WRNS Studio, AIA said about the project "Set on the wooded site of Atherton's recently built Civic Center, the new, light-filled 9,601-sf library is designed as a welcoming hub for community engagement. The healthy, low-carbon, all-electric project nestles into its locale with a modern design that reflects current and future trends, including multi-use spaces which can easily be adapted for patrons' needs." Atherton Library is one of the top building recipients to address the climate crisis through architecture. It's building design is in parallel to aesthetic design considerations and explicitly incorporates effective performance/sustainability strategies in multiple areas—energy, water, materials, health, ecology, resilience.
Read more at: Atherton Library – Climate Action Award (aiacalifornia.org)

Photo credit: Bruce Damonte

Library Improvements Update

Library staff continues to work closely with city and county staff to focus on facility improvements and future makerspaces:

- The Library Administration building remodel is nearing completion. County Public Works renovated both restrooms with new tile work, fixtures, and partitions. Currently, the kitchen and staff break room is being updated with new cabinets and appliances.
- This fiscal year, staff is also working to replace and/or purchase additional indoor and outdoor furniture for all locations and will be partnering with city and county staff to improve several facilities with new flooring, painting, and signage.
- The State Library awarded the North Fair Oaks Library with $106,174 in Building Forward Library Infrastructure Grant Program for new restroom construction. The Budget Act of 2021 (SB 129) allocated $439 Million in one-time funds to address life-safety and critical maintenance needs of library buildings, prioritized for libraries serving high poverty areas.
- In the coming months, final design plans for both the new Millbrae Library and Foster City Library makerspaces will be submitted to the cities for review. City staff will finalize documents and seek authorization to go out to bid.
- We are also pleased to report that we will begin investigating the feasibility of a makerspace at the San Carlos Library and children's garden at the Atherton Library. Staff will soon begin the process of seeking proposals for conceptual designs and a community engagement process for each project.

We look forward to making progress on these improvement projects for our communities.

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, remaining 2022 and new 2023 holiday and closure dates include:

2022

Friday, November 11	Veterans Day Holiday
Wednesday, November 23	Libraries close at 5 PM
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

2023

Sunday, January 1	Library Closure
Monday, January 2	New Year's Day Holiday (observed)
Sunday, January 15	Library Closure
Monday, January 16	Martin Luther King, Jr., Holiday
Sunday, February 19	Library Closure
Monday, February 20	Presidents' Day Holiday
Sunday, April 9	Library Closure
Sunday, May 28	Library Closure
Monday, May 29	Memorial Day Holiday
Sunday, June 18	Library Closure
Monday, June 19	Juneteenth Holiday
Tuesday, July 4	Independence Day Holiday
Sunday, September 3	Library Closure
Monday, September 4	Labor Day Holiday
Sunday, October 8	Library Closure
Monday, October 9	Indigenous Peoples' Day Holiday
Saturday, November 11	Veterans Day Holiday
Sunday, November 12	Library Closure
Wednesday, November 22	Libraries close at 5 PM
Thursday, November 23	Thanksgiving Day Holiday
Friday, November 24	Day after Thanksgiving Holiday
Sunday, December 24	Library Closure
Monday, December 25	Christmas Day Holiday
Sunday, December 31	Library Closure

Labor Negotiations

The County is in the process of negotiating a new Extra Help labor contract with SEIU, the union that represents San Mateo County Libraries' non-management employees. The current contract expired in January 2022. Negotiation meetings are currently taking place to work towards an agreement. It is anticipated an agreement may go to the County Board of Supervisors in the new year for approval.

Employee Service Awards

Two employees are being honored by the County for their completed years of service: Christina Olsen, Pacifica Library Assistant (20 years) and Elise Staples, Millbrae Library Branch Manager (10 years). Congratulations to Christina and Elise on their many years of service and numerous contributions to San Mateo County Libraries!

Library Personnel News

We are excited to share the following personnel announcements:

Paula Teixeira has announced her retirement effective December 16. Paula has worked for SMCL for more than 16 years, working as the Circulation Supervisor at Pacifica Libraries for 14 of those years. Paula has enthusiastically planned and presented many adult programs both for the Pacifica Libraries and for the entire system, including her popular Walk & Talk Book Club which has been meeting for over ten years! Paula is a regular fixture at outreach events in Pacifica and started a bi-monthly pop-up library at the Pacifica Community Center during their Senior Lunch program.

