

LIBRARY ADVISORY COMMISSION (LAC)

On Monday, April 20, 2026 at 6:30 PM

This is a hybrid in person and online provided meeting open to the public

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Public comment: There are three ways to comment during this meeting. All comments must be received prior to the close of public comment on that agenda item:

1. How to comment on agenda items via email before the meeting begins:

Members of the public may provide public comment by sending an email to the Library Board Clerk at clerk@santacruzpl.org

- Identify the agenda item number in the subject line of the email
- Emailed comments should be a maximum of 500 words, which corresponds to approximately 3 minutes of speaking time.
- All correspondences received prior to 12:00 p.m. on the Friday preceding a LAC Meeting will be distributed to Commission members to review prior to the meeting. Information submitted after 12:00 p.m. on that Friday may not have time to reach Commission members, nor be read by them prior to consideration of an item.

2. How to comment on agenda items during the meeting and prior to the close of public comment on an item, using the Zoom Q&A feature:

- Type your comment using the “Q&A” feature found on the Zoom control bar
- Identify the agenda item first, then type your comment
- Your comment will be read aloud

3. How to comment aloud on agenda items, during the meeting and prior to the close of public comment on an item, via the Zoom “raise hand” feature:

If you are accessing the meeting using the Zoom app and using computer audio:

- During the comment period for that agenda item, use the “raise hand” icon found on the Zoom control bar
- The moderator will announce your name or the last 3 digits of your phone number when it is your turn to speak
- Unmute yourself using the microphone icon
- Identify the agenda item
- Introduce yourself using your first and last name
- You will have three minutes of speaking time

If you are accessing the meeting using telephone audio:

- During the comment period for that agenda item, press *9 to raise your hand
- The moderator will announce the last 3 digits of your phone number when it is your turn to speak
- Unmute yourself using *6 – to toggle the mute/unmute feature
- Identify the agenda item
- Introduce yourself using your first and last name
- You will have three minutes of speaking time



LIBRARY ADVISORY COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING

MONDAY, APRIL 20, 2026 at 6:30 PM

APTOS BRANCH LIBRARY

1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Commissioners Rena Dubin, Charlotte Khandelwal, Timothy Lydgate, Vivian Rogers, Mike Termini, Pamela Woll, and Tricia Wynne

2. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

3. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Any member of the audience may address the Board on any matter either on or off the agenda that is within the Board's jurisdiction. Note, however, that the Board is not able to undertake extended discussion or act on non-agendized items. Such items can be referred to staff for appropriate action which may include placement on a future agenda. If you intend to address a subject that is on the Agenda, please hold your comments regarding that item until it is before the Board so that we may properly address all comments on that subject at the same time. In general 3 minutes will be permitted per speaker during Oral Communication; A MAXIMUM of 30 MINUTES is set aside for Oral Communications at this time.

4. REPORT BY LIBRARY DIRECTOR

A. Library Director's Report (P3-7)

5. REPORT BY FRIENDS OF THE SANTA CRUZ PUBLIC LIBRARIES

A. Friends of SCPL – Report (Oral)

6. MEMBER REPORTS

7. CONSENT CALENDAR

All items listed in the "Consent Calendar" will be enacted by one motion in the form listed below. There will be no separate discussion on these items prior to the time the Board votes on the action unless members of the public or the Board request specific items to be discussed for

separate review. Items pulled for separate discussion will be considered following General Business.

- A. Minutes of January 12, 2026
Staff Recommendation: Approve Minutes (P8-9)

- B. Recent Articles about Santa Cruz Public Libraries
Staff Recommendation: Accept and file (P10-31)

8. GENERAL BUSINESS

General Business items are intended to provide an opportunity for public discussion of each item listed. The following procedure is followed for each Business item: 1) Staff explanation; 2) Board questions; 3) Public comment; 4) Board deliberation; 5) Decision.

- A. Summer Reading Program Presentation by Jessica Goodman & Heather Norquist

- B. B. Strategic Plan FY 2027 - 2029 Presentation
Staff Recommendation: Discuss and provide feedback on the draft Strategic Plan and its implementation work plan over the next three fiscal years (P32-55)

- C. Library Workplace Safety Actions Update
Staff Recommendation: Accept and file (P56-60)

9. SCHEDULED UPCOMING MEETINGS

Date	Location	Anticipated Upcoming Agenda Items:
May 18, 2026	Scotts Valley Branch	•

10. ADJOURNMENT

Adjourned to the next regular meeting of the Library Advisory Commission to be held on Monday, May 18, 2026 at 6:30pm at the Scotts Valley Branch.

The Santa Cruz City-County Library System does not discriminate against persons with disabilities. Out of consideration for people with chemical sensitivities, we ask that you attend fragrance free. Upon request, the agenda can be provided in a format to accommodate special needs. Additionally, if you wish to attend this public meeting and will require assistance such as an interpreter for American Sign Language, Spanish, or other special equipment, please call the Library Administration Office at 427-7706 at least five days in advance so that we can arrange for such special assistance, or email library_admin@santacruzpl.org.



April 20, 2026

Director's Report to the Library Advisory Commission

Introduction

The Library's Winter and early Spring season has been an especially busy one. You will learn more later in this agenda about the final stages of our new Strategic Plan and preparations for our flagship Summer Reading Program. We launched extended hours, started budget preparations and filled numerous key staff positions.

We welcome our new Library IT Manager Brett Hoyer to the leadership team. Brett comes to us from the U.S. Navy, bringing 20 years' experience in systems and network administration, cybersecurity operations, and project management. He also brings the added experience of having grown up using our Boulder Creek Library so despite having deployed around the world, he knows Santa Cruz County well.

Members of Library leadership and staff attended the Public Library Association Conference in Minneapolis, the ALIVE National Summit on Volunteer Engagement in Sacramento, local MOBAC seminars on Youth Services, Reference and Technology, a performers' showcase at Fremont Public Library, and a state library funded area training on AI & library programming that SCPL hosted at our Scotts Valley Library. Additionally, our Capitola Library hosted the Spring quarterly MOBAC Council meeting.

I presented at the final session of Capitola's "Discover Capitola" series alongside their Parks & Recreation and Museum leaders. I also held an interview available on our [YouTube channel](#) with Kim Snyder, producer of the documentary [The Librarians](#), which is in current release and will have screenings at SCPL locations on April 22nd at Scotts Valley and April 23rd at Capitola. I have been invited to be in conversation with children's author Mac Barnett to discuss his upcoming adult book "Make Believe: on telling stories to children" at Book Shop Santa Cruz on May 13th.

I also want to extend gratitude to our Capitola Friends for the launch of the solar panels and information kiosk at that branch, the La Selva Beach Friends for participating in the filming of an upcoming episode of America ByDesign highlighting the architectural design of that branch, and to the entire Friends organization for another very successful Our Community Reads suite of programming around our system for Joshua Davis' book Spare Parts.

Library Team

Current Vacancies:

	Position Title	Position No.	Union	Library FTE
VACANT	Building Maintenance Worker II	118-007	SEIU	1.000
VACANT	Librarian I/II-Adult Librarian- Downtown	750-036	Mid Mgmt	1.000
VACANT	Librarian I/II-Teen Librarian- Downtown	750-033	Mid Mgmt	1.000
VACANT	Librarian II-Adult Librarian- Downtown	750-009	Mid Mgmt	1.000
VACANT	Library Assistant II- Felton	283-087	SEIU	0.750
VACANT	Library Assistant II- Felton	283-090	SEIU	1.000
VACANT	Library Assistant II- Live Oak	283-091	SEIU	1.000

New Hires:

Sue Powell- LA II Floater 1/17/2026

Luca Kodish- Felton LA II 1/17/2026

Brianna Gaffney- Capitola LA III Branch Manager 4/14/2026

Brett Hoyer- Library IT Manager 4/15/2026

Staff Departures:

Arden Rosenthal- Felton LA II 4/9/2026

Winter Programming

Youth librarians were busy in the winter months leading special events and ongoing programs that promote early literacy, after school opportunities for creativity and connection and safe spaces for teens.

- Downtown staff started a sensory bin library that is shared systemwide during Stay & Play programs. Sensory bins enhance fine motor skills, support language development, and emotional regulation
- The positive response to storytime at Capitola has prompted the librarian to launch a separate infant playgroup, Discovery Zone, to respond to large turnouts and provide opportunities for families with infants & toddlers to attend an activity tailored to this age-group.
- At Branciforte we are seeing increased attendance for Storytime and Baby Time & Stay and Play. Additionally we have partnered with Special Connections Santa Cruz and they have been available to families who would like more information on early intervention.
- We have started to issue Otter Cards, our version of Student Success Cards, in conjunction with class visits for TK- 3rd grade students. The Student Success cards have all the benefits of a regular card and are part of a statewide initiative to provide public library cards to all students by 3rd grade.
- Newly added After School programs included Seasonal Crafts and Sewing for Kids at Downtown and a crochet program led by a 10-year-old volunteer at La Selva Beach.
- Teens are enjoying the dedicated Teen rooms, as noted by this feedback from a Capitola Teen: "I love this library, you guys do such an amazing job in this room, it's my fav room" (taken from a survey in the suggestion box). As a result of teen feedback, the

librarian has implemented a “Teen Manga Book Club” which will feature different activities related to manga and anime.

- The SCV branch library finalized a partnership with the SV Boys and Girls Club, which will come to the library on early-out days to engage and provide opportunities for middle school students
- Select branches, including Branciforte, have had the pleasure of continuing our work with Drag Storytime Santa Cruz. All 6 events were filled with positivity and helped to bring the community together. We plan to now host a Drag Storytime 1x a Quarter. These events had between 15-70 participants.
- We offered special programming in conjunction with cultural celebrations including Chinese New Year Lion Dance Celebration, Mr. Boom Boom’s African Drum Circle, a popular and educational music and movement program, to celebrate Black History Month, and Ramadan and Eid storytime.
- The Downtown Branch hosted delegates from the National Institute for Youth Education from Japan in early March. The delegates consisted of educators, youth development professionals, and researchers from Japan. The group interviewed Heather Norquist and Amber Baumbach about how SCPL supports children and youth, builds partnerships within the community, and creates inclusive spaces for learning and belonging.
- At the SCCOE’s STEAM Expo, the Aptos Branch Library exhibited and promoted Afterschool STEAM programs to science fair participants and their families. There were activities for all ages: Lego car bowling, Cipher making, and Rebus puzzles. Over 200 people joined us for this all day event.
- Outreach shared crafts, games, and celebrated heritage months with the youth at Juvenile Hall. They created origami, played UNO, shared information about the Barrios Unidos exhibit "Visions from Within," brought trivia games honoring Women's History month and celebrated Black History month by learning about the Harlem Renaissance and listening to music by William Grant Still.
- Gonzo visited the Beach Flats Park and offered a Pop-Up Library, where Outreach staff shared a mini-storytime, account registrations, and book circulation.
- The Outreach team collaborated with Rising Scholars and Cabrillo College Library to provide in person library instruction at Juvenile Hall.

