



# Library Director's Report

**December 2025**

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## **LIBRARY DIRECTOR**

- The 32<sup>nd</sup> Project Read Trivia Challenge was a night of good fun and friends of the Library. With attendance of over 300 people and 27 teams competing, it was another successful event for literacy services. Literacy Program Manager Mary Ann Cordova Arce will present a recap to the Library Board.
- Congratulations to Mary Ann Cordova Arce for her promotion to Literacy Program Manager. Mary Ann has been with us since 2019, first as a part-time hourly staff member, then promoted to a full-time Literacy Services Coordinator in 2022, and now her promotion to Manager. She was the Acting Library Program Manager for almost 12 months before the recruitment and appointment to this regular position.
- On Election Day, November 4, a total of 1,001 people voted in the Library Vote Center, with many more voters dropping off their ballots. The polls close at 8pm; everyone in line at 8pm can vote. This year, the last person to vote waited in line until 10:10pm. We were a 10-Day Vote Center for this election. For the next two elections, June 2, 2026, and November 3, 2026, the Library's Community Room will serve as a 30-Day Vote Center.
- A \$10,000 gift from the Carnegie Foundation will be presented to City Council for their acceptance at the December 10, 2025, City Council meeting. We are thrilled to have received notice of this funding:

*I am delighted to inform you that the foundation established by Andrew Carnegie, Carnegie Corporation of New York, is awarding a \$10,000 gift to your library and to all Carnegie Libraries nationwide in commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence.*

- The South San Francisco Friends of the Library raised over \$1,800 for Library programs, services and collections at their November 14/15 Fall Book Sale. We are very fortunate to have such a dedicated group of library supporters.
- Save the Date: The City's Installation of the Mayor, Vice Mayor, and Retirement of City Manager ceremony and reception will be held on Tuesday, December 9, 2025, at 6:30pm in the Council Chambers and Banquet Hall at LPR.

- High Demand Holds:

	Title	Author	Material Type	System Holds
1	The secret of secrets : a novel / Dan Brown.	Brown, Dan, 1964- author.	BOOKS	416
2	The impossible fortune / Richard Osman.	Osman, Richard, 1970- author. Author.	BOOKS	248
3	The correspondent : a novel / Virginia Evans.	Evans, Virginia, 1986- author.	BOOKS	193
4	The widow / John Grisham.	Grisham, John, author.	BOOKS	189
5	107 days / Kamala Harris.	Harris, Kamala, 1964- author.	BOOKS	184
6	Nobody's girl : a memoir of surviving abuse and fighting for justice / Virginia Roberts Giuffre.	Roberts Giuffre, Virginia, author.	BOOKS	172
7	1929 : inside the greatest crash in Wall Street history-- and how it shattered a nation / Andrew Ross Sorkin.	Sorkin, Andrew Ross, author. Author.	BOOKS	164
8	The loneliness of Sonia and Sunny : a novel / Kiran Desai.	Desai, Kiran, 1971- author.	BOOKS	163
9	Good things : recipes and rituals to share with people you love / Samin Nosrat ; with photographs by Aya Brackett.	Nosrat, Samin, author.	BOOKS	149
10	The proving ground / Michael Connelly	Connelly, Michael, 1956- author.	BOOKS	148
11	Heart the lover : a novel / Lily King.	King, Lily, author.	BOOKS	137
12	DOG MAN 14 : Big Jim Believes	Pilkey, Dav/ Pilkey, Dav (ILT)	BOOKS	135
13	The black wolf / Louise Penny.	Penny, Louise, author.	BOOKS	133
14	Magic of the wizard dragon / written by Tracey West ; illustrated by Graham Howells.	West, Tracey, 1965- author.	BOOKS	127
15	Gone before goodbye / Reese Witherspoon.	Witherspoon, Reese, 1976- author.	BOOKS	127
16	Mission: impossible. The final reckoning / Paramount Pictures and Skydance present ; a Tom Cruise production ; produced by Tom Cruise, Christopher McQuarrie ; written by Christopher McQuarrie & Erik Jendresen ; directed by Christopher McQuarrie.		BLURAY	115
17	What we can know : a novel / Ian McEwan.	McEwan, Ian, author.	BOOKS	112
18	DOWNTON ABBEY: THE GRAND FINALE [DVD].		DVD	106
19	Spy school blackout / Stuart Gibbs.	Gibbs, Stuart, 1969- author. Author.	BOOKS	103
20	THE NAKED GUN [videorecording].		DVD	102

