



Library Director's Report

May 26, 2026 Meeting of the Library Board of Trustees

LIBRARY DIRECTOR

- The American Revolution Experience exhibit in the Library's Community Room was a wonderful opportunity to inform and excite folks about the founding of our country and the important values we hold as a nation. Starting with a well-attended opening day reception on April 24, the exhibit was open through April 30 before moving to San Francisco. Over 650 people visited to view the display panels and explore the interactive digital kiosks. We owe a big thank you to Sylvia Payne, Regent of the San Andreas Lake Chapter of Daughters of the American Revolution as well as the American Battlefield Trust for partnering with us in this America250 exhibit. Most visitors were from South San Francisco and local Bay Area communities, with one visitor from Denmark.
- We have been awarded a "Charlie Cart" via a federally-funded EmPOWERing Access California State Library Project. The Charlie Cart is a mobile kitchen on wheels and was specifically designed with schools and community organizations in mind. The kitchen includes: a convection oven and induction cooktop; a stainless-steel sink with spray nozzle and gray water system; storage cabinets for all included equipment; a power and electrical system optimized for classroom use. We plan to share the equipment with Parks and Recreation and use it in special programs such as Project Read Health Literacy programs. The staff report and resolution will be prepared for an upcoming City Council meeting. A specification sheet is attached to this packet.
- In partnership with the California State Library, the California Library Association has provided free USA 250-themed books to all California public libraries to support library collection development. In recognition of the United States Semiquincentennial, the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, this year's book sets feature titles for children and teens that center on events, individuals, and stories connected to the history of United States and to the journey toward achieving the ideals and aspirations set forth, for all. We have received 26

titles for both Main and Grand Library collections. The booklist is attached to this packet.

- On Friday, May 1, 2026, the Peninsula Library System (PLS) network experienced a significant outage that impacted library services across our system. Library online services, including wireless access, were down in the library, the lobby spaces close to the library and the exterior EV chargers, which are on the library wireless network. The issue began overnight/early Friday morning, with our Equipment connecting to AT&T telecommunications services showing no link lights.

Initial Response (May 1): Peninsula Libraries Automated Network (PLAN) staff immediately checked all local hardware and systems, confirming they were functioning normally. It was determined the problem was with PLAN's AT&T circuit. A trouble ticket was opened at 8:00 a.m., and PLAN staff began escalating with AT&T.

Troubleshooting and Resolution:

- AT&T dispatched a field technician on Friday afternoon.
- The issue was isolated to a hardware failure (overheated card and fan) at the AT&T central office location.
- Replacement parts were ordered, and on-site work continued over the weekend.
- On Monday, May 4, the technician replaced the faulty card. The circuit was restored at approximately 1:10 PM PDT.
- Despite having a redundant circuit in place, failover was not possible because the failure occurred upstream in the AT&T infrastructure where both paths converged.

Escalations and Coordination: Throughout the incident, PLS and PLAN staff worked continuously — including over the weekend — to escalate the issue. They engaged the State Library Broadband Administrator, CENIC, and other key stakeholders. A formal debrief meeting is being scheduled with AT&T, CENIC, the State Library, and PLS/PLAN to review the extended resolution time and improve future escalation processes. PLS has also requested a service credit for the outage.

All systems are now fully operational. We recognize how disruptive this extended outage was for staff and the community and appreciate the hard work of PLS/PLAN to resolve the issue and for the patience and understanding of LPR users.

- Mark your calendars:
 - One Book One Coast Event: Author Talk, Sunday, May 31, 2:00 p.m.: George Takei on *They Called Us Enemy*; Live Zoom program in LPR City Council Chambers or remote viewing from home (QR code on flyer)
 - The Summer Learning Challenge starts on June 1, with a kickoff program at LPR on June 11 at 4:00pm featuring a family friendly musical performance by Dos Bandoleros. Attendees will also learn about all the special events happening this summer, see a live 3D printing demo, make a paper lei craft and much more. Genentech and Friends of the Library are our premiere funders of this year's programs, events and free books.
 - The Cookout: A Juneteenth Celebration with Slam Poetry, hot dogs and America's favorite pastime is scheduled on Saturday, June 20, starting at 1:00 p.m., outside on the LPR Lawn. Picnic, crafts, and play, as well as special guests J. R. Rice (host), Angela Drew (Poet), and BB Brown (Singer) add up to a fun and entertaining afternoon. As part of the festivities, we will celebrate the Negro Baseball Leagues; wear your favorite baseball jersey and create a baseball pennant.