Adult librarians presented a range of programming that demonstrates the variety of programs and services available county-wide. In addition to regular ongoing programming, this quarter’s highlights include:

- Aptos:
Hosted Swing into Spring Cleaning for the home; Get Your Energy Back for health; Saturday Shakespeare discussions in collaboration with the Shakespeare Workshop at UCSC; and Project Scout - free tax assistance to seniors, individuals with a disability, and low income residents of Santa Cruz County.
- Boulder Creek:
Hosted Wildfire Readiness; Beginning Cross Stitch with Community Crafters; and a new Write Now! Writing group to beat procrastination
- Branciforte:
Hosted Wills & Trusts 101 and Wills & Trusts for New Parents; Wildlife on the Tibetan Plateau; and a wildly popular new weekly Mah Jongg group

- **Capitola:**
Hosted Retirement Planning workshops; a new Santa Cruz Cyber Security Club monthly meetup; an activity Crafting the Lunar New Year; a Black History Month documentary screening and panel discussion on the Life and Legacy of Civil Rights Icon, Congresswoman Barbara Jordan; a 6-session series on Approaching the Job Search Over 55; Companions of the Sun - Iranian music and dance traditions; and Project Scout - free tax assistance to seniors, individuals with a disability, and low income residents of Santa Cruz County.
- **Downtown:**
Hosted the Genealogical Society lecture series (in person and virtual). Genealogy topics looked back to the founding of this country with Researching Early American Ancestors, Exploring Loyalist and Patriot Roots at 250 Years, as well as a lecture on Determining a DNA Match Connection
Downtown also hosted a community conversation about homelessness with author of *Front Street: Resistance and Rebirth in the Tent Cities of Techlandia*, Brian Barth, Members of Wood Street Commons, Alicia Kuhl (President of SC Homeless Union), and Don Lane (UCSC Lecturer for “Solving Homelessness” seminar, former Mayor of Santa Cruz, and former president of Housing Matters board of director).
New Life Literacies Center partners are Teen Kitchen Project connecting adults with nutritious meal delivery, and Miracle Messages helping people experiencing homelessness rebuild their social support systems.
Downtown started a new Bring Your Own Book Club; offered Spirituality of Aging 4-week meditation series; and hosted Project Scout - free tax assistance to seniors, individuals with a disability, and low income residents of Santa Cruz County.
- **Felton:**
Hosted Canning 101; Wildfire Readiness; Starting from Seed gardening; Sumi-e painting; A Matter of Balance falls prevention workshop series with the Volunteer Center Empowered Aging program; a series on Tax Savings with new tax laws; and Project Scout - free tax assistance to seniors, individuals with a disability, and low income residents of Santa Cruz County.
- **Garfield Park:**
Hosted Vibration Meditation performances and started new weekly In-person Tech Help
- **La Selva Beach:**
Hosted Nature Journaling; a new Conversations in Español discussion group to foster fluency; a new Knit & Stitch group; and a talk on discovering different ways to meditate
- **Live Oak & Live Oak Library Annex:**
Held a Noon Year’s Eve community celebration at the Live Oak Library to ring in the New Year with 170 participants
- **Scotts Valley:**
Hosted Starting a Gourmet Garden from Seed; Digital Photo Management; Healthy Digital Habits and Screen Time workshop; a new monthly in-person Riveted Readers Book Discussion Club; Companions of the Sun - Iranian music and dance traditions; and a talk on discovering different ways to meditate
- **Offsite:**
Librarians participated in the annual HERstory celebration for Women’s History month at the MAH showcasing unique zines in SCPL’s local history special collections
- **Virtual:**
Tech Talks workshop topics covered Digital Wellness features, Reading Recommendation Strategies, AI Media Deception, and Apple Intelligence Options

- Outreach provided short story discussion groups at three jail facilities, participation in 12 of these classes may earn folks early release from jail. Stories are selected from many cultures, countries, and experiences offering participants the opportunity to explore the lives and places of people from every walk of life.

Services

In recognition of the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, we received \$20k from the Carnegie Corporation. We are using these funds to purchase new or updated titles relating to our country's founding and government across all age levels and formats including Ken Burns' "The American Revolution", Ray Raphael's "A People's History of the American Revolution", and Mara Pratt-Chadwick's "American History Stories: 200 stories of elementary American history" for children.

This month we are starting an 8-week Pilot partnership with Scotts Valley Boys & Girls Club for early out day activities at the Scotts Valley Library. The goal is to better engage school students after school and as well explore the potential for a longer term partnership with the Boys & Girls Club. We will use our innovation grant funds to cover the costs for this pilot. Importantly, it will be free to participants removing the barrier that has often been the issue in the past.

Upcoming

Our annual Staff Day will be Thursday April 23rd at the Simpkins Center. It will include trainings from the County Sheriff, City of Santa Cruz safety officer, and the Conflict Resolution Center.

On May 11th we will host a joint volunteer appreciation event with volunteers from the library and the Santa Cruz Art League at the Art League itself. Two of our volunteers will be recognized by the Volunteer Center at their "Be the Difference Awards" on May 20th. They are Lezlie Ward who volunteers with our Puzzle Exchange Program and Elise Dempsey who has been coordinating the historical file scanning project at the Downtown Library.



LIBRARY ADVISORY COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

MONDAY, JANUARY 12, 2026 at 6:30 PM

1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Commissioners Rena Dubin, Charlotte Khandelwal, Timothy Lydgate, Vivian Rogers, Mike Termini, Pamela Woll, and Tricia Wynne

2. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

RESULT:	APPROVED THE AGENDA
MOVER:	Rena Dubin
SECONDER:	Timothy Lydgate
AYES:	Dubin, Lydgate, Rogers, Termini, Woll, Wynne
ABSENT:	Charlotte Khandelwal

3. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

None

4. REPORT BY LIBRARY DIRECTOR

Library Director, Christopher Platt, provided a written report

5. REPORT BY FRIENDS OF THE SANTA CRUZ PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Sarah Beck, Executive Director of the Friends, provided a report

6. MEMBER REPORTS

7. CONSENT CALENDAR

RESULT:	APPROVED THE CONSENT CALENDAR Items A - C
	A. Approved Minutes of August 18, 2025
	B. Accepted and filed recent articles about Santa Cruz Public Libraries
	C. Accepted and filed the 2025 Library Insights Report

MOVER:	Rena Dubin
SECONDER:	Timothy Lydgate
AYES:	Dubin, Lydgate, Rogers, Termini, Woll, Wynne
ABSENT:	Charlotte Khandelwal

8. GENERAL BUSINESS

A. Elect Chair and Vice Chair

RESULT:	Elected Chair Termini and Vice Chair Dubin for 2026
MOVER:	Tricia Wynne
SECONDER:	Timothy Lydgate
AYES:	Dubin, Lydgate, Rogers, Termini, Woll, Wynne
ABSENT:	Charlotte Khandelwal

B. 2026 Library Advisory Commission Meeting Schedule

RESULT:	Approved the LAC 2026 calendar
MOVER:	Rena Dubin
SECONDER:	Mike Termini
AYES:	Dubin, Lydgate, Rogers, Termini, Woll, Wynne
ABSENT:	Charlotte Khandelwal

- C. Presentation on the Downtown Library historical materials scanning project
- D. Presentation on the Collection Audit
- E. Update on hours expansion
- F. Strategic Planning update

9. SCHEDULED UPCOMING MEETINGS

Date	Location	Anticipated Upcoming Agenda Items:
April 20, 2026	Aptos Branch	•

10. ADJOURNMENT

Adjourned at 8:00pm to the next regular meeting of the Library Advisory Commission to be held on Monday, April 20, 2026 at 6:30pm at the Aptos Branch Library.



SANTA CRUZ
PUBLIC LIBRARIES

STAFF REPORT

DATE: April 20, 2026
TO: Library Advisory Commission
FROM: Ana Maria Treadwell, Community Relations Specialist
RE: Recent Articles about Santa Cruz Public Libraries

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Accept and File Recent Articles about SCPL.

DISCUSSION

These media packets cover the time period for January through March 2026

Library Advisory Commission

Media Packet

(Jan 1st – Mar 31th, 2026)

In the News and Media

December 19, 2025: Community Matters: Friends of the Santa Cruz Libraries radio interview

<https://specialevents.podbean.com/e/friends-of-the-santa-cruz-public-library-2025-santa-cruz-gives/>

Santa Cruz Sentinel

January 1, 2026: Celebrating Early- Front Page

Link to story: <https://www.santacruzsentinel.com/2025/12/31/photos-celebrating-early-with-noon-years-eve-party-at-live-oak-library/>

officials this week faced to seal the and still draws thousands of vis- protect the telescope from the to best tai, with a larger opening

NOON YEAR'S EVE PARTY AT LIVE OAK LIBRARY
CELEBRATING EARLY



Above, Live Oak Library staff release an avalanche of balloons as the clock strikes noon on Wednesday during a Noon Year's Eve Party to usher in 2026. The celebration included crafts, cookies with cider and the balloon drop as participants counted down to welcome the New Year ... at noon. Typically, New Year's is observed the second the clock strikes midnight, but not all kids -- or adults -- are willing to stay up that late. Noon Year's Eve has become a popular alternative for those who want all the celebratory elements of New Year's Eve many hours before bedtime. A second Noon Year's Eve took place at the Children's Museum of Discovery in the Capitola Mall, where kids created festive crowns and confetti was fired out of a launcher when the clock struck noon.



Right, Romi Hightower takes in the busy button-making table at Live Oak Library's 4th post-COVID shutdown Noon Year's Eve on Wednesday. PHOTOS BY SHIMUEL THALES -- SANTA CRUZ SENTINEL



January 5, 2026: Books about women top Santa Cruz Public Libraries' most checked-out books in 2025

By Hillary Ojeda

Books about women were the most checked-out pieces of literature by adults at Santa Cruz Public Libraries in 2025.

Kristin Hannah's "The Women," about a nurse serving in the United States Army Nurse Corps during the Vietnam War, topped the adult fiction list, while Britney Spears' memoir "The Woman in Me" was the most checked-out nonfiction book last year.

Sarah Harbison, Santa Cruz Public Libraries collections manager and a 22-year veteran of the library system, said it's not surprising to see "The Women" top the list as it's been a bestseller and popular across the country's libraries.

"Each time we see a new Kristin Hannah title published, we know there's going to be a huge demand for it," she said. "She's such a popular author, not just [Santa Cruz County], but all public libraries."

Young adults most checked out "The Book Thief" by Markus Zusak from the fiction section. Set in Nazi Germany, it tells the story of a girl who becomes obsessed with books. Harbison said it's a book with "staying power" and continues to be popular with new audiences.

"Pete the Cat and his Magic Sunglasses" by James Dean took over the imagination of kids, and topped the kids picture books list.

Looking for your next read? Check out the full list from Santa Cruz Public Libraries:

Adult fiction

1. "The Women," by Kristin Hannah
2. "The Covenant of Water," by Abraham Verghese
3. "The God of the Woods," by Liz Moore
4. "Fourth Wing," by Rebecca Yarros
5. "James," by Percival Everett

Adult nonfiction

1. "The Woman in Me," by Britney Spears
2. "Atomic Habits," by James Clear
3. "Educated," by Tara Westover

4. "Braiding Sweetgrass," by Robin Wall Kimmerer

5. "Becoming," by Michelle Obama

Young adult fiction

1. "The Book Thief," by Markus Zusak

2. "Powerless," by Lauren Roberts

3. "The Giver" (graphic novel), by Lois Lowry

4. "The Hunger Games," by Suzanne Collins

5. "The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes," by Suzanne Collins

Young adult nonfiction

1. "They Called Us Enemy," by George Takei

2. "Dreams From My Father," by Barack Obama

3. "The Truths We Hold," by Kamala Harris

4. "A Young People's History of the United States," by Howard Zinn

5. "Maybe An Artist," by Liz Montague

Kids fiction

1. "Claudia and the Bad Joke," by Ann M. Martin

2. "Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets," by J.K. Rowling

3. "Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Deep End," by Jeff Kinney

4. "Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Wrecking Ball," by Jeff Kinney

5. "Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone," by J.K. Rowling

Kids picture books

1. "Pete the Cat and his Magic Sunglasses," by James Dean

2. "The Bad Seed," by Jory John

3. "Pete the Cat and the Itsy Bitsy Spider," by James Dean

4. "I Want My Hat Back," by Jon Klassen

5. "Home Is Where the Heart Is," by Emma Dodd

Link to story: <https://lookout.co/books-about-women-top-santa-cruz-public-libraries-most-checked-out-books-in-2025/story>

Santa Cruz Sentinel

January 9, 2026: Work Continues

DOWNTOWN SANTA CRUZ LIBRARY CONSTRUCTION WORK CONTINUES



Rebar is loaded this week into the construction site in downtown Santa Cruz where a new library will rise over the coming months. The project will include the library along with 124 affordable housing units, a child care center and a 240-space parking garage. It is expected to be completed in spring 2026, following a two-phase construction timeline with the first phase focusing on the building's shell, housing, child care and parking expected to finish in mid-2026. **SHMUEL THALER** — SANTA CRUZ SENTINEL

Link to story: <https://www.santacruzsentinel.com/2026/01/09/photos-work-continues-on-new-library-building-in-downtown-santa-cruz/>

Santa Cruz Sentinel

January 12, 2026: 'Spare Parts' - Our Community Reads selects 2026 book

By Nick Sestanovich

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY — Few things are quite as uplifting as a good underdog narrative. Joshua Davis's 2014 book "Spare Parts" delivers that, telling the story of four undocumented high schoolers from Phoenix who enter a robotics competition, overcome the odds and end up winning the national championship.