21	These summer storms : a novel / Sarah MacLean.	MacLean, Sarah, author.	BOOKS	95
22	Partypoooper / by Jeff Kinney.	Kinney, Jeff, author, illustrator.	BOOKS	95
23	The secret of secrets : a novel / Dan Brown.	Brown, Dan, 1964- author.	LARGE PRINT	92
24	Clown town / Mick Herron.	Herron, Mick, author.	BOOKS	84
25	What we can know : a novel / Ian McEwan.	McEwan, Ian, author.	LARGE PRINT	83
26	NASH FALLS	Baldacci, David	BOOKS	79
27	The art of spending money : simple choices for a richer life / Morgan Housel.	Housel, Morgan, author. Author.	BOOKS	79
28	Replaceable you : adventures in human anatomy / Mary Roach.	Roach, Mary, author.	BOOKS	74
29	Breakneck : China's quest to engineer the future / Dan Wang.	Wang, Dan (Writer on China), author.	BOOKS	72
30	Mother Mary comes to me / Arundhati Roy.	Roy, Arundhati, author.	BOOKS	69

- Top eBook and eAudiobook Checkouts:

Title		Checkouts
1	Say You'll Remember Me: (unabridged)	24
2	Great Big Beautiful Life	23
3	The Wedding People: A Novel	23
4	A Court of Thorns and Roses	21
5	The Nightingale: A Novel (unabridged)	19
6	The Women: A Novel (unabridged)	18
7	Great Big Beautiful Life: (unabridged)	17
8	The Perfect Marriage: (unabridged)	16
9	The Women: A Novel	16
10	The God of the Woods: A Novel (unabridged)	14
11	Sunrise on the Reaping	13
12	A Court of Mist and Fury	12
13	Careless People: A Cautionary Tale of Power, Greed, and Lost Idealism (unabridged)	12
14	Deep End: (unabridged)	12
15	Intermezzo: A Novel	12
16	Iron Flame	12
17	Pride and Prejudice: (unabridged)	12
18	Dune: (unabridged)	11
19	James: A Novel (unabridged)	11

20	Just for the Summer: (unabridged)	11
21	The Midnight Feast: A Novel (unabridged)	11
22	Two Can Play: (unabridged)	11
23	Funny Story: (unabridged)	10
24	The Housemaid's Secret: (unabridged)	10
25	The Let Them Theory	10
26	The Wedding People: A Novel (unabridged)	10
27	Throne of Glass	10
28	A Court of Mist and Fury: (unabridged)	9
29	A Court of Silver Flames	9
30	A Court of Thorns and Roses Bundle: A 5 Book Bundle	9

## **ADULT SERVICES**

### *Digital Literacy & Online Resources*

We now subscribe to Swank Streaming, a company that provides an umbrella license to libraries to show thousands of feature films and documentaries. With Swank Streaming we are now able to stream themed movies for movie nights at the library without the need for a DVD player. We are looking forward to all the future programming opportunities with this new service.

### *October – Key Stats & Updates*

- Programs: 37 total; 326 attendees or participants
- Streaming Movies, TV & Music:
  - Hoopla: 173
  - Kanopy: 760
- eBooks, eAudiobooks, & eMagazines check-outs: 10,887
  - eBook and eAudio checkouts (combined Libby & Hoopla): 8,743
    - Hoopla: 753 (includes comics)
    - Libby: 7,990
  - EMagazines checkouts (Libby): 2,144

### *Premiere Programming & Community Partnerships*

On Tuesday October 14<sup>th</sup>, 18 people Celebrated Diwali with a Bollywood dance lesson. Swetha Ravi gave a brief explanation of the Diwali holiday and taught participants a full Bollywood dance routine.



The Adult Services Team partnered with Councilmember Flor Nicolas and the San Mateo County Chapter of the Filipino American National History Society to screen the movie *Song of the Fireflies* to honor Filipino American History Month. Ninety members of the community, many dressed in traditional attire of the Philippines, gathered at the South San Francisco Library | Parks &



Recreation Center, where two screenings of the film were accompanied by servings of pancit and lumpia. A few attendees shared their excitement to see the film being shown at the library since they had missed other Bay Area screenings.

