

## **Library Director's Report August 2007**

### Building community, end-of-summer style

- Bookstock 3 was an overwhelming success. 700 young children and family members came to the Downtown Library to celebrate this end-of-summer reading program and listen to live music, participate in the raffling off of gifts and avail themselves of the various crafts, vendors, and food in the “pavilion” area of the staff parking lot. Events like this not only build our community of readers, families and library users, but also help build a community of volunteers, business partners and library staff who spent many hours planning the event, and came in on a Saturday to assist. Once again, the power of working collaboratively comes through big time with another successful event that helps make the library a memorable and major part of the lives of Redwood City’s children and their families.
  
- Working to ignite the interests of children in reading, the Library held its 2nd “Vamos a Leer,” program at Fair Oaks on Saturday, August 25th. Over 100 people attended, approximately 88 of those were elementary-aged youngsters who came to hear celebrity reader DJ Yolanda Aguilar, also known as “La Pijamada, read stories aloud. By day Yolanda is a DJ at station 98.9 Estereo Sol 99. She personally made the reading event memorable and her attendance demonstrated the commitment of her station to improving literacy in our community. The children were not only treated to stories but they took part in two fun and entertaining reading sessions. The San Mateo Credit Union and specifically Mrs. Connie Paniagua are recognized for their generosity and community spirit. Without the donations of the San Mateo Credit Union our event would not have been the hit it was with the children.
  
- Thousands turned out on Sunday, August 19, for The Sixth Annual North Fair Oaks Festival at which an estimated 35,000 people attended. Hundreds of festival booths included food, community information and entertainment. The Library had a large booth where we gave away free books, prizes and library cards; and read stories throughout the day.

### Building Community back-to-school style

- August is back-to-school month for the kids and families in Redwood City. Earlier in the month, staff collaborated with the Redwood City School District to determine the supplies necessary for students this year which included folders, colored pencils, notebooks, loose-leaf paper, rulers, erasers, pencils and glue sticks - all the materials necessary to get our kids off to a good start this school year. Many of our children are at risk of starting school without the required supplies. Best of all because everyone was excited to find those school supplies stuffed inside hip backpacks. It was a fun-filled frenzy featuring the most popular characters, colors and styles. **Over 140** backpacks filled with supplies were provided to Project READ families. Handing out school supplies has become a

Project READ tradition, but this year's addition of giving out backpacks took this event to a whole new level. The children were ecstatic and made a special point to thank staff and grateful parents no longer needed to worry about how to provide school supplies for their children. This meaningful and successful event shows how the Library's Project READ program supports our community members that are most in need and is a perfect example of the library helping to level the playing field so that all kids have the opportunity to be successful in school and enjoy the love of learning.

We have hired a new Teen Librarian, Sarah LaTorra, who will coordinate teen services at our libraries, including helping design the new teen area. She will also represent the library on city-wide teen issues and programs, and work closely with Project Read and Parks and Recreation. Before coming to Redwood City, Sarah was working at the Los Angeles County Library System in the Paramount Library as Children/Reference Librarian. Furthermore, she was the *Intensive Literacy Program Teacher* at the William S. Hart School District where she taught 7th-10th graders reading and writing skills, tutored students one-on-one and visited students at home to speak with parents about their child's education.

The number of participants in this summer's Reading Club was up overall and significantly up from last year at the Downtown Library, particularly in the Parents Club. The increase in participation is probably due to the increase in use of the newly remodeled children's room and also that for the first time the library had a free raffle for children and parents signed up for the respective clubs. Figures for the branches are less spectacular. The number of Reading Clubs sign ups at Schaberg was well below last year due to the fact that there was no summer school at Roosevelt School this year as in years past. We are discussing a collaborative venture with the school district for next year's program.

	2006	2007
Reading Club		
Downtown	933	1077
Fair Oaks	269	265
Schaberg	326	120
Listening Club		
Downtown	250	311
Fair Oaks	23	57
Schaberg	43	65
Parents Club		
Downtown	116	273
Fair Oaks	21	10
Schaberg	22	59
Teen Club		
Downtown	386	383
Fair Oaks	64	65
Schaberg	38	36
Total	2491	2721

School has started and we will continue to provide homework assistance for children at all of our libraries - a space to do homework and someone to help. The hours and locations are as follows:

- Downtown Library Mon. - Thurs. 4-7
- Fair Oaks Mon. - Thurs. 3:30-6:30
- Schaberg - Mon. - Wed. 2-5 and Thurs. 1-5
- Free live online tutoring

The planning process for the renovation of the park adjacent to the Downtown Library has taken a new direction. We want to fold it into a bigger picture of the Main Street/City Hall/Library portion of downtown.

Redwood Shores Library construction is 30% completed. All is going as planned, and the goal is to enclose the building before the rainy season begins in November.

The Library has received twelve fifteen second shared promotional advertisements from Estereo Sol radio which have a value of \$22,000. This will go a long way toward promoting upcoming events. (One of the Estereo Sol promotional team was Rosario Rodriguez who recalled having lots of happy times and memories when she visited the Fair Oaks library as a child).

Project READ had a great time at the San Mateo County Mentoring Fair: Connections for Success. The fair was designed to encourage employees to mentor and tutor youth in San Mateo County. With over 200 people in attendance, Project READ was able to spread the word about the literacy needs of our community and generate a large list of potential volunteers to be matched with eager elementary and high school children who want to improve their literacy skills. We are looking forward to seeing these City and County employees at Project READ's September Tutor Training Workshop.

Why we do what we do: 61 percent of low-income families have no books at all in their homes. And the National Council on Research said in 2000 "that most of the reading problems faced by today's adolescents and adults are the result of problems that might have been avoided or resolved in their early childhood years by having experiences in early childhood that fostered motivation and provided exposure to literacy in use."