What's more: it's a true story. What's even more: Davis will be coming to Santa Cruz Feb. 24 to discuss the book, courtesy of Friends of the Aptos Library's Our Community Reads program.

But as is the case with Our Community Reads every year, there will not be just one event related to the book. There will be nine events geared at making the book's themes come alive, including workshops, film

screenings, panels, a visit to a robot sculptor's studio and a dance performance.

It is all part of Friends of the Aptos Library and its partners' goal to not only encourage reading but also engage in themes related to that reading, including current hot-button issues. Our Community Reads dates back to 2018 when Friends of the Aptos Library hosted a series of events centered around Trevor Noah's "Born a Crime," the comedian's autobiography of growing up in apartheid-era South Africa. Over the years, the program has expanded to include other Friends of the Library Groups from throughout the Santa Cruz Public Libraries system, including Capitola, La Selva Beach, Felton and Scotts Valley. Books from past years have included "Flight Behavior" by Barbara Kingsolver, "The Monk of Mokha" by Dave Eggers, "The Death and Life of Monterey Bay" by Stephen R. Palumbi and Carolyn Sotka and "Red Letter Days" by Sarah-Jane Stratford.

Every year, a book selection committee reads potential books for the annual program and narrows them down.

"We're in our ninth year now, so we kind of know what our participants like in terms of a book for the community read," said program coordinator Denise Ward.

After whittling the possible selections down to four, Ward said voting parties were held at three different branches: Aptos, Capitola and Scotts Valley. The 140 attendees who listened to presentations on each book ended up settling on "Spare Parts."

The book centers around four undocumented Mexican American teenagers who attend an underfunded school in Phoenix and are constantly under the threat of deportation when they are encouraged by their science teachers to enter the Marine Advanced Technology Education Remotely Operated Vehicle Competition. They are given the task of trying to build an underwater robot, and not having the approximately \$1,000 needed to work with, have to do so with any parts they can find as well as donations from vendors. They end up winning the competition, even when pitted against students from better funded schools throughout the country. The book, which was adapted into a movie in 2015, not only tells the boys' story but also focuses on their lives after the competition, which includes the struggles of being undocumented immigrants in the U.S.

"The book has themes of being an underdog, going against all odds and ultimately prevailing," said Ward. "It's a really heartfelt tale, it's true and it goes on to follow the lives of these four individuals and the obstacles that they faced."

As always, Our Community Reads will host a series of events centered around the book's themes, essentially bringing the concept of a book club to the next level. The events are as follows:

A book discussion facilitated by Bookshop Santa Cruz owner Casey Coonerty Protti, 11 a.m. Jan. 22 at The Loft Coffee shop at Cabrillo College, 2701 Cabrillo College Drive, Building 9000, Aptos.

A screening of the 2014 documentary “Underwater Dreams,” centered around the same group featured in “Spare Parts,” 6:30 p.m. Jan. 27 in the Ow Family Community Room at the Capitola Branch Library, 2005 Wharf Road.

A talk and demonstration on underwater robotics 1 p.m. Jan. 31 at the Felton Branch Library, 6121 Gushee St. Knute Brekke, remotely operated vehicle/Monterey Accelerated Research System manager at the Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute, will discuss building remotely operated vehicles. Then, the San Lorenzo Valley High School underwater robotics team — under the tutelage of instructor Eric Brown — will host an underwater robotics demonstration. A Q&A session will follow.

A panel on empowering immigrants 6:30 p.m. Feb. 5 in the Betty Leonard Community Room at the Aptos Branch Library, 7695 Soquel Drive. Maria Elena de Garza of Community Action Board Santa Cruz County, Isai Pazos of Senderos and Angela Di Novella of Catholic Charities Diocese of Monterey will discuss the immigration process, legal services for immigrants and current federal challenges, as well as take questions from the audience.

A visit to Mario Guizar’s lighting and art studio in Soquel where he has created robot sculptures out of spare lamp and clock parts. Guizar will be on hand to talk about his creative process, and robot coloring pages will be available to take home. The event is 10 a.m. Feb. 7 at Mario’s Lighting, 3025 Porter St., Soquel.

A writing workshop hosted by local author Anne Janzer 6:30 p.m. Feb. 10 in the Fireside Room at the Scotts Valley Branch Library, 251 Kings Village Road. Janzer will be teaching how to write a good underdog story, like “Spare Parts,” and provide writing prompts.

A conversation on the international student experience in the U.S. hosted by Cabrillo College political science professor Nicholas Rowell and Anna Zagorska, Cabrillo’s international student counselor. They will discuss current geopolitical tensions, immigration policies and constraints on campuses that shape the lives of students studying in America. The discussion is 6:30 p.m. Feb. 17 at the Aptos Library. At 6 p.m., the library will host an awards ceremony for art created by Aptos High School students and judged by Two Birds Books.

Davis will discuss “Spare Parts,” how he learned the story of the Carl Hayden High School robotics team and how his interactions changed his understanding of leadership, opportunity and resilience. The event is 6:30 p.m. Feb. 24 at the Colligan Theater, 1010 River St., Santa Cruz. The discussion is free, but register in advance at SantaCruzPL.org. Donations at the door are encouraged.

Our Community Reads will host its first ever dance performance 2 p.m. March 1 at the La Selva Beach Clubhouse, 314 Estrella Ave., outside the La Selva Beach Library. It will be a mix of styles, as Senderos will perform traditional folklórico dances, and Luis Sanchez — Watsonville native and hip-hop dance instructor with Arts Council Santa Cruz County — will perform modern dances, including the robot.

All events are free, and the immigration panels and writing workshop are hybrid events that will allow for remote participation.

Ward hopes this year's program, and the book that inspired it, serve as reminders that people can do anything they put their minds to.

"I hope that it will encourage people to do things that they might not think they have the capability to do," she said. "I think that's such a great motto in life: give it a try, see how far things can go and maybe success isn't out of your reach."

For information on all Our Community Reads events, go to FriendsOfSantaCruzLibraries.org/our-community-reads.

Link to story: <https://www.santacruzsentinel.com/2026/01/11/joshua-daviss-spare-parts-is-focus-of-2026-our-community-reads-events/>



January 20, 2026: Capitola library to cut ribbon on long-awaited solar and battery storage project

By Cecilia Schutz

Capitola is celebrating a solar and battery storage project on the roof of the Capitola branch of the Santa Cruz Public Libraries — a sustainability effort long in the making.

In the past decade, nine of the 10 Santa Cruz public library branches have been renovated or rebuilt. The renovations were supported through Measure S, a voter-approved tax measure placed on the June 2016 ballot to support the construction of modern, accessible library infrastructure.

The Friends of the Capitola Library had planned for solar panels on the roof in the original design for the library, which opened in 2021. But during construction, the installation was delayed because there wasn't enough money in the budget.

But the Friends didn't give up. For years, the organization's volunteers sold books at its used bookstore in the Capitola Mall to raise money. That funding, plus donations from the community and contributions from the city and Santa Cruz Public Libraries, covered the cost of the approximately \$500,000 solar and battery storage project.

The project is the first public building in Capitola to achieve energy neutrality. SCPL said it will save more than \$30,000 annually in energy bills.

“We’re thrilled that this is an infrastructure project that is all about resiliency and clean energy, and it obviously is going to save some money for the library system, which we support,” said Sarah Beck, executive director of the Friends of the Santa Cruz Public Libraries.

Community members are invited to the ribbon-cutting at 10 a.m. Saturday at the Capitola Branch Library, 2005 Wharf Rd.

Link to story: <https://lookout.co/capitola-library-to-cut-ribbon-on-long-awaited-solar-and-battery-storage-project/story>



January 27, 2026: Santa Cruz Public Libraries receives \$20,000 Carnegie award for U.S. history materials

Carnegie Corporation gifts Santa Cruz libraries \$20,000

Santa Cruz Public Libraries received a \$20,000 award from the Carnegie Corporation of New York.

The Carnegie Corporation was established in 1911 to promote the diffusion of knowledge.

The award is part of Carnegie Libraries 250, celebrating the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

The funds will be used to acquire materials highlighting the history of the U.S. and its founding documents. They will also be used to promote and educate the public about the roles and rights of U.S. citizens.

There are about 1,280 Carnegie libraries across the country, and each library is set to receive \$10,000 to celebrate the anniversary.

The Santa Cruz Carnegie (Main) Library opened in April 1904 with partial funding from Andrew Carnegie. Four libraries were opened, including the Garfield Park Library, Eastside Branch Library, and the East Cliff & Seabright Library. The Garfield Park Library is still open today and remains the only Carnegie library in the area.

The Santa Cruz Carnegie (Main) Library was among the first Carnegie libraries built in California, following those built in San Diego, Alameda, and Los Gatos.

Andrew Carnegie, a Scottish immigrant, funded the construction of 1,681 free public libraries over 30 years.

Upon his death, he left much of his estate to the Carnegie Corporation, which continues to fund libraries. Of the 1,681 libraries he funded during his life, about 750 still use their original buildings.

<https://www.ksbw.com/article/santa-cruz-public-libraries-carnegie-award-us-history/70161759>



January 28, 2026: Santa Cruz Public Libraries get Carnegie grant, California Democrats introduce legislation to regulate ICE

In today's newscast, Santa Cruz Public Libraries have received a \$20,000 grant from the Carnegie Corporation to mark the upcoming 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. And, California Democrats introduce new legislation aiming to regulate Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

Link to story: <https://www.kazu.org/kazu-news/2026-01-28/santa-cruz-public-libraries-get-carnegie-grant-california-democrats-introduce-legislation-to-regulate-ice>

Santa Cruz Sentinel

January 28, 2026: Coastlines

■ SANTA CRUZ

EXTENDED HOURS AT SELECTED LIBRARY BRANCHES

Santa Cruz Public Libraries is pleased to announce system schedule changes and extended hours at selected branches starting Feb. 1. Several branches within the system will have extended hours. Capitola and Felton Branch Libraries will join the Downtown Branch Library in offering library services to the public on Sundays. Capitola and Felton Branch Libraries will offer Sunday services from 1-5 p.m.

Additionally, Aptos and Scotts Valley branch libraries will have an extended schedule Monday through Thursday from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., Friday from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Lastly, all 10 SCPL branches will open at 11 a.m. every Friday to allow for staff participation in local and systemwide meetings.

For information on branch hours and other services, visit santacruzpl.org.



January 28, 2026: Santa Cruz Public Libraries add Sunday hours at two branches, opening later on Fridays at all branches

By: Ashley Palma-Jimenez

The Santa Cruz Public Libraries announced system schedule changes and extended hours starting Feb. 1 at select branches.

The Capitola and Felton branches will be open to the public on Sundays from 1 to 5 p.m., joining the downtown location in offering Sunday hours.

The Aptos and Scotts Valley branch libraries will have an extended schedule Monday through Thursday from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., Friday from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

All 10 Santa Cruz Public Libraries branches will open at 11 a.m. every Friday so staff can hold meetings.

For more information on branch hours and other services, visit Santa Cruz Public Libraries.