National Library Week

The Library celebrated National Library Week in April with a range of events, including crafts and a movie screening.



DJ Chico Chi spun tracks for a *Baby Rave* at the Grand Avenue Library on Saturday, April 18. The event was designed for those under the age of five years old, but it ended up being a powerful intergenerational gathering. Parents, grandparents, older siblings, and little ones all had songs they enjoyed and danced with each other. There were many songs in world languages, which the community really appreciated, enthusiastically singing or clapping along. Folks attended in fun party clothes and

used our supplies for dressing up. Anyone who needed a dance break went to the patio for bubbles and chalk.

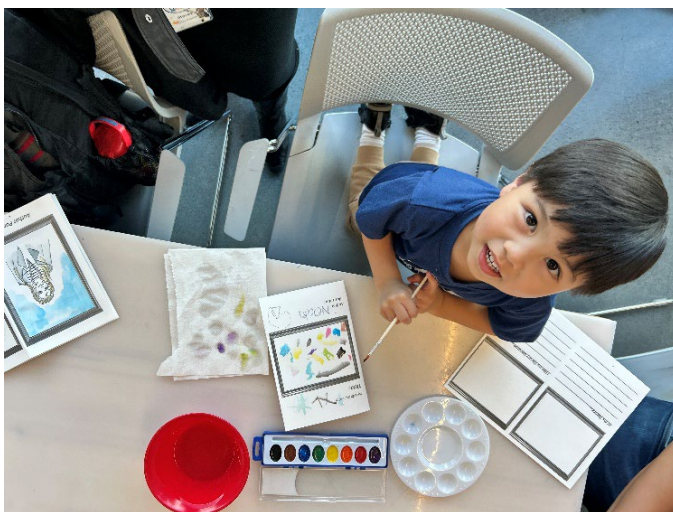
30 teen patrons participated in the *Mini Book Charms* craft, choosing from popular YA and manga. More than fifty mini books were prepared, and supplies ran out. This was a well-attended teen program for a Friday after school. Patrons made multiple books for themselves and expressed interest in similar future programs.



Discovery Center volunteer, Christian Chang, and his daughter, Isabella, taught the first session of *Ukulele for Beginners* in the Young Adult Room. Participants learned basic strumming and how to properly tune their ukuleles. Two more sessions are planned where they will continue to practice basic picking, chords and eventually play songs.

25 people attended the Library's screening of the film *The Librarians* on Saturday, April 25, calling it "provocative". The documentary examines the practice of book banning by policymakers and how libraries are on the front lines of protecting our freedom to read.

A group of children and their caregivers participated in the *Design Your Own Book* program. Kids and adults made lovely paintings and a few children stayed to write a whole book! Patrons learned different types of book binding: tape, stapler, sewing. One patron left her book on display at the Youth Library Circulation Desk.



National Poetry Month

The Library also celebrated National Poetry Month in April. To mark the 30th anniversary of National Poetry Month, the South San Francisco Public Library hosted a poetry reading with Andrew Paul Nelson and Carlos Quinteros III. They shared their own poems and some favorites from other Bay Area poets. Afterward, we had a Q&A with the poets. We also handed out pocket-sized poems by Langston Hughes, Chen Chen, Lucille Clifton, Mary Oliver, and local favorite Kenneth Rexroth. One patron, Sherri, said that the "currency of poetry is joy," which perfectly summed up our cozy gathering.