In early November we partnered with Amgen principal scientist Dr. Ittai Eres, who presented biology, genetics and the breakthroughs in medicine that are being made through the study of the human genome. After engaging the audience with his presentation, Dr. Eres answered guests' questions, of which there were many – so many, in fact, that the building closed before Dr. Eres could answer them all! Attendees commented that they were interested in more programs about biotechnology, climate science, lectures and hands-on science events. The next program will be on Earthquakes, scheduled for Saturday, December 13.

One December 1<sup>st</sup> at 6:30pm the Bel Canto Flutes will be performing in the City Council Chambers.

## **CIRCULATION**

- Total raw circulation (Main and Grand): **39,084**
- Total circulation including Overdrive (Main and Grand): **47,074**
- Total number of materials checked in: **17,726**
- New library accounts: **420**
- Number of items lent to another library: **5,854**
- Number of items borrowed from another library: **2,828**

## **MARKETING and PROMOTION**

Total Library Newsletter Opens in October + November: **77,323**

Notable features in Mayor Newsletter:

- FAHM 2025 Events (**14% of total clicks**)

### **Social Media**

- Total library content views: **35,839**
- Community members reached: **27,568**





## **GRAND AVENUE BRANCH LIBRARY**

### *OCTOBER – Key Stats & Updates*

- In-Person Programs: 17 total; 578 attendees or participants
- Self-Directed Programs: 575 participants

The Grand Avenue Library hosted four holiday programs in October, including three Halloween programs and a Día de los Muertos program.

Over 250 people made pirate people with popsicle sticks as part of the library's afterschool passive program.

We created an interactive banned books display in which patrons indicated which of the highlighted censored books they had read and learned about the library's dedication to providing a collection that includes books with a wide range of perspectives. Over 100 patrons participated.

### *Premiere Programming & Community Partnerships*

Puppeteer Ramon Abad offered a fun and participatory puppet show program for the library in celebration of Filipino-American History Month on Saturday, October 25.



## **LITERACY SERVICES**

### *Gene Mullin Community Learning Center (GMCLC) – Adult Services*

In October, the Adult Program saw strong engagement across its programs.

- English Conversation sessions were held on both Thursdays and Saturdays, with new patrons attending and expressing excitement about returning. One group implemented an anonymous feedback form, which received overwhelmingly positive responses.
- In the Citizenship program, three patrons passed their exams and are now awaiting their official citizenship. Additionally, a representative from IIBA visited the center to meet with patrons and provide support with immigration cases.
- In Digital Literacy, a participant shared how the class helped improve her self-image and confidence. She appreciated the program's focus on growth and credited the support she received in building foundational skills and becoming more independent.

### *Gene Mullin Community Learning Center (GMCLC) – Youth Services*

- In October, youth programs at GMCLC were filled with creativity, learning, and seasonal fun. Fourth graders explored 3D shapes like cubes and cones to build imaginative models, while also engaging in team-building activities through a Halloween-themed virtual island on ClassDojo. 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> graders created festive classroom decorations, including handprint ghosts and haunted houses, and many showed progress in math with the help of a dedicated volunteer. Fifth graders embraced the spooky season with a STEAM-based potion activity using baking soda and vinegar, crafted 3D pumpkins and yarn ghosts, and enjoyed paper crafts while watching a seasonal favorite, *Over the Garden Wall*.
- In October, Family Literacy Services hosted a special community event at GMCLC, creating a safe and welcoming space for families to celebrate together. GMCLC staff organized a movie screening, hands-on crafts, and a raffle, with *Coco* as the featured film. The event welcomed 67 attendees, and every child received a book kit. Families expressed their appreciation, with many hoping for more events like this in the future.