Link to story: <https://lookout.co/santa-cruz-public-libraries-add-sunday-hours-at-two-branches-opening-later-on-fridays-at-all-branches/story>

Santa Cruz Sentinel

January 29, 2026: Carnegie Corporation - Santa Cruz libraries receive \$20K gift - Grant comes as part of initiative celebrating America's 250th birthday

SANTA CRUZ — In addition to revolutionizing the American steel industry, Andrew Carnegie is best known for donating money to build libraries throughout the United States, helping them flourish in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Between 1886 and 1917, he is estimated to have helped finance the construction of 1,681 libraries in America alone, accounting for half of the libraries in the country by the time he wrote his final grant.

Among those libraries he helped fund were four in Santa Cruz: on Church Street, East Cliff Drive, Soquel Avenue and Woodrow Avenue. Of these four, only the latter — dubbed the Garfield Park Branch Library — is still in operation today, one of approximately 800 still-functioning Carnegie Libraries in the United States and one of 121 in California. As America prepares to celebrate a milestone of its own — its 250th birthday — the Carnegie Corporation of New York has bestowed Santa Cruz Public Libraries with a \$20,000 gift through its Carnegie Libraries 250 initiative, celebrating the anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

"Our founder, Andrew Carnegie, who championed the free public library movement of the late 19th century, described libraries as 'cradles of democracy' that 'strengthen the democratic idea, the equality of the citizen, and the royalty of man,'" Dame Louise Richardson, Carnegie Corporation president and former head of the University of Oxford, said in a statement. "We still believe this and are delighted to celebrate our connection to the libraries he founded."

Santa Cruz Public Libraries will use the funds to highlight the history of America and its founding documents, illuminate how American government works and promote understanding of Americans' rights and responsibilities as citizens.

All four of Santa Cruz's Carnegie libraries were designed by famed architect William Weeks, who also designed hundreds of buildings throughout California, including such local landmarks as the Santa Cruz High School campus, the Coconut Grove at the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk and the Palomar Hotel on Pacific Avenue.

"Carnegie's formula was simple," Christopher Platt, Santa Cruz Public Libraries director, said in a statement. "He agreed to build the library if the local jurisdiction committed to funding its operations for the future. Like communities across the country, Santa Cruz took advantage of the offer and originally built four 'Carnegie' branches, of which only Garfield Park remains as a library."

The other three were the main library on Church Street, which opened in 1903 and was demolished to make way for the present downtown library in 1966; the Seabright Library on East Cliff, which closed in 1966 and now houses the Santa Cruz Museum of Natural History; and the Eastside Library on Soquel Avenue, which opened in 1921 and closed in 1967 after the opening of the Branciforte Library. The triangular island at the intersection of Soquel and Poplar avenues at Water Street, across from 24 Hour Fitness, features a monument to the Eastside Library.

The Garfield Park Branch Library was built in 1915 through a \$2,615 bid. Outside the Santa Cruz Public Libraries system, but still within Santa Cruz County, Carnegie also funded a library on Union Street in Watsonville, which was designed by Weeks and constructed by The Granite Rock Co. The library opened in 1905 and was demolished in 1975 to make room for a new library on the site, which in turn was succeeded by the library's present location at the Watsonville Civic Plaza, which opened in 2008.

As part of Carnegie Libraries 250, the Carnegie Corporation is asking people to submit photos and memories of the Carnegie Libraries they have visited. Longtime patrons of the Garfield Park Branch Library can submit their materials to [CarnegieLibraries.org](https://www.carnegielibraries.org).

Link to story: <https://www.santacruzsentinel.com/2026/01/28/santa-cruz-public-libraries-receive-20k-gift-from-carnegie-corporation/>



January 30, 2026: Libraries announce schedule changes, extended service hours

By: Staff Report

Santa Cruz Public Libraries (SCPL) has announced system schedule changes and extended hours at selected branches starting on Sunday, Feb. 1.

Several branches within the system will have extended hours. Capitola and Felton branch libraries will join the Downtown Branch Library in offering library services to the public on Sundays from 1-5pm.

In addition, Aptos and Scotts Valley branch libraries will have an extended schedule Monday through Thursday from 10am-7pm, Friday from 11am-5pm and Saturday from 10am-5pm. All 10 SCPL branches will open at 11am every Friday to allow for staff participation in local and systemwide meetings.

For more information on branch hours and other services, visit santacruzpl.org.

Link to story: <https://pressbanner.com/news-briefs-published-jan-30-2026/>



January 30, 2026: Santa Cruz Public Libraries receives \$20,000 gift from Andrew Carnegie foundation

By Cecilia Schutz

The Carnegie Corporation of New York recently gifted \$20,000 to the Santa Cruz Public Libraries to honor the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

Andrew Carnegie was a Scottish immigrant who made his millions in the steel industry through ruthless business dealings and technological innovation. He championed free public libraries and funded thousands of library buildings, [among other institutions](#), nationwide.

Carnegie paid for the construction of 1,681 free public libraries across United States over 30 years at the turn of the 20th century. He asked only that local jurisdictions make the commitment to continue funding the libraries' future operations.

Between 1903 and 1921, the Santa Cruz public library system received four separate grants from the Carnegie Corporation to construct a main library and three branch buildings.

"The Carnegie Library" was built in 1903 with \$20,000 in Carnegie funds. The main library on Church Street in Santa Cruz became the central hub for the county library system. In 1953, the city deemed the building too small, and it was demolished to clear the path for the present downtown branch in 1966.

A Carnegie grant paid for both the East Cliff Branch Library in Seabright and the Garfield Park Branch Library, which opened in 1915. In the 1950s, the City Museum combined with the East Cliff Library. The library portion closed in 1965, and the museum transformed into the [Santa Cruz Museum of Natural History](#). The Garfield Park Library, at 705 Woodrow Ave. on the Westside is now the only original Carnegie-funded library building that remains open.

The Eastside Branch Library on Soquel Avenue was the last built of the four branches. Although the Carnegie grant was received in 1917, World War I delayed construction.

The Eastside Library opened in 1921, but over the decades, people struggled to reach the building due to traffic on Water and Poplar streets and Soquel Avenue. In 1964, the city built a new Eastside branch. The original Eastside Library

closed in 1967 to make room for the Branciforte Library, which opened that same year. Santa Cruz Public Libraries said it will put the new Carnegie gift toward "historical preservation of democracy, and promoting the understanding of the roles and rights of citizens," in celebration of the country's 250th anniversary.

Link to story: <https://lookout.co/santa-cruz-public-libraries-receives-20000-gift-from-andrew-carnegie-foundation/story>

Santa Cruz Sentinel

February 3, 2026: New Building Starts to Rise



Santa Cruz Sentinel

February 4, 2026: Capitola - Library to screen doc on civil rights icon

By Nick Sestanovich

CAPITOLA — February is Black History Month, which means a time to learn about the many individuals who have contributed to the progress toward racial equity. These include well-known figures like Martin Luther King Jr. and Harriet Tubman, but also unsung civil rights icons whose stories are not as well-known.

Barbara Jordan — the first Black woman elected to the Texas Senate in 1966 and a congressional representative who was a major force in the impeachment hearings against President Richard Nixon — is the subject of the documentary “The Inquisitor,” which will premiere on PBS Feb. 19. However, Santa Cruz County residents can view it 12 days earlier when the film will be screened at the Capitola Branch Library Saturday, followed by a panel discussion that includes a virtual visit from the film’s director, Angela Tucker.

Jordan was born in Houston in 1936 as the granddaughter of Edward Patton, who previously served a term as the only Black member of the Texas House of Representatives before Jim Crow laws took hold in Texas. Due to segregation, she attended the historically Black college Texas Southern University and became a lawyer. In 1960, she volunteered at Black churches in the Houston area to encourage people to vote for John F. Kennedy in the presidential election. In 1966, she became the first Black woman to be elected to the Texas Senate and the first Black person to serve in the Texas Legislature since the Reconstruction Era.

After six years in the state Senate — which also included a brief stint as acting governor of Texas on June 10, 1972, when Gov. Preston Smith and Lt. Gov. Ben Barnes were out for the day, making her the first Black woman to serve in a state’s gubernatorial capacity — she was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1972. Her term in Congress is best remembered for a 15-minute televised speech in front of the House Judiciary Committee during the hearings over whether to impeach Nixon over his role in the Watergate scandal. Jordan cited her faith in the U.S. Constitution and the system of checks and balances and declared, “I am not going to sit here and be an idle spectator to the diminution, the subversion, the destruction of the Constitution.” With waning support from both parties and the certainty of impeachment growing more likely, Nixon resigned more than two weeks after Jordan’s speech.

Jordan later delivered the keynote speech at the 1976 Democratic National Convention with some delegates even pushing for her to be Jimmy Carter’s running mate. She declined to run for re-election in 1978, became an adjunct professor at the University of Texas at Austin and died in 1996.

In addition to her political career, “The Inquisitor” focuses on Jordan’s personal life, including her intersectional identity as she navigated racism and sexism, a long-term private domestic partnership with another woman and an undisclosed battle with multiple sclerosis. The film premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival in June 2025.

Tucker, who won an Emmy for her work on the 2020 women’s prison documentary “Belly of the Beast,” will be virtually taking part in a panel discussion about the film at the Capitola Library. The in-person panelists will include Elaine Johnson, executive director of Housing Santa Cruz and president of the NAACP Santa Cruz County Branch; Ami Chen Mills, member of the Asian American Pacific Islander Collective, Santa Cruz and host of the podcast “Moment of Truth with Ami Chen Mills;” and Carmelita Limas, Diversity Center board member. The panel will be moderated by Ayo Banjo, community organizer, director of The Village Project and vice chair of the Progressive Caucus of the California Democratic Party.

The screening is 2 p.m. Saturday in the Ow Family Community Room at the Capitola Branch Library, 2005 Wharf Road. Walk-ins are welcome, but registrations are recommended at [SantaCruzPL.org](https://www.santacruzpl.org). Light refreshments will be served.

For those unable to make it to the event, “The Inquisitor” will be screened on PBS’ independent film series “Independent Lens” at 10 p.m. Feb. 23, both locally on KQED Channel 9 and KQET Channel 25 and on the PBS app.

<https://www.santacruzsentinel.com/2026/02/03/capitola-library-to-screen-doc-on-civil-rights-icon-barbara-jordan/>

February 4, 2026: Watsonville's Hope Village welcomes first residents, Capitola library to screen "The Inquisitor"

By Elena Neale-Sacks

In today's newscast, Watsonville's Hope Village—a tiny home community for people living unsheltered on the Pajaro River levee—finally welcomes its first residents. And, Santa Cruz Public Libraries is hosting a screening this Saturday of the forthcoming documentary "The Inquisitor," which chronicles the legacy of Congresswoman Barbara Jordan.

<https://www.kazu.org/kazu-news/2026-02-04/watsonvilles-hope-village-welcomes-first-residents-capitola-library-to-screen-the-inquisitor>



February 12, 2026: Santa Cruz Public Libraries receives \$20K gift from Carnegie Corporation

By Staff Report

Santa Cruz Public Libraries has received a \$20,000 gift from Carnegie Corporation of New York, the foundation established by Andrew Carnegie.

The award is part of Carnegie Libraries 250, a special initiative celebrating the upcoming 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence and honoring the roughly 1,280 Carnegie Libraries still serving their communities across the United States.

Scottish immigrant Andrew Carnegie funded the construction of 1,681 free public libraries nationwide between 1886 and 1917. Approximately 750 of them continue to use their original buildings, while others have moved to new locations.

"Carnegie's formula was simple. He agreed to build the library if the local jurisdiction committed to funding its operations for the future. Like communities across the country, Santa Cruz took advantage of the offer and originally built four 'Carnegie' branches, of which only Garfield Park remains as a library," said Christopher Platt, Director of Libraries. "Two of the original libraries were replaced and the third currently serves as the Santa Cruz Museum of Natural History."

Designed by W.H. Weeks and constructed by W.A. White, the Garfield Park Branch Library, opened in 1915, is one of 121 existing Carnegie Libraries in California built through this historic program.

Santa Cruz Public Libraries will use the funds to acquire materials that highlight the history of the nation's democracy and its founding documents, illuminate how the government works, and promote understanding of the roles and rights as citizens and residents to celebrate the 250th anniversary.