Minna Albagli, Library Assistant at the Millbrae Library and Access Services Division retired earlier this month. Minna worked for SMCL for than 12 years and her contributions to the community are many including growing our systemwide language collections and starting the popular Lunar New Year Festival. She also made significant contributions to our first Chinese language eBranch.

After an incredible 28 years, Cris Miranda, Senior Graphics Specialist in our Communications Division has announced he has accepted a promotion in the County's Planning and Building Department and Raquel Espana has also recently accepted a new position and her last day at SMCL will be November 5. Raquel started working at San Mateo County Libraries five years ago as our Development Manager.

Adrienne Gass has accepted a promotion to the position of Senior Librarian at our North Fair Oaks Library. Adrienne previously worked as a Librarian at the Foster City Library and in Access Services assisting with the Empower Card and Student Success Initiative. Adrienne holds an MLIS from Rutgers University and a Bachelor's in English and History.

Sam Trinkaus has accepted a permanent Library Assistant position in our Access Services Division. Sam previously worked as an Extra-Help Library Assistant across our system and has assisted with system-wide author programs.

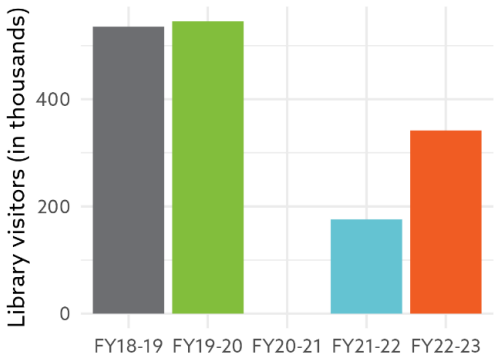
Please join us in congratulating the following staff who have accepted professional growth opportunities. Senior Librarian Amy Selmi has accepted a work-out-of-class (WOC) position to help lead the expansion and return of our volunteer program, Ismael Betancourt will be Interim Senior Librarian at the Atherton Library, Senior Librarian Cary Mossing will be Acting Manager at the Millbrae Library while Elise Staples is on parental leave. Librarian Darren Heiber will be Interim Senior Librarian at the San Carlos Library, and finally, Financial Services Manager Lindsey Freeland will be Interim Development Manager in addition to her continued work leading the Finance Division.

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

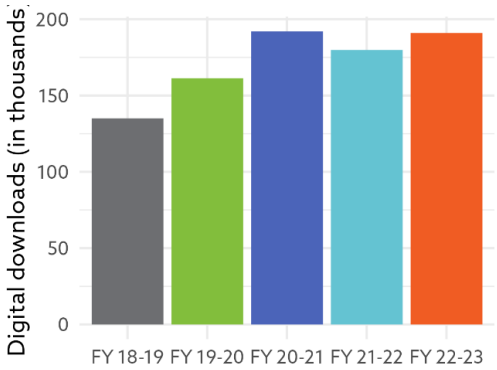
Quarter 1 Data Update

The following charts summarize first quarter totals for key library services, including July through September, from FY2018-19 through the current fiscal year. Updates will be provided on a quarterly basis moving forward, with year-over-year and quarter-over-quarter comparisons available.

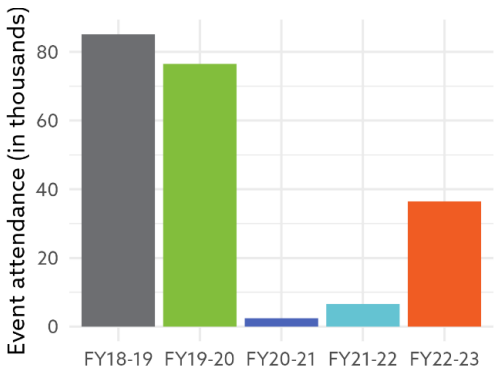
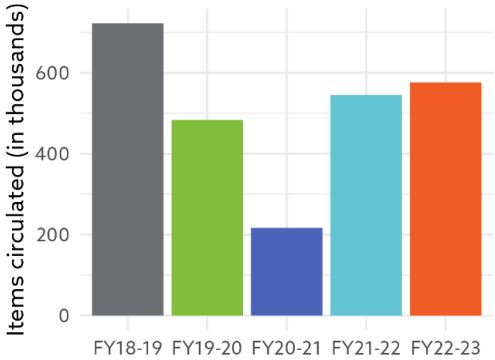
Q1 LIBRARY VISITORS



Q1 DIGITAL DOWNLOADS



Q1 EVENT ATTENDANCE



Q1 ITEMS CIRCULATED