### *Project Read – Adult Literacy Services*

- Project Read wrapped up its final Book Club session on October 23 with *The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane* by Kate DiCamillo—a poignant story that captivated readers with its themes of resilience, love, and transformation. Participants shared that this season introduced them to books they might never have chosen on their own, offering moments of deep emotion and reflection. The club fostered a safe, welcoming space for exploring diverse perspectives and life experiences, encouraging both self-discovery and connection. While the program is now in recess as staff gather recommendations and plan for the next season in the new year, the sense of community remains strong. Members have even organized an informal social gathering in November to reconnect before the



holidays. Project Read's Book Club continues to be more than a literacy program—it is a dynamic support system that nurtures personal growth and meaningful relationships.

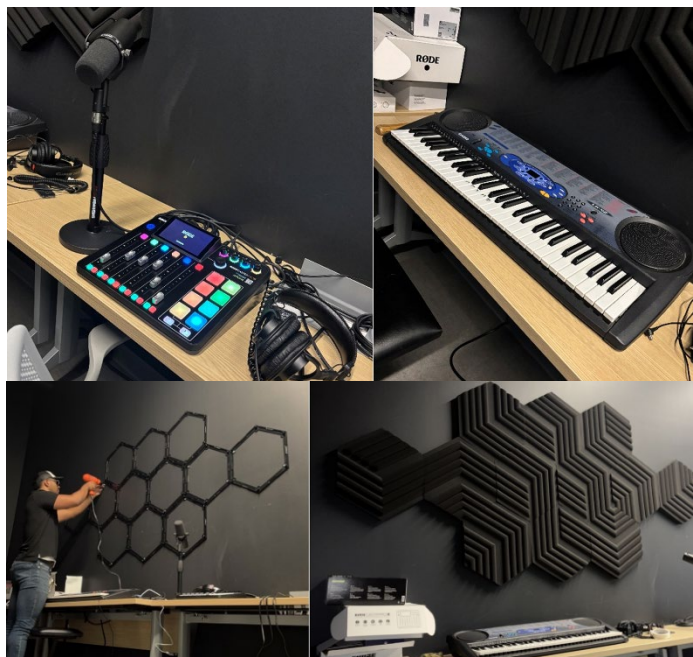
### *Project Read – Family Literacy Services*

This month was filled with engaging and festive activities across our programs:

- My First Years concluded its fall session on October 9 with a successful mix of in-person and virtual events, including a Halloween-themed class and guest presentations from JobTrain and Monterra Credit Union.
- Learning Wheels continued weekly visits to the South San Francisco Health Clinic and San Bruno Library and hosted its first Halloween event, (BOO)K & Treat, welcoming 192 visitors and distributing 107 books.
- Bilingual Storytime embraced seasonal themes throughout the month, culminating in a special Halloween Storytime on October 29 with costumes and trick-or-treat safety kits for families. At Colma, students enjoyed two hands-on cultural lessons—creating lanterns for the Mid-Autumn Moon Festival and crafting pigeon puppets inspired by a fun story. These activities fostered learning, creativity, and community connection throughout the month.

### **DISCOVERY CENTER**

- **26** programs and activities were conducted in the Discovery Center with approximately **581** participants. The Makerspace had an estimated **10,400** visitors and a total of **77** total appointment reservations and **41** walk-ins for the 3D printers, sewing machines and vinyl cutters.
- The Green Room project is currently underway and has made a lot of progress during the month of October.
- The Rodecaster mixer, microphones, headsets, laptop station, sound dampening panels and electric piano have all been set up and tested for functionality. The Discovery Center team plans to train staff with the goal of making the Green Room available in 2026.



- On Tuesday, October 21, the Discovery Center team hosted the **Virtual Reality Event: North Pole**. Patrons explored the floating sea of ice, the Northern Lights, and the different ocean vessels that ventured through the North Pole. The Discovery Center team plans to hold two more sessions in December to fulfill the Pacific Library Partnership grant.