At the *Teen Poetry Slam*, participants recited poetry, created blackout poetry crafts, enjoyed tea and conversation, and the teens stayed until closing.

Peninsula Libraries Comic Arts Fest

Artists Josue Cruz, SS Julian, and Danna Staaf visited the Library as part of the Peninsula Libraries Comic Arts Fest (PLCAF) to teach people how to draw an anatomically correct octopus. At the *How to Draw an Octopus* workshop, patrons of all ages learned about the anatomy of an octopus and practiced their drawing skills. Patrons had the option to share their drawings using the overhead camera in the Makerspace at the end. The workshop was well attended with 35 patrons who can now draw their own octopus.

Artist Josue Cruz returned to the Library for a second year for PLCAF to do a *Comics Jam workshop* in the Makerspace. Josue brings a lot of laughter to the Makerspace with their fun and creative workshop.



Introduction to Video Game Development

In this three-part workshop series, Discovery Center volunteers Christian Chang (Senior Level Designer for Skydance New Media) and Danny Karp (Former Engineering Manager at Meta and Sanzaru Games) gave patrons a deep dive into the world of video game development. In the first session, patrons received an overview of what it takes to enter the industry and the skills required to be successful. In the second and third sessions, the patrons got hands on practice with Unreal Engine 5 software and created a video game level and character.



Uncle Jer's Traveling Bee Show

80 people attended Uncle Jer's Traveling Bee Show. Participants learned about bees, seeing them up close. Attendees also had the opportunity to taste honey that was produced by the bees in the show. Young children enjoyed learning and doing the Bee Dance.



Second Harvest Nutrition Workshop

A nutrition workshop was held at the Gene Mullin Community Learning Center (GMCLC) with Second Harvest Food Bank's Evelyn Thai, who taught patrons how to better understand nutrition labels. She focused on serving size, calories, added sugars, and specific ingredients to look out for when grocery shopping. She went into detail about ingredients that can negatively impact health, such as partially hydrogenated oils. Patrons asked several questions throughout the presentation and showed a strong interest in learning more about ingredients found in products with added sugars and additives like maltodextrin. She also shared several equations, such as how to determine daily protein intake based on body weight, along with other tips for remembering recommended daily sugar and calorie intake based on age and gender. The students expressed gratitude and shared that they enjoyed learning from Evelyn. They also expressed interest in seeing more programs like this in the future that can help them make healthier choices when grocery shopping.

Navigating SSFUSD for Guardians

GMCLC held a series of workshops starting in April at the request of multiple community members to learn more about how to advocate for their child(ren) and understanding the school system. Throughout the eight sessions, people learned about the PTA, enrollment applications, transfers, and more.

Project Read Adult Book Club

In March, Project Read’s Book Club continued to evolve as participants established a new structure for future sessions: meeting twice per book to allow for deeper discussion, followed by an optional activity to bring the text to life. This month, the group read, *They Called Us Enemy*, by George Takei, and gathered for two thoughtful discussions exploring its themes of identity, injustice, and resilience.

The second meeting extended beyond literary analysis, as participants shared George Takei TED Talk and engaged in research on local history. They discovered the Tanforan Assembly Center Memorial, a site connected to the incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II. Inspired by this connection, members independently organized a visit following their discussion to deepen their understanding through place-based learning.

Book Club has increasingly become a space not only for reading, but for active engagement—where literature is explored through lived experience and community connection. This growth has been made possible through the dedication of tutor volunteers, who helped lead the first discussion for this title and demonstrated strong community-building in support of Project Read learners’ progress.



Project Read's Family Literacy Services

We had an exceptionally busy April in Family Literacy Services. In addition to our weekly programs, we supported six special events featuring Learning Wheels. The Family Literacy team made two preschool visits to Southwood and Hillside preschools and participated in two sessions of the Promise Champions evening program. We also joined the Town of Colma and the City of San Bruno for their Day of the Child celebrations.



Storytime at Gene Mullin Community Learning Center

Valerie Sommer

Valerie Sommer
Library Director