

## **Library Director's Report September 2006**

The City Council rejected all bids for the Redwood Shores Community Library and directed staff to repackage and resubmit the project bid application. This will hopefully give us a more competitive cost.

The major remodel and expansion of the children's room is on schedule, slated for a soft opening the last week of October and a formal opening ceremony on Saturday, November 4. This is huge project with many many library and city staff involved.

The Big Read (<http://www.neabigread.org/>) grant has been submitted on 9/12/06 by Montalvo Arts Center. Montalvo is coordinating the Redwood City-wide community reading of *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury planned for March 2007. The Library, the School Districts, the Community Colleges, the City and key local businesses are all partners in the project. Thanks to funding from Montalvo, and support from all partners, we will go ahead with the project regardless of the fate of the grant (awarded 11/06.)

A good example of busy and productive staff: during the last two months the Traveling Storytime staff (Joanne and Jan) have prepared their new TSS room, moved into it for a few days, moved to the Teen Homework Center for a few weeks due to the remodel project, and then back to the new room. In addition, they selected books for five new baby bags (paid for by a grant), trained five new volunteers, placed four volunteers, visited three new sites, helped with Bookstock II, conducted a volunteer workshop at Oracle for twenty-four volunteers that produced eleven new flannel boards, continued the task of expanding their collection of English bags from twenty-two to thirty-five, gave two talks at Kaiser about reading to children and attended a grant meeting, and sent two mailing to our volunteers concerning our move and our Grand Opening of the Children's Room. They're hoping to catch their breath in October!)

Our own Chuck Ashton was the cover story of "Spectrum", Redwood City's monthly magazine.

The monthly family night program featured popular singer/guitarist Jose-Luis Orozco. He performed at the Fair Oaks Library in the afternoon to an audience of primarily preschoolers who were singing along and hopping around to the lively mix of English and Spanish language tunes. His evening performance at the Downtown Library brought together an audience of about 200 older children and their parents. Though he needed to catch a flight to Los Angeles right after the performance, he still played for over an hour and then signed autographs for his appreciative fans.

The Fair Oaks Library now has wireless Internet access. Now all Redwood City Public Library facilities have wireless Internet access (Downtown, Fair Oaks and Schaberg).

The 5<sup>th</sup> Annual North Fair Oaks Community Festival was held on Saturday, September 17, 2006. The Library had its own booth and tables at the festival and provided outreach services to the community. Over 400 people stopped by and visited with the library staff. Angelica Jaimez, Carla Nolasco and Ligia Andrade graciously greeted the visitors and provided them with information about the library. They also checked out over 150 books and issued 36 new library cards! Armando Ramirez read stories to children. Visitors received one of the Library's "Building a Great Community Together" bag which contained a free book, pencil and bookmark. Gift certificates were provided by Chipotle Mexican Grill in Redwood City and were given to each person that checked out 3 or more books, or registered for a new library card at the festival.

Newly hired casual/on-call Librarian Armando Ramirez is visiting schools within the North Fair Oaks service area (Fair Oaks School and Garfield School) on a weekly basis, reading stories to students and providing library outreach services. A total of eight class visits were made to the schools this month, reaching 200 students. These visits instill the joy of reading in the students and heighten their awareness of the library.

The Fair Oaks Library has expanded its weekly story time schedule with the addition of a Monday evening bilingual story time for children that is held at 6:00pm.

After several months of telephone calls, Liz was finally able to make contact with key San Mateo County staff in regard to building and maintenance issues at the Fair Oaks Library. San Mateo County staff has provided desperately needed landscape maintenance to the front and side of the Fair Oaks Library, making it much more attractive and presentable on the outside. Service will now continue twice per month. Further communications will occur regarding basic building maintenance issues.

Public Relations highlights: customized, and distributed the first edition of BookPage, book review publication containing both children's and adult's books. The first edition highlighted two fundraising campaigns of the library—the Trivia Bee and the Friends' Book Sale. The Danford Foundation gave \$5,000 to Traveling Storytime and \$5,000 to the Redwood Shores Library Campaign for the Opening Day Collection. The Friends of the Library granted \$1,000 to the library for a series of films to be part of a film series held in the library for children and adults. The Marketing Team is working on an opt-in email list being created for the library by the City's IT department. Lined up two potential graphic artists to work on the redesign of the Redwood City Public Library card.

These four issues were cited as the most pressing issues facing public libraries at a recent conference:

- Succession planning – from recruiting the right candidates to developing new leadership from within. Succession planning isn't just about picking a successor and building them for your organization – it's about readying your organization for upcoming changes.
- Creating flexible organizations that are tolerant of failure. We need to experiment and pilot new ideas, services and technologies.
- Our inability to deliver simple, easy, fast, relevant service.
- Our communities are evolving faster than we are. Even when we feel we are "cutting edge" we are actually still well behind the curve of the business world. We haven't examined old procedures and policies in years. Staff is afraid to deal with ambiguity and use their own judgment to make decisions.

And finally, here is an article I wrote for the Library Foundation's newsletter:

Well, it's that time of year again: fall, the change of seasons, and soon, the time for giving. As a City employee we are underway in our annual giving campaign; and it has made me realize how many worthy organizations there are in our community. I gave both to Project READ and the Library Foundation, my two favorite non-profits!

Giving is not just monetary. The Library has so many important volunteer opportunities that enrich the lives of our community. You can teach someone to read, help kids with their homework, adopt a preschool or daycare to read stories to every week using books picked out by our librarians, help with fundraising for our new Redwood Shores Library or work in our Friend's Bookstore. Volunteering at the library is good for the soul and helps the library, our neighbors and families. Contact me at 780-7060 or [dgenesy@redwoodcity.org](mailto:dgenesy@redwoodcity.org) if you are interested!

We are also planning our next One Book, One Community event for March of 2007. Ray Bradbury's Fahrenheit 451 will be our book, a great read and a story that is very relevant today. Community partners and volunteers are welcome to get as many of our residents reading and talking about it!!

A Library Archives Committee project, the History of Redwood City book, has been written by 12 local authors, and is currently being edited for a summer publication date. The Committee is fundraising to offset the publishing costs of this exciting new book. Please contact me if you are interested in supporting this great addition to our Redwood City legacy.

Fall is also (for Californians) a definite change in season. The library is undergoing some very exciting projects. We are half-way through our Children's Room remodel,

expanding this heavily-used and well-loved space to accommodate more books and seating and places to cuddle up to read with a loved-one. A new Teen Area is under design, a small outside café is under construction and the park adjacent to the Library will be made safe, welcoming and accessible for our downtown residents and visitors.

I want to thank all of the great folks in our Redwood City community who have given their time or money—or have just plain used the library—that helps create a great community.

Have a great season!