

Library Director's Report July 2006

Montalvo Arts Center in Saratoga (www.montalvoarts.org) is collaborating with the Redwood City Library in order to apply for an NEA grant to participate in The Big Read program. www.nea.gov/national/bigread/about.html This will be our next One Community, One Book program, the purpose of which is designed to revitalize the role of literature in American popular culture. A significant byproduct of a project such as this is to build community - something to which both Montalvo and The City of Redwood City are dedicated. Approximately 50 organizations will be selected for The Big Read Project occurring between January and June 2007. The deadline for this application is September 12, 2006. Given the short turnaround needed for the application, we met to plan a preliminary sketch of what a Redwood City Big Reads Project would look like.

The grant gave us 5 book titles to choose from and after meeting with both Elementary and High School representatives, we have decided to use *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury as our Big Read book. It was felt that this book would appeal to both boys and men, as well as girls and women. Most likely grades 7 and up would find value in the themes of the book. The book moves quickly, and its theme of censorship is uncomfortably relevant today. There is also the film version of the book which adds another realm to the programming. Communities who participate in The Big Read Program, among other things, must present 10- 50 book discussions in diverse locations including libraries and museums

Staff set up meetings with Marine Science Institute and SplitRock Studios, a design/fabrication/installation company, to brainstorm ideas for the wetlands interpretive center that will make the new Redwood Shores Community Library a destination for hands-on science learning. Preliminary sketches and descriptions are very exciting as the process toward a final design continues.

Staff met with El Concilio of San Mateo County staff to discuss the Fair Oaks Library's participation in the upcoming "Bi-National Health Week" and "Annual Bi-National Health Fair in San Mateo County" activities. The Fair Oaks Library will host a weekly series of health workshops in Spanish, beginning Wednesday, September 13, 2006 through October 2006. On Saturday, October 14, 2006, the Fair Oaks Library will be open special hours to participate in the health fair by serving as a community site for health screenings and providing library service.

A video monitor was installed in the Downtown Library lobby to publicize library events. Staff is working on a template that can be loaded and easily updated weekly.

A new building sign was installed on the north side of the library, in full view of the new cinema. Design plans for a kiosk to house Alana's coffee cart are complete. Construction for the children's room remodel will begin in September. Café tables for wireless access were purchased for the fireplace room.

Four weekly Summer Reading Club programs drew big crowds to all three libraries in July. Juan Sanchez (singer/guitarist), James Henry (percussionist), Timothy James (magician) and Puppet Art Theater (puppet show) entertained both children and adults with their mix of performances. Weekly attendance figures averaged around 100 at Schaberg, 70 at Fair Oaks, and 150 at the Downtown Library.

Weekly Bedtime, Preschool, Toddler, and Tiny Tales storytimes continued to draw large audiences in July. The Youth Services staff met to discuss the implementation of new and additional storytimes in the Fall. We will begin new storytimes in September at Fair Oaks and Schaberg and will expand the roster of storytimes at the Downtown Library after completion of the renovation.

The First Ever Teen Readers Theater put on a wonderful performance for 19 parents and their kids. The teens performed two plays and then treated the crowd to bubble science for another hour in front of the library.

Staff met with Joanie Cavanaugh at Sequoia Hospital concerning the continuation of the partnership between the hospital and Traveling Storytime program. 1400 additional books have been ordered and will be sent directly to the hospital and the hospital will cover the cost.

The excitement continues as the expanded Traveling Storytime program prepares to move to the old Sight and Sound room. The room has been emptied of its old contents, the carpet has been replaced and cleaned, and arrangements have been made with California Closets to increase the capacity of the book bag case and move it to the new room.

Jacky read stories to over 300 summer school kids at the Schaberg Library. All students were signed up for the Summer Reading Club and learned about the library. Cristina and Chuck did the same at the Fair Oaks Library for Garfield summer school students.

The Summer Reading, Listening, and Parents Clubs continued sign ups of readers in July. Anyone finishing their respective club receives a free paperback book, a free game of miniature golf from Malibu Castle, two admissions for the price of one at Redwood Roller Rink, a 10% discount at Linden Tree Records and Books, a free personal pizza from Round Table and a Randy Winn pin from the San Francisco Giants. Mid-month we were able to add an additional award of a free burrito for both child and parent from Chipotle, a new eatery that just opened in the new cinema complex. The Summer Teen Reading Club also offers many of the same awards plus a \$12 gift certificate to the Century Theaters.

For a speech I made recently, I compiled some powerful statistics:

- Over 50,000 of our residents have a library card that they have used in the past year
- We lend over 1,000,000 books and movies per year
- Our libraries have hosted more than 1,000 public meetings this past year
- We visited 80 daycare/preschools a week and read stories
- Over 10,000 folks have come to a library storytime this year
- 100,000 people have used the libraries computers—more if you count our wireless access!
- We have over 1,000 volunteers
- All 100 at-risk teens in our tutoring program graduated from high school
- Thousands of kids use our homework centers
- Staff have visited every school and every child this year

Wow!