Patrons are invited to share their Garfield Park Branch Library photos, stories and community celebrations at carnegielibraries.org.

Link to story: <https://pressbanner.com/santa-cruz-public-libraries-receives-20k-gift-from-carnegie-corporation/>

Santa Cruz Sentinel

February 18, 2026: Author explores homelessness in book

By Nick Sestanovich

SANTA CRUZ — Homeless encampments have grown significantly throughout the United States over the years. That includes Silicon Valley, where people can be seen living out of tents, shacks and cars amid a backdrop of sprawling tech campuses, skyscrapers and houses occupied by billionaires.

It is this stark contrast that journalist Brian Barth paints in his book "Front Street: Resistance and Rebirth in the Tent Cities of Techlandia." The book provides an up-close look at three different Bay Area encampments, its inhabitants and the struggles they face to find housing while also living in fear that their makeshift homes may be swept. Barth will be coming to Santa Cruz — a city where these situations are commonplace — for a panel discussion on the book at the Downtown Branch Library Feb. 27.

Barth is an independent journalist who has had articles published in the New Yorker, National Geographic, New Republic and Mother Jones. "Front Street" is his first book and focuses on three well-known

encampments in the Bay Area: the Crash Zone near Columbus Park in San Jose, Wolfe Camp in Cupertino and the Wood Street encampment in Oakland. He talks to activists within these camps, discusses their fears of encampment sweeps and harassment by police officers, explores the history of homelessness in the 19th and 20th centuries and analyzes the root causes of homelessness and potential solutions.

Barth will be joined by members of Wood Street Commons, a group of Oakland homelessness activists that sprung out of the Wood Street encampment, one of the largest camps in West Oakland until its closure in 2022. The discussion will be moderated by Don Lane, former Santa Cruz mayor and City Council member, social sciences lecturer at UC Santa Cruz and president of Housing Matters' Board of Directors.

In addition to the book, Barth is working on a documentary called "The Spark," which provides a look at the Wood Street encampment as it faces eviction from the city of Oakland. The documentary is currently in postproduction.

The event is 7 to 9 p.m. Feb. 27 at the Downtown Branch Library, 224 Church St., Santa Cruz. For information, go to SantaCruzPL.libnet.info/event/15732988.

Link to story: <https://www.santacruzsentinel.com/2026/02/17/santa-cruz-author-brian-barth-explores-homeless-encampments-in-front-street/>



February 20, 2026: Applications open for Youth Poet Laureate

By Staff Report

Santa Cruz Public Libraries, in collaboration with Urban Word, the Santa Cruz County Office of Education, the Rotary Club of Santa Cruz and the Arts Council Santa Cruz County, is seeking applicants to serve as the county's third Youth Poet Laureate.

The program celebrates youth poetry across Santa Cruz County and offers young writers opportunities for readings, publication and community engagement. The selected Youth Poet Laureate will serve a one-year term from April 2026 to April 2027, promoting poetry and encouraging peers to explore creative expression. Finalists will also participate in events as part of a cohort of teen poets.

Applicants must be 13 to 18 years old, live in Santa Cruz County and be able to participate in local activities throughout the program year.

Workshops to help students prepare applications are scheduled for noon Saturday, Feb. 21, at Capitola Branch Library; 4 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 24, at Felton Branch Library; and 4 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 25, at Downtown Branch Library.

Applications are due March 1, with finalists to be announced March 15. The 2026-27 Youth Poet Laureate will be named April 16 during the Santa Cruz County Youth Poetry Celebration at Kuumbwa Jazz Center, which will include a free public reading and celebration of teen poetry.

Link to story: <https://pressbanner.com/news-briefs-published-feb-20-2026/>



February 25, 2026: The Editor's Desk GOOD WORK

By Brad Kava

Santa Cruz Public Libraries have received a \$20,000 gift from Carnegie Corporation of New York, the foundation established by Andrew Carnegie.

The award is part of Carnegie Libraries 250, a special initiative celebrating the upcoming 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence and honoring the roughly 1,280 Carnegie Libraries still serving their communities across the United States.

Scottish immigrant Carnegie funded 1,681 free public libraries nationwide between 1886 and 1917. Approximately 750 of them continue to use their original buildings.

“Santa Cruz took advantage of the offer and originally built four ‘Carnegie’ branches, of which only Garfield Park remains as a library,” said Christopher Platt, Director of Libraries. Patrons are invited to share their Garfield Park Branch Library photos, stories and community celebrations at carnegielibraries.org.

Link to story: <https://www.goodtimes.sc/the-editors-desk-36/>

Santa Cruz Sentinel

February 26, 2026: Young at Heart in Santa Cruz County: Local libraries offer book delivery to home-bound readers

By Tara Fatemi-Walker

This month, we’re exploring the Santa Cruz Public Library (SCPL) Book Buddies program, which increases library access by connecting home-bound readers with volunteers who deliver books (and other materials upon request) to library patrons’ homes. Book Buddy volunteers need to be 16 or older; right now, the current volunteer cohort ranges from people in their 30s to their 80s. The home-bound patrons who participate in Book Buddies are mostly seniors, but the program is open to anyone who can’t get to the library. This includes younger people and those who are only temporarily house-bound due to illness or injury.

SCPL Librarian Laam-sha “Laamie” Young has served as the library’s Volunteer Coordinator since May 2024. As one other roles, she runs Book Buddies—with the help of volunteers, of course. “I believe deeply in supporting and engaging with my community and the library is a great place to work because that’s a big part of our mission. As the Volunteer Coordinator, I get to meet people that love the library and want to give back to their community. I feel very lucky! Library Volunteers are amazing folks. They are hardworking, kind, caring and dependable.” In 2025, SCPL volunteers (covering many programs, not just Book Buddies) contributed over 6,000 hours to helping with programs and serving the community. Laamie works with volunteers to arrange delivery of materials to home-bound patrons about once a month.

“Volunteers apply and go through a vetting process. They are interviewed, fingerprinted and they sign several library forms. I also interview anyone that is applying for a Homebound Library card and/or looking for a Book Buddy. I meet with both the volunteer and the home-bound patron and go over all of the details of the program in person. I work hard to match a Book Buddy with a home-bound person that isn’t too far away geographically, so that there isn’t too much additional driving. “When possible, she matches reading preferences as well.

Sarah Kivela has been a Book Buddy for a little over a year. She first looked into volunteering after she was missing her book group at the Branciforte Library, which had been disbanded after the pandemic. “I thought maybe my buddy and I could have our own little book group.”

Sarah really likes being a volunteer. “I enjoy sharing my love of reading and libraries with other people.” She is continuing to be a Book Buddy even though her Branciforte book group did start meeting again (albeit with new members). An Eastside Santa Cruz resident, Sarah’s current home-bound patron Vi Olly lives in Garfield Park Village. Sarah interweaves her library volunteering with other activities to create what she refers to as a perfect day. “Vi’s location is ideal for me since I know three other ladies who live near there,” says Sarah. “I go to one of my friend’s houses on Walk Circle for coffee, stop by Vi’s to deliver her books and have a chat, and then it’s on to volunteering at St. Francis Soup Kitchen.”

Sarah loves to meet new people and hear about their lives. "Vi and I are just getting acquainted (they were connected in December). I really enjoyed our conversation last month." Vi agrees wholeheartedly: "Sarah brings the items and usually chats for a bit, which is lovely since we both have similar interests."

Vi has been reading since she was three, when her father taught her. "I was the youngest library card holder at the New Brunswick Public library which was across the street from my home." She is now 80 years old and very grateful for the program. "Our dear friend who used to run the Bookmobile that was here at Garfield Park Village twice a month, has been out on medical leave since late last summer. I'm partially disabled and don't own a car. None of the library branches near me are on a bus stop. Having my Book Buddy Sarah drop off and pick up books has been such a gift and blessing."

There is lots of flexibility with how the program works. "If home-bound readers prefer to just have library materials dropped off, volunteers can leave new materials and pick up returns from the doorstep," explains Laamie. "Otherwise, Book Buddies can stop in for a visit, read out loud, or discuss what they are reading with the patron. This is up to the volunteer and home-bound patron to decide." Once the Book Buddies are established, Laamie continues to support the process by helping out with library account questions over the phone or by email.

Laamie herself is a Book Buddy for various patrons. "I always feel welcome and appreciated when I visit a home-bound reader. Our patrons are sharp, witty, and engaging. Many are voracious readers and many have incredible stories to share." One library customer that Laamie serves is Annette March. "Since I am 82, and housebound with a chronic illness, overtime I have been lucky to have first one, then another library volunteer bring books to my house," says Annette. "I call them my library fairies. I'm an avid reader, and although I do miss going to the library myself, this service provided by SCPL has been a god send."

About three years ago, Annette was connected to her first Book Buddy, who inquired about what books she liked, "what authors, what genres, what favorites. She brought me very satisfactory books, some that I had requested from the library, and always some good surprises. We arranged for her to leave books on my front porch, and I would leave ones for her to return," Annette says. This worked and they made plans via email. "I was grateful for her service, until she retired from this volunteer work."

Laamie made her first visit as Annette's Book Buddy soon after beginning her job as Volunteer Coordinator. "I am lucky to have her as my library fairy," says Annette. "She comes by every few weeks, which we arrange via email. We sometimes have tea or a snack together. She's a bright spot in my life, both with her presence and with her wonderful selection of books—sometimes ones I have requested and have on hold, or ones she chooses, using my criteria. Her choice of books would not necessarily be mine, and that is a great surprise. I am happy to be introduced to new authors, or new titles I might have missed."

Annette truly appreciates the Book Buddies program. "If it wasn't for the home-bound services of the library, I would never have met Laamie and would not have enjoyed not only a relationship with her, but also the wonderful opportunity to receive books at home."

Sabrina Andrenacci has been a Book Buddy since July 2025. She was nervous about serving as a volunteer and says Laamie has been very supportive, successfully matching her with a patron (his name is Charles), facilitating the initial meet-up, and graciously answering any questions that come up.

"Book Buddies is wonderful because everyone deserves access to books, and it's a meaningful way for me to stay connected to the library and to the Santa Cruz community," says Sabrina. "I value my monthly visits with Charles, and

the chance to stay in touch throughout the month—whether I’m checking in to say hello, suggesting new books, or just seeing what he’s been up to or what he’s been reading.”

Sabrina lives in Seabright and Charles lives Downtown. “I walk over to his home as well as to the library to pick up and drop off his books. I like to bring him a sweet treat each visit (his favorite is the carob malt balls from Staff of Life!). I typically stay for 30 minutes to an hour and we catch up. Charles has traveled all over the world and has lived in Santa Cruz for decades, so he always has fascinating stories. He has so much information about the world to share and I truly enjoy getting to sit down and learn.”

Jan Nelson, who is in her 70s, is a past Book Buddies program recipient. “Because I no longer drive, I was thrilled when a friend found the Book Buddies brochure at the Boulder Creek library,” says Jan. “I contacted Laamie who arranged for the first meeting at my house.” In October, Laamie and volunteer Melissa Sniffen made their initial visit.

Not long after, Melissa started bringing Jan books on CD. Soon, Jan realized she was very particular about subject matter, and they started exploring the Libby app which is for downloading ebooks, audiobooks, magazines and more from the library. Melissa helped install Libby on Jan’s phone. “I have opted to use Libby more as I can research books on my own and not waste Melissa’s time with something that is not to my liking,” explains Jan.

“My time working with Jan was unusually short for typical Book Buddies, because as we learned Jan’s reading habits, it became clear that she preferred reading via the Library’s audio materials online,” says Melissa.

“Once we got her comfortable using the Libby online system, Jan was able to navigate it herself, search for the titles on her own, and really didn’t need me to pick up and deliver anymore. It felt sort of like she graduated out of the program!”