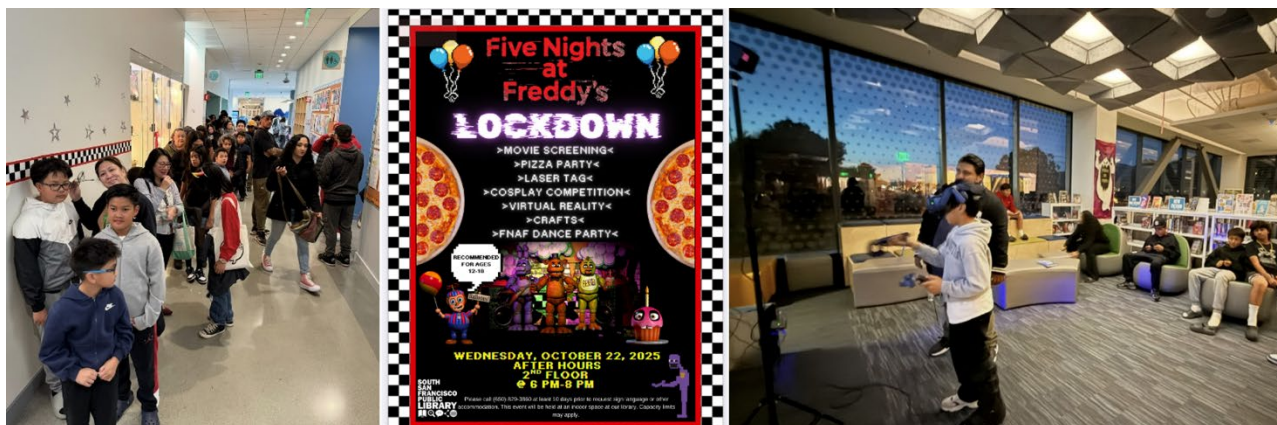
- The Discovery Center team collaborated with the **Friends of the Library** volunteers to create special custom-designed bookmarks using the Makerspace 3D printers. These bookmarks were used as special giveaway gifts for the November book sale.



- On Wednesday, October 22, the Discovery Center team held the **Five Nights at Freddy's Lockdown** program after hours in the Makerspace, Community Room, and Youth Library. Approximately 170 patrons of all ages came to participate in the fun activities. This year we had a movie screening of Five Nights at Freddy's, virtual reality and iPad gaming, arts and crafts, laser tag and a cosplay competition.







The Discovery Center team hosted two special class visits for a group of home-schooled students. Tina Zhen, Marissa Vazquez and Monte Gordon, showed the teens how to use soldering irons, 3D printers, button makers, snap circuits, robotics and graphic design using iPads/Apple Pencils.





## **YOUTH SERVICES**

### *OCTOBER – Key Stats & Updates*

Programs: 37 total; 4,741 attendees or participants

#### **Mid-Autumn Festival Storytime and Lantern Making:**

On Saturday, October 4, Youth Services celebrated Mid-Autumn Festival with a special themed edition of Cantonese storytime in the Council Chambers. Over 170 attendees shared complimentary mooncakes and green tea in the Youth Library. On October 7, the celebration continued as families made paper lanterns.



#### **K-pop Performance and Crafts:**

On October 6, over 200 community members gathered in the Social Hall to enjoy live K-pop performances from a local youth dance group, make crafts, and share their love of K-pop. Attendees also received giveaways provided through a Library partnership with the Bay Area's original K-pop store, Saranghello.

#### **Special Storytime in Celebration of Filipino American History Month:**

On October 11, a special edition of Filipino Bilingual Storytime took place in the Youth Library in celebration of Filipino American History Month. The event featured read-alouds by guests South San Francisco Councilmember Flor Nicolas and local Filipino American authors Lloyd and Alex Bautista. Participants got to explore an exhibit of clothing and other items that were displayed to highlight Filipino culture. Participants got to enjoy pandesal and other refreshments from The Bread Basket Bakery in Daly City.



**SSF Education Foundation Community Book Fair:** In partnership with the SSF Education Foundation, a Scholastic Book Fair was hosted in the community room on October 2-5, 2025. Over the weekend, 1,955 shoppers visited the Book Fair and over \$6,000 were raised for South San Francisco Unified School District Schools.

**Halloween Hoopla:** On Friday, 10/31, we celebrated Halloween at the library! Programs and activities included all-day trick-or-treating, a special musical storytime, and Halloween crafts in the Makerspace.





Two murals created for the Cultura Fest 2025 event are on display in the Young Adult Room, Library I Parks and Recreation Center. These vibrant pieces are by artists Josué Rojas (left) and Juyoung Ku (right). Information about Cultura Fest can be found at [cultura-fest.com](http://cultura-fest.com).



Valerie Sommer

Valerie Sommer  
Library Director