



Library Director's Monthly Report

March 2026 Meeting of the Library Board of Trustees

LIBRARY DIRECTOR'S EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- National Library Week is April 19-25 this year. Library Director Valerie Sommer will be reading the National Library Week 2026 Proclamation and Library Board President Catherine Abalos will be accepting it at the April 8, 2026, City Council meeting. The Proclamation is included in this packet.
- Mark your calendars for two upcoming movie screenings celebrating America250 values:
 - Tuesday, March 30, 2026, 6pm in the City Council Chambers, film screening of *The Hello Girls*, story of the 233 American female operators recruited by the US Army Signal Corps during WWI to work near the front lines in France. Commanded by General John Pershing, these women connected over 26 million calls and greatly helped the war effort. There are local connections to *The Hello Girls* that we will highlight as part of the program.
 - Saturday, April 25, 2026, 1:00 in the City Council Chambers, film screening of *The Librarians*, a documentary film on book bans and the right to read. *The Librarians* is a powerful documentary that highlights librarians as frontline defenders of the First Amendment and intellectual freedom during an unprecedented wave of book challenges.
- As part of community gathering programs supported by SMCo Measure K funds, on Saturday, March 28, 2026, 11:00 a.m. in the LPR 1st floor Banquet Hall, meet Mychal Threats, author and host of Reading Rainbow, as he shares Finding your Joy, his personal journey through mental health, wellbeing and self-care and reads from his newest story time book *I'm So Happy You're Here: A Celebration of Library Joy*.
- On March 12, 2026, Literacy Program Manager MaryAnn Cordova Arce joined the California Library Association legislative priorities advocacy group and testified in Sacramento at the Senate Budget Subcommittee on Education Finance, supporting continued funding for English as a Second Language Literacy

Programs. We are seeking \$3 million in ongoing funding to continue the program, since one-time funds that were dedicated for the program will expire in June 2026, ending a very successful three-year grant program.

- This year's Youth in Government counterparts are seniors at South San Francisco High School: Elizabeth Unisa is the Library Director and Julianne Garcia-Ku is the Assistant Library Director. At the March 18 Mock City Council meeting, they presented staff reports on funding library-related services at the new Westborough Preschool. As part of a collaboration with the Parks and Recreation Department, we proposed the receipt of grant funding to support in-classroom libraries and subscriptions to the TumbleBooks online reading and literacy resources. Both of our counterparts are big library users and didn't need a tour of the building, as they often visit after school.

LIBRARY PROGRAM MONTHLY REPORTS – February 2026

Adult Services Program

Key Stats & Updates for February 2026

- Programs: 33 total; 339 attendees or participants
- Streaming Movies & Music: 798
 - Hoopla: 132
 - Kanopy: 666
- eBooks, eAudiobooks, & eMagazines check-outs: 10,702
 - eBook and eAudio checkouts (combined Libby & Hoopla): 8,761
 - Hoopla: 686 (includes comics)
 - Libby: 8,075
 - EMagazines checkouts (Libby): 1,941

Premiere Programming & Community Partnerships

Black History Month | America 250

Black History Month | America 250 was a collaboration between Adult Services, the Discovery Center, and Youth Services, with a month of programming that included a total of 192 participants for Adult Services and the Discovery Center.

The programming kicked off with America's Soundtrack Film Series, which explored the impact of Black Americans on popular music. Over four weeks, we watched four documentaries that traced the evolution of gospel into rock and roll and correlated it with the rise of hip-hop. An attendee at all four screenings shared that she learned "so much" and was appreciative of the programs. After the screening of a documentary about Grace Jones, a patron shared that "it doesn't matter who you are, we are all the same, and we all love music." Overall, 79 patrons attended the film series, even if a few just popped in to dance to the music for a minute or two.

Adult programming continued with a Black Inventors & STEM Creators exhibit, and a Black History Paint and Sip in which participants of all ages were invited to paint wooden models of famous Black figures and inventions, while enjoying a sip of Sorrel, a sweet spicy hibiscus tea with roots in West Africa. The SSFPL Monthly Book Group read *Horse* by Geraldine Brooks, which explored the legacy of Black jockeys, grooms, and trainers through US history, art, and science.