“I will be forever grateful to Melissa who I’ve continued to text occasionally to keep in touch as she is such a kind and caring person,” says Jan. “When you are home-bound there is nothing like having caring people go out of their way to connect and help you stay engaged with life and audiobooks.” Melissa enjoys being a Book Buddy. “It’s a simple and joyful way to help someone who could use a little help. It’s fun getting to know new people and learning about their interests through a shared appreciation for books. I had a great time becoming friends with Jan as her Book Buddy! She was so generous and kind.”

Jan worked as a landscape designer before her eye problems got too limiting. When Melissa told Jan that her 12-year-old daughter also loved plants and was possibly interested in that career, Jan invited her to bring her daughter by the next time she came to pick up CDs. “Jan showed my daughter her design portfolio, explained her working process, and gave us some extra flower bulbs to plant in our garden at home,” shares Melissa. “My daughter thought it was really cool to learn about landscape design, and we appreciated Jan sharing that part of her life with us.”

Another reason Melissa likes being a Book Buddy? “I love hunting for library materials on a theme! It feeds my curiosity and gives me energy. When searching for items for my buddy, I get to explore some themes outside of my usual genres. “It’s a fun challenge to try to find materials that will match another person’s interests. It’s like wandering through a good bookstore and reading all the book covers.”

“Our public libraries are an amazing free resource for our community,” adds Melissa. “I can’t imagine our community without them. I hate to think that someone isn’t able to take advantage of this opportunity simply because they can’t physically get to a branch. Book Buddies can help us reach those people so they can stay connected, learning, thinking, and being entertained. I’m looking forward to connecting with my next home-bound patron.”

Many people do not know that this service exists. Laamie has a waiting list of around 20 volunteers that are hoping for a chance to deliver books to people that can't make it to the library themselves. Hopefully this article will reach some new home-bound readers. Interested in signing up to receive book deliveries? Contact homebound@santacruzpl.org. Or 831-427-7700, x7614. Interested in volunteering? Fill out a volunteer application at santacruzpl.org/volunteer. Contact Laamie at 831-427-7700, x7638 or volunteer@santacruzpl.org with questions.

Link to story: <https://www.pageturnpro.com/NORCAL-Community-Newspaper-Group/113223-Young-at-Heart-February-2026/sdefault.html>



March 24, 2026: Organization announces final push for financing library construction The Downtown Santa Cruz Library is nearly at its goal for funding during construction

SANTA CRUZ, Calif. —

The Friends of the Santa Cruz Public Libraries have announced the final campaign match to help complete the Downtown Library Capital Campaign. With funds from a private foundation, the group will match every donation up to \$150,000.

The library will be constructed on Lincoln and Cedar Streets. The group has already raised more than \$2.7 million of the \$3 million goal to support the construction. The city is preparing for contractor bids for phase two of construction, including interior structures and systems. More than 350 individuals, families and businesses have donated to the construction of the Downtown Branch, which will act as a hub for the library system when completed. The library is expected to open in early 2028.

Link to story: <https://www.ksbw.com/article/organization-announces-final-push-for-financing-library-construction/70835631>

Chair Mike Termini
Vice Chair Rena Dubin
Commissioner Timothy Lydgate
Commissioner Charlotte Khandelwal
Commissioner Vivian Rogers
Commissioner Pamela Woll
Commissioner Tricia Wynne



STAFF REPORT

DATE: April 20, 2026
TO: Library Advisory Commission
FROM: Christopher Platt, Director of Libraries
RE: Strategic Plan FY 2027 - 2029 Presentation

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Discuss and provide feedback on the draft Strategic Plan and its implementation work plan over the next three fiscal years.

DISCUSSION

The Library is excited to share its proposed Strategic Plan for the next three fiscal years (2027-2029). The Library, with support from Bâton Global Consulting, has spent over a year planning and preparing for implementation in the upcoming fiscal year, pending approval by the Library Joint Powers Authority Board (LJPA).

The attached Strategic Plan pamphlet and Strategy on a Page outlines the Library's continued purpose and its commitment to provide enhanced core programs and services to meet the needs of our diverse communities, while building on past iterations of SCPL's shared vision and mission.

BACKGROUND

Aligning with Our Communities:

In September and October 2025, the Library team launched a community-wide survey in English and Spanish, along with a targeted stakeholder survey to solicit input on current and future library services. The stakeholder survey received a total of 154 responses, primarily from SCPL Staff and several community and government partners. The community survey was promoted across SCPL communication platforms and through the social media, newsletters, and other digital outlets of the four Library governing jurisdictions.

Staff conducted additional outreach by distributing paper and digital flyers in English and Spanish to local organizations, businesses, churches, schools, daycares, and by visiting locations frequented by Spanish-speaking communities to encourage participation.

The survey was featured in the Santa Cruz Sentinel, highlighted in the October edition of Mountain Network News magazine at the request of a Commissioner, and promoted through local radio. To support in-person engagement, the Library provided paper surveys in English and Spanish, along with collection boxes at all branch locations, including the Live Oak Library Annex, to accommodate those who preferred not to participate online.

The survey was further distributed through the Library's Book Buddy program to gather input from homebound patrons. Staff also distributed a modified version of the paper survey to collect feedback from the incarcerated individuals through the Library's Jail Reach program. Promotion was also amplified through word-of-mouth efforts supported by the Commission, staff, the Friends of Santa Cruz Public Libraries (FSCPL), local leaders, and other library advocates.

As a result, the community survey received 1,345 responses, representing all ZIP codes within the Library's jurisdiction. Respondents were also invited to participate in one of the 11 virtual or in-person focus group sessions conducted by Bâton Global Consulting.

Focus Group sessions were organized as follows: SCPL staff (4 sessions), FSCPL, Anyone/community-wide (2 sessions), Infrequent Users, Adults/senior Users, Lived Experience Individuals (at Housing Matters), and Community Partners, which included: Arts Council Santa Cruz County, Boys and Girls Clubs of Santa Cruz County, Cradle to Career Santa Cruz County, Downtown Santa Cruz Association, First 5 Santa Cruz County, Santa Cruz Area Chamber of Commerce, Santa Cruz County Parks Department, Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office, and Volunteer Center of Santa Cruz County.

Additionally, the Library reviewed 13 peer libraries to benchmark comparable library systems to gain insights on what has made them successful. Findings from all efforts were then synthesized into an insights report by Bâton Global Consulting which helped inform the development of this Strategic Plan.

Revised North Star:

The Library has refreshed its Mission, Vision, and Values as follows:

Mission: Access, Information, Connection, Inclusion

Vision: Transforming lives and strengthening communities.

Values: Lifelong Learning, Intellectual Freedom, Public Good

Highlighted Project Charters:

The Library's Strategic Plan includes 19 project charters, many of which are highlighted in this report and will set the stage for the FY 27 Work Plan and key performance indicators.

Access: Free and uninhibited access for all.	
Goals	Measures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Be a viable and vibrant third space. ● Promote digital access for all. ● Deliver SPCL resources and services outside of the Libraries. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Branch visits ● Meeting room utilization ● Public internet use ● Bookmobile visits ● Materials checked out from bookmobile and outreach ● Outreach programs delivered ● Jail Reach checkouts
<p>Project: Welcoming Environment at the Downtown Branch</p> <p><u>Description:</u> This project aims to improve and foster a welcoming environment at the Downtown Branch Library.</p> <p><u>Key Performance Indicators:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Downtown Library visits ● Downtown Library Social Worker Proposal Developed ● All staff trained in customer service, de-escalation, and trauma-informed care. ● Decrease in Library incidents ● Patron and staff feedback 	

Information: Credible curated collections, resources, and programming supporting lifelong learning and enjoyment.	
Goals	Measures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Offer the materials and resources our communities want. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Physical item circulation ● Digital content circulation
<p>Project: Robust and Sustainable Digital Library</p> <p><u>Description:</u> This project aims to develop a robust and sustainable digital library.</p> <p><u>Key Performance Indicators:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Digital circulation and patron holds ratios that serve patrons needs while remaining financially sustainable. ● An articulated strategy for the entire suite of digital materials, both circulating and reference. ● Resources for frontline staff to engage with the digital collections in work with patrons. 	
<p>Project: Collection Alignment and Optimization</p> <p><u>Description:</u> This project aims to evaluate the physical collections for alignment and optimization.</p> <p><u>Key Performance Indicators:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Physical circulation and patron holds ratios that serve patrons needs while remaining financially sustainable. 	

Connection: Social bonds that strengthen communities.	
Goals	Measures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide meaningful, inclusive, and impactful programming. ● Partner with community organizations to enhance programs or services. ● Participate in community events. ● Connect the community to the Libraries' offerings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Program attendance ● Community partner count ● Offsite program attendance ● Newsletter opens ● Digital patron engagement
<p>Project: <i>Program Priorities and Alignment</i> <u>Description:</u> This project aims to prioritize Strategic Plan goals in Program Planning. <u>Key Performance Indicators:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Number of programs per librarian ● Number and diversity of new programs for strategically important constituencies. ● Participant feedback ● Reference service model review and implementation. ● Create a “propose a program” form on the new website. 	
<p>Project: <i>Program Evaluation Process</i> <u>Description:</u> This project aims to implement a system to capture patron feedback to be used for evaluations purposes. <u>Key Performance Indicators:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Define and articulate criteria for program outcomes. ● Diversity of programs ● Program attendance and participant survey feedback 	
<p>Project: <i>Partner Collaboration Enhancement</i> <u>Description:</u> This project aims to increase collaboration with partners during the program planning process. <u>Key Performance Indicators:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Number of active partnerships ● Partner program attendance and survey feedback ● Programs support strategically important constituencies 	
<p>Project: <i>Future Downtown Teen Center Plan</i> <u>Description:</u> This project aims to empower teens by offering safe, welcoming library spaces that encourage connection, creativity, and youth voice, while supporting learning, job readiness, social development, and mental health. <u>Key Performance Indicators:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Articulated Teen program plan for the new Downtown Library to be implemented on opening. 	
<p>Project: <i>Newsletters Tailored to Individual Interests</i> <u>Description:</u> This project aims to create customized newsletters and communications that speak to the more specific interest areas of our patrons. <u>Key Performance Indicators:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Newsletter open rate ● Email subscriptions ● Correlating program attendance 	

Inclusion: Welcoming, relevant, and responsive services that reflect and serve the diversity of our communities.	
Goals	Measures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increase engagement with and service to Spanish speakers. ● Connect vulnerable patrons with relevant services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Spanish/bilingual program attendance at branches ● Bookmobile Spanish speaker attendance ● Life Literacies Center visits
<p>Project: <i>Spanish-first Outreach Service Expansion</i> <u>Description:</u> This project aims to add a mobile library that is Spanish-first including signage in Spanish, Spanish speaking staff, and Spanish language materials, resources, and library information. <u>Key Performance Indicators:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Update site service schedule ● New registrations/account updates at outreach sites ● Circulation of Spanish and Bilingual items at outreach sites ● Feedback from patrons, staff and partner organizations 	
<p>Project: <i>Spanish Speakers' Programming Engagement</i> <u>Description:</u> This project aims to remove access barriers and actively engage Hispanic/Latino communities across our Santa Cruz County service area. <u>Key Performance Indicators:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Spanish speaker program attendance ● Feedback from patrons, staff and partner organizations ● Enhanced or expanded program partnerships with relevant partner organizations. 	
<p>Project: <i>Spanish Readers Collection Engagement</i> <u>Description:</u> This project aims to increase collection engagement with Spanish readers. <u>Key Performance Indicators:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Spanish or bilingual materials circulation 	
<p>Project: <i>Institutional Engagement with Spanish Speakers</i> <u>Description:</u> This project aims to increase institutional engagement with Spanish speakers. <u>Key Performance Indicators:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Create Spanish speakers' cultural advisory group to help inform programs, services and collections. ● Participate in relevant community engagement events 	
<p>Project: <i>Life Literacies Center Partnership Expansion</i> <u>Description:</u> This project aims to expand the Life Literacies Center's partnerships and to increase utilization of the Life Literacies Center space at the Downtown Branch.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Hire librarian to coordinate Life Literacies Center ● Increased number of participating partner organizations ● Increased number of hours of partner availability ● Coordination with vulnerable patrons' social worker ● Coordination of unhoused patron advisory group 	

Inclusion: Welcoming, relevant, and responsive services that reflect and serve the diversity of our communities. – CONTINUED

Project: *Unhoused Patrons Advisory Group*

Description: This project aims to establish an Unhoused Patron Advisory Group composed of individuals with lived experience and representatives from partner organizations to help inform library programs and services that can better serve their needs.

Key Performance Indicators:

- Establishment of period focus group of unhoused individuals and/or related partners organizations to inform library programs and services.
- Attendance rate at related programs and services such as Life Literacies Center offerings.
- Feedback from participants and staff.

Project: *Vulnerable Patrons' Library-based Social Worker*

Description: This project aims to partner with social workers to assist at the Downtown Library with staff and vulnerable constituents for referrals and behavioral issues.

Key Performance Indicators:

- Solicit recommendation from library social worker expert to outline need, feasibility and structure for re-implementing a library social worker based at the Downtown Branch Library.
- Vulnerable patrons are better served, staff supported, and incidents mitigated.

Team Culture: A supportive and high-functioning organizational culture that enables staff to do their best work.

Goals	Measures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Team members are informed and included. ● Team members are satisfied, fulfilled, and safe. ● Team members are lifelong learners who are growing in their profession. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Communication satisfaction ● Staff satisfaction

Project: *Stronger Communications = Better Outcomes*

Description: This project aims to work towards a culture change towards positivity. Same Team/Same Purpose.

Key Performance Indicators:

- Staff communication and engagement satisfaction scores
- Implementation of training resources suite focusing on effective communication.
- Related training offerings from partner organizations.

Project: *Organizational Assessment and Refinement*

Description: This project aims to assess the organizational structure needed to best position SCPL to achieve its strategic goals.

Key Performance Indicators:

- Organizational consultant analysis for refinements to organizational structure to better achieve strategic goals.
- Staff communication and engagement satisfaction scores.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no additional fiscal impact to the approved budget on this item.

ATTACHMENT

Strategic Plan FY 2027 - 2029

Strategy of a Page

Report Prepared by: Jennifer Yeung, Management Analyst

Reviewed and Approved by: Christopher Platt, Director of Libraries



SANTA CRUZ
PUBLIC LIBRARIES



ACCESS



INFORMATION



CONNECTION



INCLUSION

STRATEGIC PLAN

FY 2027 – FY 2029

TRANSFORMING LIVES AND STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES

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LOOKING FORWARD

“

There is not such a cradle of democracy upon the earth as the Free Public Library, this republic of letters, where neither rank, office, nor wealth receives the slightest consideration.”

~ Andrew Carnegie

”

We are pleased to present to you **Santa Cruz Public Libraries'** newest strategic plan. In some ways it is an evolution of the previous strategy and will guide our work through the next three years. This plan embodies our “North Star” vision of **transforming lives and strengthening communities** by balancing core programs and services with innovations that reflect our institutional values of lifelong learning, intellectual freedom, and, as Andrew Carnegie points out above, our foundational role as a public good freely accessible to all.

Through surveys, interviews and focus groups we gathered ideas and insights from our communities, staff, partners, and stakeholders across **Santa Cruz County**, as well as peer libraries in California and beyond. Your feedback supported the creation of goals and projects that align with the four components of our updated mission: **access, information, connection and inclusion** as well as the flourishing team culture necessary to support those goals. The theme that was underscored in every conversation along the way is that you, our Santa Cruz communities, love and support your libraries. You rely on us not only for books and information, but also for the meaningful connection and life enrichment we provide through programs and meeting spaces. Our service to you is in fact a relationship, one that we must nurture with care and respect.

While we cannot be all things to all people, the next three years give us an opportunity to celebrate and innovate in programs, collections, services, and partnerships that impact more people's lives in measurable ways. In doing so, we honor your support, deliver on our North Star commitments, and position **Santa Cruz Public Libraries** for a strong future in the years to come.

We are grateful to each of you who helped inform our strategic goals and look forward to welcoming you to our branches, outreach partnerships and digital spaces to partake of our work as we round out this decade.



Sincerely,

Christopher Platt
Director of Libraries

OUR NORTH STAR



Access • Information • Connection • Inclusion

MISSION



Transforming
lives and
strengthening
communities

VISION



VALUES

- Lifelong Learning
- Intellectual Freedom
- Public Good



Shark Fin Cove

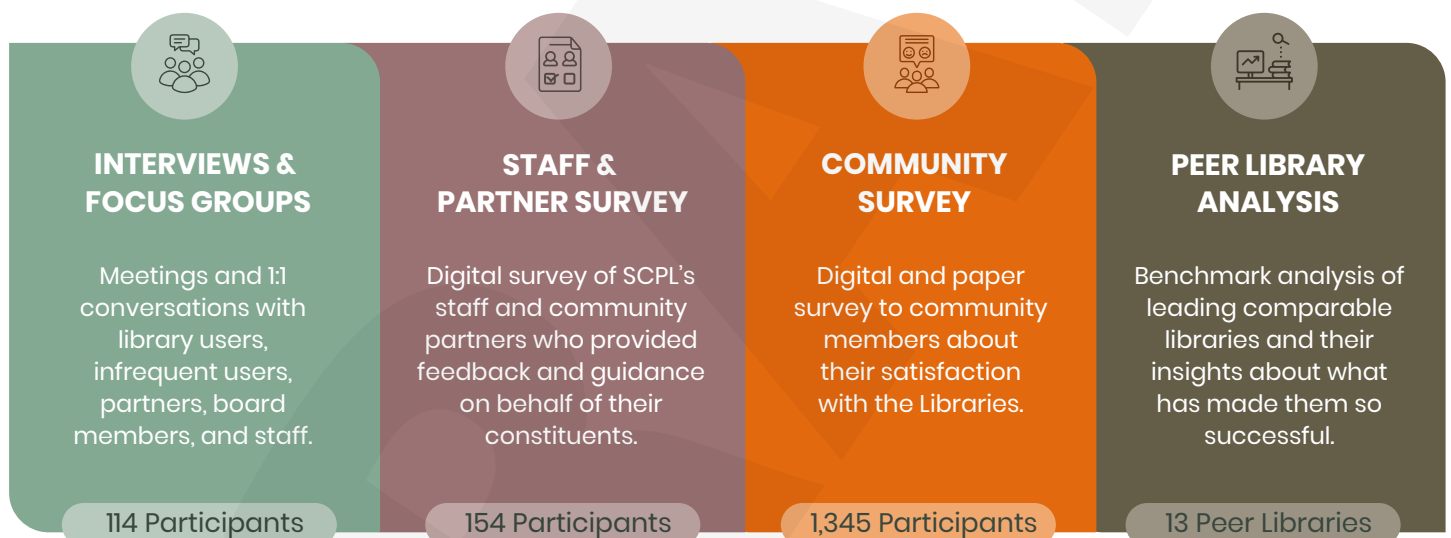
Scott Eriksen © 2024

ALIGNING WITH OUR COMMUNITY

Strategic planning enables public libraries to look ahead with purpose and intention. For Santa Cruz Public Libraries, this three-year plan provides a shared vision and clear direction for meeting the evolving needs of our diverse county and guides how resources, partnerships, and energy are focused to deliver outsized results for our community.

LISTENING TO OUR COMMUNITY

To shape our strategic plan, SCPL embarked on an extensive listening process to assess how well we are addressing the needs across our communities and what opportunities exist. Using the following data collection methods, we heard from **over 1,500** different people.



WHAT WE HEARD

The community confirmed many things we anecdotally knew. Our listening efforts confirmed that patrons love their Libraries. On average, patrons gave the Libraries a Net Promoter Score (NPS) of 67 (NPS scores range from -100 to +100). This high level of satisfaction was consistent across nearly all demographic groups, branch locations, and service areas. Patron satisfaction was driven by trust, accessibility, value, and the new and refurbished branches.

Our listening process also identified opportunities for improvement. The most prominent themes from this feedback informed the Priorities and Goals discussed below in this Plan.

DESIGNING THE STRATEGY

This plan was developed by a Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) based on what we heard from residents across Santa Cruz County. The twenty-member SPC included team members from all operational areas of the Libraries. The planning process was facilitated by a team of library strategic planning consultants.

This Plan articulates SCPL's long-term Vision and how we will deploy our limited resources to advance our Mission during fiscal years 2027 - 2029. It aligns our team and external stakeholders so that, together, we can provide the services that are most important to the greater Santa Cruz County community.

The elements of the Plan, shown below, work together to help us achieve our Vision.



The Libraries defined our Mission as: Access • Information • Connection • Inclusion. These areas, along with Team Culture, were also adopted as the Priority areas of the Strategic Plan.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) is a foundational value of Santa Cruz Public Libraries and guides all Library activities and the implementation of this Plan.

IMPLEMENTATION

A scorecard is the key tool to gauge the success of the Plan. The scorecard shows the elements of the strategy, including the metrics, which help demonstrate the impact of the Libraries' services in numeric terms. By using this data-driven approach, the Libraries can focus on results and impacts (public good) rather than activities alone. This approach empowers the SCPL to add, alter, cancel, or reprioritize projects in response to evolving circumstances.

Goals / Objectives	Metrics	FY2023	FY2024	FY2025	FY2026	Trend ('23-'25)	Status	Project Titles
ACCESS - Free and uninhibited access for all.								
Be a viable and vibrant third space for community members.	Visits	452,532	785,458	852,176			●	• Ensure a welcoming environment at DTN branch
	Meeting Room Utilization (hours)	11,138	16,123	19,951			●	
Promote digital access for all.	Public Internet and WiFi Sessions	64,609	81,665	85,251			●	
Deliver SCPL resources and services outside of the Libraries.	Bookmobile Visitor Count	n/a	n/a	n/a			●	• Increased Service to Spanish Speakers • Spanish-First mobile library
	# of materials checked out from bookmobile or outreach services	36,215	37,128	36,395			●	
	# Outreach library programs delivered	n/a	381	428			●	• Expand Outreach Programming
	Jail Reach checkouts	6,770	6,455	8,863			●	

Example Scorecard for Access Priority

Projects are the intentional initiatives the Libraries will undertake to help achieve our Goals. The SPC defined 19 ambitious Projects to be implemented during the three year strategic plan as listed in the Priorities and Roadmap sections that follow.



OUR PRIORITIES

ACCESS

Access is the foundation of an equitable library system. For **Santa Cruz County**, it means ensuring residents can use library spaces, technology, collections, and services regardless of schedule, income, language, or circumstance – so everyone can benefit from what the Libraries offer.

“

Once you learn to read, you will be forever free.

~ Frederick Douglass

”



WHAT WE HEARD...

Community members consistently emphasized the need for expanded library hours. Working adults and families told us that the current hours limit their ability to fully utilize the libraries' services.

Library staff and community partners prioritized tech lending (PCs and hotspots) as a top priority for meeting patron needs.



GOALS...

- Be a viable and vibrant third space for the community members.
- Promote digital access for all.
- Deliver SCPL resources and service to constituents who have barriers to using physical branches.

Example measures of success...

- SCPL branch visits
- Bookmobile visits
- # of Outreach programs delivered



PROJECTS...

- Welcoming environment at Downtown Branch
- Outreach programming expansion

INFORMATION

“

Knowledge is power. Information is liberating. Education is the premise of progress.

~ Kofi Annan

”



WHAT WE HEARD...

Expanding the size of the Libraries' collection is the #1 way to increase library usage.



PROJECTS...

- Robust and sustainable digital library
- Collection alignment and optimization
- Library of Things assessment and alignment

Information empowers individuals and strengthens communities. **Santa Cruz Public Libraries** provide trusted, relevant, and diverse collections that support lifelong learning, curiosity, and enjoyment across all ages and backgrounds.



GOALS...

Offer the materials and resources our communities want.

Example measures of success...

- Physical item circulation
- Digital content circulation



CONNECTION

Human connection strengthens the social and civic fabric of **Santa Cruz County**. Through shared spaces, programs, and partnerships, the Libraries foster relationships, belonging, and civic engagement—helping residents connect with one another, their community, and the resources that support a healthy and thriving society.

“
Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.
”
~ Margaret Mead



WHAT WE HEARD...

- There is strong community demand for programs.
- In FY26, the Libraries delivered 4,700 programming sessions spanning 350 topics but has limited meeting room and staff capacity to offer additional programs.
- The staff observes that some programs are lightly attended and could be scaled back to free up resources for more popular programs.
- The primary reason the public doesn't visit the Libraries more frequently is that visiting doesn't cross their minds, or they're unaware of the Libraries' extensive offerings.

GOALS...

- Provide meaningful, inclusive, and impactful programming.
- Partner with community organizations to enhance programs or services.
- Participate in community events.
- Connect the community to the Libraries' offering.

Example measures of success...

- Program attendance
- Community partner count
- Newsletter opens
- Digital patron engagement



PROJECTS...

- Program priorities & alignment
- Future Downtown Teen Center plan
- Program evaluation process
- Partner collaboration enhancements
- Newsletters tailored to individual interests

INCLUSION



“
Every individual matters. Every individual has a role to play. Every individual makes a difference.
”

~ Jane Goodall

Inclusion ensures library services reflect and serve the full diversity of **Santa Cruz County**. By prioritizing inclusion, the Libraries work to remove barriers, reach underserved communities, and provide welcoming, relevant, and responsive services so all residents feel seen, valued, and supported.



WHAT WE HEARD...

- Over 30% of Santa Cruz County reports being Hispanic or Latino per the US Census. However, Spanish-speaker engagement with the Libraries is low based on observation and anecdotal feedback. Less than 10% of the strategic planning survey participants reported as Hispanic or Latine origin.
- Some vulnerable patrons (e.g., unhoused, mentally ill, low-income) who could significantly benefit from the Libraries' offerings are either unaware of the available services or have individual concerns (e.g., safety of belongings) that block them from using the Libraries.



PROJECTS...

- Spanish-first outreach service
- Spanish speakers' programming engagement
- Spanish speakers' collection engagement
- Institutional engagement with Spanish speakers
- Life Literacy Center partnership expansion
- Unhoused patron advisory group
- Vulnerable patron social worker



GOALS...

- Increase engagement with and service to Spanish speakers.
- Connect vulnerable patrons with library and other relevant services.

Example metrics of success...

- Spanish/Bilingual program attendance at branches
- Bookmobile Spanish speaker attendance
- Life Literacy Center visitors

TEAM CULTURE

“
People may never remember what you said or what you did, but they will always remember how you made them feel.
”

~ Maya Angelou

A positive **team culture** is essential to both staff morale and excellent public service. By prioritizing well-being, communication, safety, and growth, **Santa Cruz Public Libraries** empowers staff to do their best work and, in turn, better serve the community.



WHAT WE HEARD...

- Staff's general satisfaction with the Libraries is strong and exceeds patron satisfaction.
- Staff pressures have caused frustration, burnout, and inefficiencies and, is viewed as unsustainable.
- Staff identified inefficiencies with some existing workflows.
- Internal communications has strong potential for improvement.



PROJECTS...

- Strong communication = better outcomes
- Organizational assessment and refinement

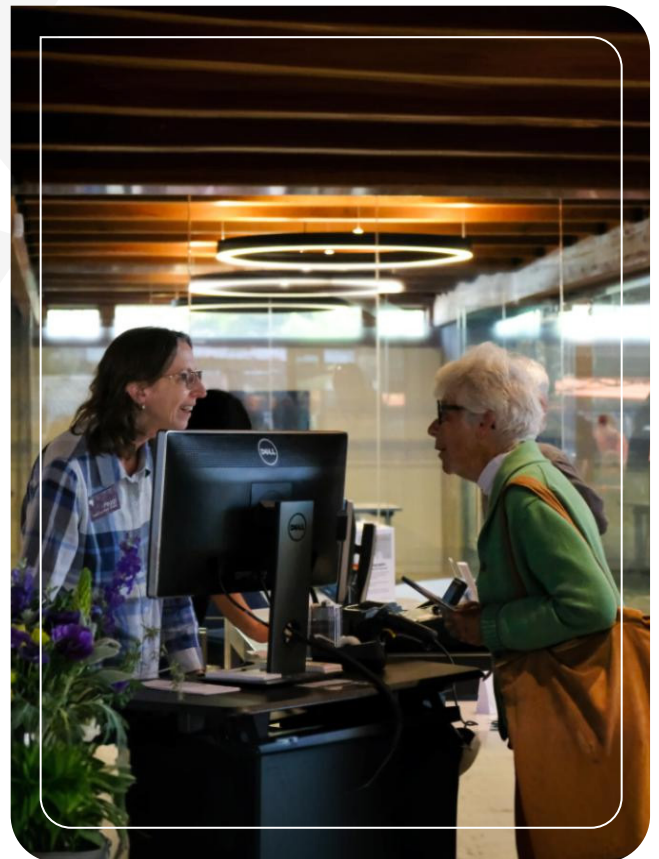


GOALS...

- Team members are informed and included.
- Team members are satisfied, fulfilled, and safe.
- Team members are lifelong learners who are growing in their profession.

Example metrics of success...

- Communication satisfaction score
- Staff overall satisfaction score



STRATEGY AT A GLANCE 2027-2029

MISSION Access • Information • Connection • Inclusion

VISION Transforming lives and strengthening communities

VALUES

- Lifelong Learning
- Intellectual Freedom
- Public Good

ACCESS

- Goals**
- Be a viable and vibrant third space.
 - Promote digital access for all.
 - Deliver SCPL resources and services outside of the Libraries.
- Measures**
- Branch visits
 - Meeting room utilization
 - Public internet use
 - Bookmobile visits
 - Materials checked out from bookmobile and outreach
 - Outreach programs delivered
 - Jail Reach checkouts

INFORMATION

- Goals**
- Offer the materials and resources our communities want.
- Measures**
- Physical item circulation
 - Digital content circulation

CONNECTION

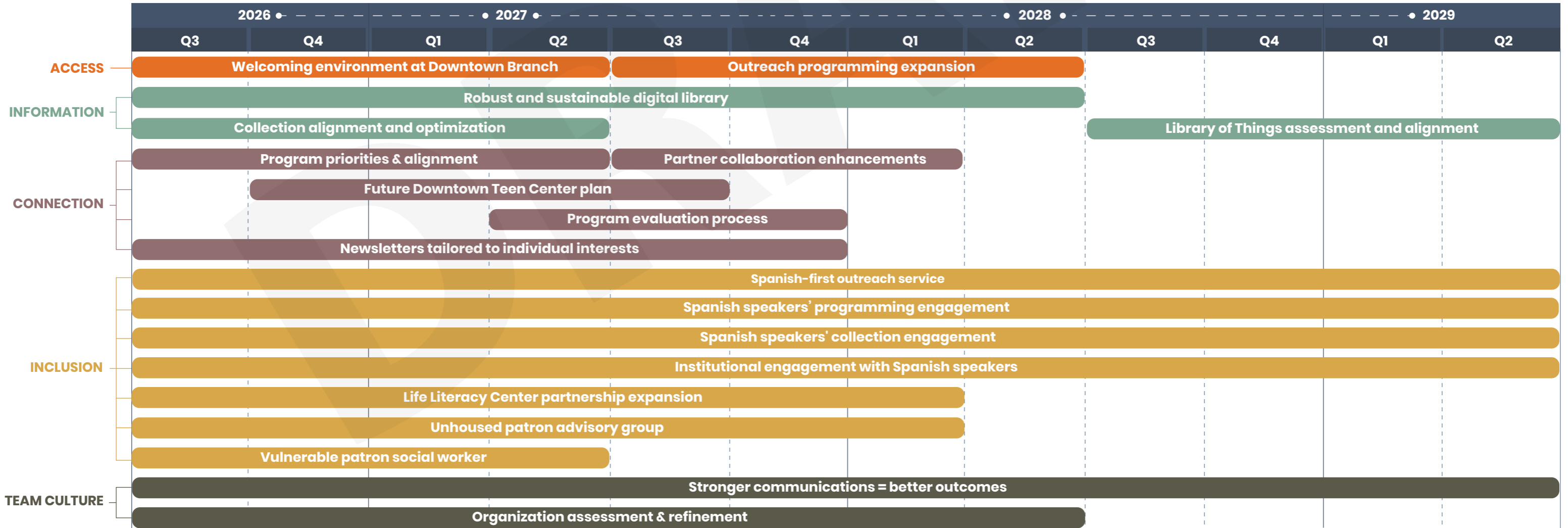
- Goals**
- Provide meaningful, inclusive, and impactful programming.
 - Partner with community organizations to enhance programs or services.
 - Participate in community events.
 - Connect the community to the Libraries' offerings.
- Measures**
- Program attendance
 - Community partner count
 - Offsite program attendance
 - Newsletter opens
 - Digital patron engagement

INCLUSION

- Goals**
- Increase engagement with and service to Spanish speakers.
 - Connect vulnerable patrons with relevant services.
- Measures**
- Spanish/bilingual program attendance
 - Bookmobile Spanish speaker attendance
 - Life Literacy Center visits

TEAM CULTURE

- Goals**
- Team members are informed and included.
 - Team members are satisfied, fulfilled, and safe.
 - Team members are lifelong learners who are growing in their profession.
- Measures**
- Communication satisfaction
 - Staff satisfaction



ABOUT SANTA CRUZ PUBLIC LIBRARIES

The Santa Cruz Public Libraries (SCPL) system delivers information, education, enrichment, and inspiration through a network of 10 neighborhood library branches, a web-based digital library, a bookmobile, a library annex, and community-based programs. SCPL serves children, teens and adults with innovative programming, professional services and community facilities that spark imagination and support discovery. Patrons can explore a wide range of interests from academic research, book clubs and literacy programs to digital photography, locally-produced music and local history. Branch locations include Aptos, Boulder Creek, Branciforte, Capitola, Downtown Santa Cruz, Felton, Garfield Park, La Selva Beach, Live Oak and Scotts Valley. (Note: Watsonville is served by its own library separate from the SCPL system.)

2025 LIBRARY USE

852,176

Visits

194,958

Cardholders

2,146,403

Total Circulation of Items



OUTREACH

- Bookmobile – **23,000 items** on board, **32 sites** visited monthly, **36,395 items** circulated
- Jail Reach – **4 sites** visited weekly, **200 participants** served monthly



MARKETING

- Newsletter Opens – **52,564**
- Digital Patron Engagements – **950,719**



PROGRAMMING

- Summer Reading – **4,101** participants, **56,402** hours read
- Adult Programs – **22,853** participants, **2,436** programs
- Youth Programs – **40,643** participants, **2,065** programs
- Life Literacies Center – **1,213** participants, **343** programs



Partnerships with **26 local organizations**



Internet Sessions **85,321**

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A special thank you to these individuals who have contributed their valuable insights, energy, and leadership to **Santa Cruz Public Libraries** and this strategic plan.

LIBRARY STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

- **Christopher Platt**
Director of Libraries
- **Laura Whaley**
Assistant Director
- **Julia Bernal**
- **Diane Cowen**
- **Maddy Damon**
- **Jessica Goodman**
- **Sarah Harbison**
- **Kira Henifin**
- **James Lee**
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- **Heather Norquist**
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- **Autumn Paquette**
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- **Ana Maria Treadwell**
- **Catherine Upton**
- **Catherine Workman**
- **Jennifer Yeung**

LIBRARY FACILITIES FINANCING AUTHORITY & LIBRARY JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY

- Mali LaGoe – Chair
- Nicole Coburn – Vice Chair
- Jamie Goldstein
- Matt Huffaker

LIBRARY ADVISORY COMMISSION

- Mike Termini (Capitola)
- Charlotte Khandelwal (Supervisory District 1)
- Timothy Lydgate (Supervisory District 5)
- