



Library Director's Report

July 28, 2026 Meeting of the
Library Board of Trustees

LIBRARY DIRECTOR

- Good news from the California State Library (CSL) - we have received a “heads up” that they will be funding a [Tutor.com](https://www.tutor.com) subscription for all public libraries in this fiscal year. Several years ago, we were lucky to provide tutor.com to our community thanks to a previous CSL initiative. When the funded service ended after a few years, we were not able to continue the service due to the \$30,000+ annual cost. This is a great fit with our afterschool homework hub in the LPR community room and will be useful in our GMCLC afterschool program.
- Response from a query at the June 2026 LB meeting: the free legal clinic provided by API Legal Outreach and held on the second and fourth Friday of the month, from 10am-12:30pm has been fully booked at 6 participants per session. The SMC Health Cal Benefits workshop was unfortunately canceled in June, but in May, 4 people attended.
- National Night Out 2026 occurs on Tuesday, August 4. Library staff will table at four of the events; Learning Wheels will attend two. The full lineup is below, with Library participation in red. LW will attend the Westborough and Paradise Valley sites.

1	Winston Manor Community Assoc. / Dist 4	Clay Park 298 Clay Ave (portolet)	6pm - 8pm
2	Flor Nicolas / District 3	Elks Lodge 920 Stonegate Drive	5pm - 7pm
3	Mark Nagales / District 2	Westborough Picnic Shelter 2380 Galway Ave	6pm - 7:30pm
4	Good News Chapel / Dist 5	215 West Orange Ave	6pm - 7:30pm
5	Friends of Old Town / Dist. 3 & Dist.5 with Morelos Hall (SMMM)	Paradise Valley Rec. Center	5pm - 7pm

6	SSF Housing Authority / District 5	350 C Street	5:30pm - 7:30pm
7	Marie Patea / Dist 4	206 Arroyo Drive	6pm - 8pm
8	Amanda Rodriguez	21 Conrad Court	6pm - 8pm

- Mark your calendars for a selection of upcoming programs and events:
 - There are still many fabulous programs scheduled as part of Summer Learning Challenge 2026 to list; you can find them via this link:
<https://www.ssfca.gov/News/2026-Summer-Learning-Challenge>
 - Tuesday, July 28 at 6:30 PM @ LPR Banquet Hall, 1st Floor – Bel Canto Flutes Summer Concert (drop by after the Library Board meeting)
 - Wednesday, July 29 at 6:00PM in the LPR City Council Chambers – author talk with Alicia Upano, author of *Everything to the Sea*, one of People Magazine’s *Must-Read Books* for Summer 2026
 - Tuesday, August 4 National Night Out City-wide events
 - Saturday, August 15, Amgen’s “DNA Day” @ the Library Time TBD
 - Saturday, August 15, Summer Learning Challenge wrap-up program LPR 3-4:30PM - Musical performance by Soul4Kidz
 - Looking ahead to the City’s Annual Concert in the Park: September 12, Orange Memorial Park

Amgen Presents: Out-of-This-World: Space Activities

On Saturday, June 6, Amgen scientists hosted an exciting and educational craft workshop in the Community Room. Young patrons and their families created sun catchers, stain glass earths, spaceships, and straw rockets. Participants also learned about the sun, earth, and advances in space technology.



America 250 Trivia, Hamilton to Hollywood: Trivia Throwdown at the Library

The library hosted a variety of programs this year paid for by San Mateo County Measure K funds. The purpose of the grant was to bring people into the library that don't usually visit the library. Well, trivia night on Monday, June 15, was a success! The vendor did custom questions for a night of American history and pop culture to celebrate America's 250th.



We provided food and refreshments and the players brought their enthusiasm. Eight teams participated. For each team, one of the members was a frequent library user but the

rest were new and had never been here before. First and second place came down to a one point win! Most players asked when the next one was.



Father's Day & Special Men in Your Life Craft Program

The program on Tuesday, June 16, was well attended by 46 patrons - both children and adults. Some came in because they saw the program on the website (and they arrived early, ready for the program!), others were in the library looking for books - and these people were delighted that the library had something they could do for Father's Day. Since students are already on summer break, they don't make crafts at school for Father's Day



like they do for Mother's Day, so many thought the program was a great benefit. The kids were



very creative in their card making, and used the supplies in delightful ways. The tissue paper flowers were fantastic, and some young patrons even taught me to use pom poms in the middle of the flower, making the flower look even more authentic. The program was lots of fun, and I was able to help many of the patrons one on one and in small groups for the tissue paper flowers. A couple of the Mom's said "this is perfect since we haven't done anything for their Dad!"



Father's Day: Special Musical Storytime

On Thursday, June 11, a large crowd joined Grand Avenue Library for a special Musical Storytime celebrating fatherhood. We read books about fathers and engaged in a craft designed as a supplemental Father's Day gift.

Juneteenth: The Cookout

This Juneteenth SSFPL took the library to the cookout on Saturday, June 20. As an ode to both Juneteenth & Father's Day, we had a Negro Leagues themed celebration featuring performances by poets JR Rice, Andrea Drew, South San Francisco's Youth Poet Laureate Nathan Nand, and signer-songwriter BB Brown. After the performances patrons were treated to stadium worthy hotdogs, created baseball pennants, shopped Negro League gear from a local vendor, danced to Oldies, and played lawn games. 213 people attended the event.



One patron shared that it means a lot for the library to host events that reflect her culture. Another patron, who is a regular at the library shared that she looks "forward to these events every year!"

Community Paper Quilt For Juneteenth

In celebration of Juneteenth, Grand Library offered a self-directed quilt-making activity along with a display of books about African American quilt-making, the purpose of Juneteenth, and quilt-making in general. This year we focused on patterns and shapes. We offered square stickers available to be cut into triangles or other shapes to make patterns. Patrons used hole punchers and thread to connect their quilt squares to the larger community quilt.

Many patrons contributed quilt squares, and some made pieces to keep. One patron created an entire mini-quilt that they brought home. The Juneteenth community paper quilt will spend the rest of the summer decorating the wall of the library as a visual representation of working together.



Pride Month

On Friday, June 5, patrons listened to a short presentation on the history of the lavender and how it's a symbol for the queer community and Pride Month. They made lavender flowers with paint and Q-tips on postcards. Patrons were enthusiastic and even made multiple postcards to keep.



Pride Rainbow Storytime and Craft

To celebrate Pride Month, the Grand Avenue Library hosted a special Rainbow Pride Storytime on Monday, June 15, emphasizing family diversity and celebrating our differences. Children made rainbow hats and we kept the craft materials available for children to engage in over the rest of the week.

Mahjong Meet-Up

On Wednesday, June 10, Mahjong Meet-Up returned after a month hiatus, and it the program didn't miss a beat jumping back into the rhythms of things. We had a resounding twenty six people attend the program, with all five of our mahjong tables full of people having fun. To celebrate Mahjong's return, we ordered dumplings. One patron named Anita said that she plans on coming every week. Another patron named Victoria wanted to share the following message: "We have all missed playing Mahjong at SSF Library. With much appreciation for the warm welcome back, the delicious dumplings, and for always having tea for us. It is so very nice." Since the Mahjong Meet-Up's return we have gone from an average of 18 patrons to 30 patrons, filling up the tables.



Grand Adult Board Game Nights

As part of the Library's initiative to support social engagement for adults, and with Measure K funding, the Grand Avenue Library has been offering adult board game nights two



Wednesday evenings each month.

Attendees may bring games or play one of the games purchased via Measure K support. Each event has attracted more than enough participation to play up to two different games, often a cooperative game plus a more competitive one. The game Wavelength has proved to be quite popular. It is a social, cooperative party game in which players come up with clues to help each other identify a hidden point on a continuum between contrasting concepts, such as "good

movie/bad movie" or "waste of time/good use of time." Another game the group has chosen to play over and over is Ticket to Ride, in which players build railroad networks across a map by collecting cards, claiming routes, and completing secret travel objectives.

Pokémon Meetup

The Pokémon Meetup on Tuesday, June 23 was well attended. Kids made new friends while talking about cards and making trades. The "Catch 'em All" game was brought out and enjoyed by many people in the room, even those who did not plan to attend the Pokémon Meetup. Cards were handed out as prizes and there were two drawings for 3D printed Pokémon figurines.



Weekly Woolies Yarn Club

Weekly Woolies brought in a broad age demographic: children, teens, and older adults. Staff taught them how to crochet. It was a difficult craft to learn; staff decided to scale back the ambitious goals of making coasters and bookmarks. Instead, they focused on simply learning how to crochet a chain. Patrons took their work home to practice, and will reconvene for a small beginner project.



Solstice Charms

Patrons really enjoyed beading! The calming activity held on Tuesday, June 16, drew in teens and adult patrons. People did not want to leave and asked when we would hold it again.



Summer Fest with Facepainting

We kicked off the summer at Grand Avenue Library on Saturday, June 6, with facepainting, bubbles, music, and color! Scarves danced in the wind on the patio while bubbles floated by. The rug became a dance floor, and we listened to Kpop Demon Hunter CD from our music collection. We were joined by Diego Flores Face Painting team. The community loved getting their faces painted. We offered temporary tattoos while waiting in line to help boost community engagement and practice patience.



Disco Dance Party with DJ Chico Chi

We celebrated SSSFPL's Summer Learning Challenge and Pride month in the Youth Library with some kid-friendly beats by DJ Chico Chi on Saturday, June 13. As disco lights lit up the dance floor, over 250 attendees including children ages 0-11 and their caregivers dressed up in their best disco party outfits to enjoy some fun music and light refreshments.

Appreciative caregivers came up to staff at the end of the event to say "You should do this again!"



Unearth a Story: Dinosaur Puppet & Magic Show

On Saturday, June 20, approximately 110 people attended Unearth a Story: Dinosaur Puppet & Magic Show in the City Council chambers. Children were invited on stage to engage with archaeological-themed props and participate in magical reveals that support reading comprehension, critical thinking, and curiosity. The show's host, Safari Sam, also included a good amount of humor. Many laughs were heard from audience members.

This event was presented by California Kids Fun and is part of the 2026 Summer Learning Challenge special event lineup. The 2026 Summer Learning Challenge program has been made possible through the support of Genentech and the South San Francisco Friends of the Library.



Family Literacy Services Program Highlights

In June, alongside our recurring weekly programs, Learning Wheels led a Literacy Services-wide event called LearningFest. LearningFest was an educational event designed for families, helping to raise awareness about all our literacy programs. We also launched our guest lessons at Colma's summer program in June.



LearningFest welcomed 205 people at several learning stations, exploring resources, playing games, and building community! 85 children went aboard Learning Wheels after stopping by all stations and receiving stamps at each station. The event showcased the Summer Learning Challenge where

children received free books to build home libraries and enjoy a summer of reading. This

event also provided an opportunity for people to learn about Makerspace equipment and activities.

This was a great opportunity for residents to learn more about literacy resources and programs at Project Read and the Gene Mullin Community Learning Center.

As one staff member was leaving the building, they were thanked and asked, "When is the next event? This was amazing!" It was a very successful and fun event.



Colma's Summer Program



Free Legal Clinic with API Legal Outreach

We've been hosting the Free Legal Clinic since March of 2026, and participation has gradually risen. The most recent two sessions, both in June, have been at capacity (a maximum of six people per week). We also frequently receive calls from people who would like to participate, so it's clear that there's a need for this type of service.



Immigrant Heritage Month Storytime

In collaboration with the San Mateo County Office of Community Affairs, the Grand Avenue Library hosted a special Immigrant Heritage Month Storytime and activity on Monday, June 29. We read books about diverse neighborhoods, sharing, and the experience of being bilingual and bicultural. Participants engaged in an activity inspired by what reminds them of home, culture and identity. Parents were provided resources related to immigration and legal rights. We also offered bubble-making and paletas (Mexican popsicles) for children on the patio.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Valerie Sommer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end.

Valerie Sommer
Library Director