Patrons celebrate Lonnie Johnson, inventor of the super soaker, by creating their own super soakers in the Community Room



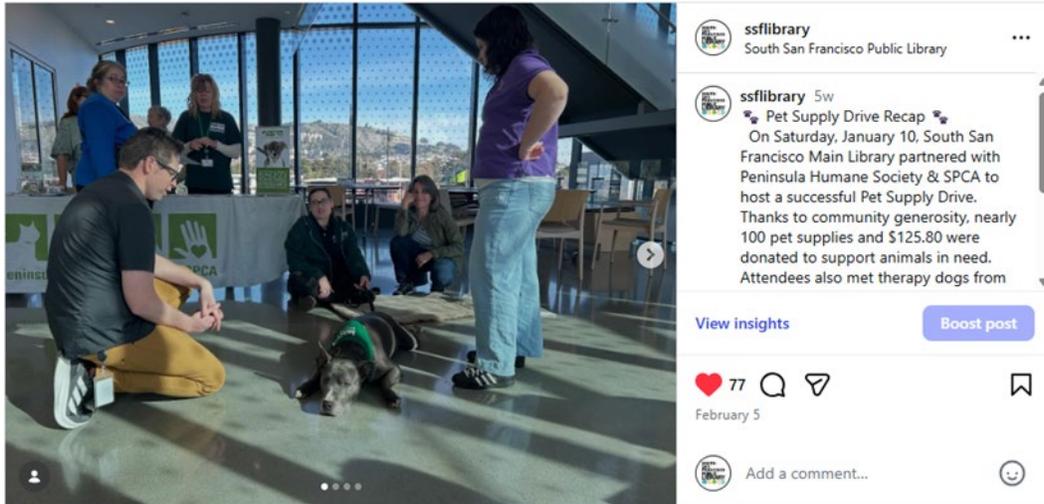
Young Patrons at the Black Inventors & STEM Creators exhibit

We continued our craft program get-togethers funded by the Measure K grant. This month we began a three-month long crafting series called Cricut Crafternoon. In February participants made foiled Valentine's Day cards. In March the community will be making spring vinyl wall art. All materials are funded by the San Mateo County Measure K grant.

Marketing, Promotion, and Outreach

Total Library Newsletter Opens in February: **37,213**

- Notable content: Pet Supply Drive with the Peninsula Humane Society
- **3,447** views, **85** likes (IG + FB), **4** shares



Social Media Statistics

- Total library content views: **19,598**
- Community members reached: **8,346**

Circulation

- Total raw circulation (Main and Grand): **34,688**
- Total circulation including Overdrive (Main and Grand): **42,763**
- Total number of materials checked in: **14,953**
- New library accounts: **377**
- Number of items lent to another library: **5,136**
- Number of items borrowed from another library: **2,984**

Grand Avenue Branch Library

Key Stats & Updates for February 2026

- Programs: 25 total; 796 attendees or participants
- In February, the library initiated its fourth weekly storytime: a Saturday Storytime. Each of these storytimes has proven to be popular, with an average of 44 attendees per program.

Self-Directed Programs: 1,020 participants

Grand Avenue Library staff created numerous self-directed activities for all age levels, including ones that celebrated Black History Month and Valentine's Day. These activities are designed to invite patrons to break away from their busy lives and engage in thoughtful, creative, and/or meditative activities.



Premiere Programming & Community Partnerships

Grand Library continued to collaborate with local elementary schools, hosting four class visits in February, including with middle school students. Class visits include read-alouds, scavenger hunts, catalog overviews (for the middle school students), and time for browsing the collections and quiet reading.



Staff observed teens experimenting with the heart-making craft and creating more complex versions. A 5th grader complimented the craft as "so fire!"

Literacy Services Programs

Gene Mullin Community Learning Center (GMCLC) – Youth Services

Homework Club continues to provide a supportive after-school space for 1st–5th grade students of Spruce Elementary to complete homework, build friendships, and engage in hands-on learning activities. During February, the program celebrated Lunar New Year with a paper lantern craft and explored themes of animals and nature, where students adopted stuffed animals, learned about gorillas, and created 3D insects using wood and magnets, combining creativity with simple STEM concepts. Students also explored the plant life cycle, planting “*tickle me not*” seeds and watering them daily to observe how plants grow and respond to their environment.



Gene Mullin Community Learning Center (GMCLC) – Adult Services

Gene Mullin Community Learning Center kicked off the month with our long-term organizational partner, Familias Tomando Acción, starting their new cohort for Creciendo Juntos. Tech Tutoring services continue, supporting patrons with vast needs ranging from drafting emails, typing, and accessing Khan Academy for math review. Staff member Dimitri Antonis provides assistance with services averaging an hour and a half a session. Furthermore one-on-one and small group tutoring for English as a Second Language have expanded, bringing GMCLC services to more patrons. Over seven GMCLC adult services programs, including Citizenship and Digital Literacy, there were a total of 177 people in attendance. As a result, Creative Center has seen an increase of approximately 200% compared to January 2026. Creative Center staff provide enrichment activities to children whose family members are attending GMCLC classes and programs.



Project Read – Adult Services

Project Read's Book Club has returned this year with great enthusiasm from participants. The group recently read *Siddhartha* by Hermann Hesse, and the discussion was so engaging that learners and tutor volunteers requested and planned for an additional meeting to continue reflecting on the book. Participants appreciated the opportunity to explore the book's themes together and share diverse perspectives. The group's next selection will be *They Called Us Enemy* by George Takei. Participant reflections:

"As part of the Project Read Book Club, we discussed Siddhartha. I found the book insightful in understanding Hindu spiritual concepts and Siddhartha's journey and many learnings through life. It was particularly meaningful to have a discussion with the members of the Book Club and hear their diverse perspectives."

"Thank you for inviting me! It was a truly special gathering. It was lovely discussing the book with you all ❤️🙏"

"...thanks for choosing a great book for us. It was right on time for me ❤️"

Project Read – Children and Family Services

Learning Wheels supported the highly successful Lunar New Year event at the Main Library, where we distributed more than 400 books and over 100 STEAM kits to families. February brought heavy rain and challenging weather, so we're especially grateful for our continued partnerships with the SSF Clinic and the San Bruno Library. On days when it wasn't safe to take the truck out, we were still able to deliver books for children and families at these partner sites. Storytime sessions throughout the month celebrated several themes, including Valentine's Day, Black History Month, and Lunar New Year. Each theme featured engaging read-alouds and hands-on crafts. In our partnership with the Town of Colma's after-school program, we continued providing our regular guest lessons and led a special science session for students in their President's Week camp.



Discovery Center Programs

- Discovery Center Services
 - In February 2026, the Discovery Center fulfilled 44 3D printer appointments, 15+ 3D printer walk-in appointments, and 11 Tech Drop-in appointments.
- Drop-in, Self-Directed Activities: Valentines Craft and Lunar New Year Buttons
 - To celebrate the Lunar New Year and Valentines Day, Discovery Center staff put together passive craft stations. Over 120 Lunar New Year themed buttons and over 60 Valentine's Day hearts were decorated by patrons.



Black History Month – Lewis Latimer: Snap Circuits

The Discovery Center and Adult services teams led the Snap Circuits: Lewis Latimer program on Tuesday, February 17, in the Community Room. Adult Services librarian, Philecia Harris, supplemented the program with an amazing presentation of the Black

History Month Inventors display on the 2nd floor. Approximately 30 patrons received a history lesson of the life of Lewis Latimer and his many contributions to lighting system development and inventions such as the carbon filament in incandescent light bulbs.



Peninsula Libraries Comic Arts Fest

Miriam Hart, Discovery Center Library Assistant, is one of the coordinators of the Peninsula Library Comic Arts Fest scheduled for April 2026. She has created vibrant and colorful flyers to advertise the lineup of premier programs that will take place at LPR. The flyers are posted on the walls of the library as well as the San Francisco Bart

Station as part of the marketing campaign. Small Press Comics Expo is on Saturday, April 4 at LPR, from 10am -4pm.



AMGEN Program – Sunlight Science

AMGEN scientists in coordination with the Discovery Center held another successful STEAM program, Sunlight Science: Rainbows, Flowers and Butterflies, in the Community Room on Saturday, February 21. Children and their families completed a genetic punnett square lesson, created butterflies and rainbows using triangular prisms. Approximately 267 patrons were in attendance throughout the day.



Community Room
Passive Activities



Ability Path Movie Showings



Youth Services Programs

Key Stats & Updates for February 2026

- Programs: 64 total; (Pending: attendees or participants – update at LB meeting)

Outreach

In February, Youth Services staff presented at several Career Days hosted by local schools, including Junipero Serra Elementary and Parkway Middle School. Staff shared what they do as a Librarian and shared their career journey with students. Flyers and physical objects were shown to students to showcase library offerings and what a Librarian does. Items shown include video game controllers, 3D prints, etc.



Parkway Middle School Career Day Visit

Lunar New Year Celebration

On Saturday, February 7th, the South San Francisco Public Library hosted its annual Lunar New Year celebration at the Library | Parks and Recreation Center, welcoming nearly 1,000 community members to ring in the Year of the Horse.

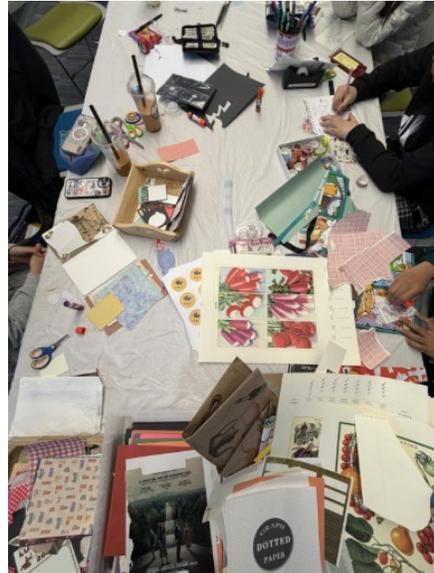
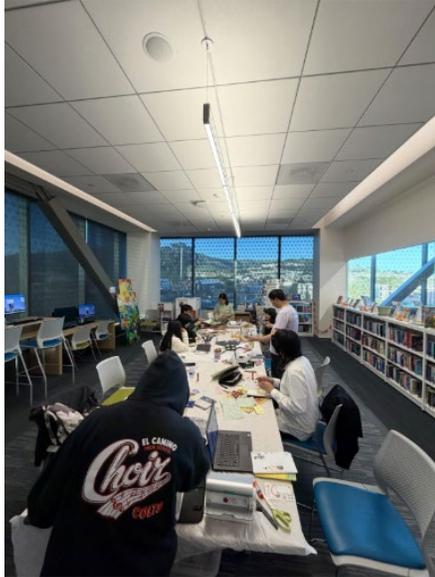
The celebration began in the Banquet Hall, where attendees received red envelopes and enjoyed refreshments before heading outside for a lion dance performance by LionDanceMe, one of the Bay Area's premier lion dance troupes. Special guests included South San Francisco City Councilmember Flor Nicolas and Vice Mayor Mark Nagales, who offered welcoming remarks and served as the event's emcee.

Following the performance, festivities continued in the Social Hall with Lunar New Year-themed crafts led by library staff and volunteers. Community members of all ages created lucky paper fish, designed their own Lunar New Year Zodiac stamps and buttons, and posed for photos in an interactive, themed photo booth. The celebration also featured face painting by Diego Flores Art.



Junk Journal Club for Teens (February 26, 2026)

Teens gathered in the Young Adult Room and created creative and personalized journals, mainly from upcycled materials.



STEMsters

The last session of the Winter 2025 - Spring 2026 STEMsters took place on February 11th and 25th. Activities included Balancing Bot and Cotton Ball Launcher. Pictured below are patrons building a "balancing bot" using items such as compact discs, tape, sticks, etc.

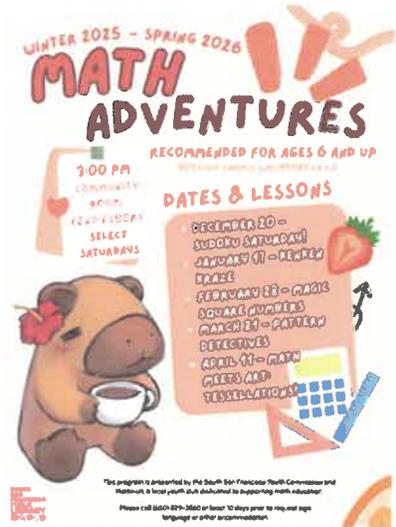


Math Adventures

The activity for the February 28th installment of Math Adventures was Magic Square Numbers. This program is led by Mathivist, a local youth club dedicated to supporting math education. The club organizer, Yunn Lee, is a current South San Francisco Youth Commissioner.

Class Visits

On February 27th, LPR hosted a visit from Hillside Christian Academy here in South San Francisco. The visit included students ranging from grades 1-4.



Valerie Sommer
Library Director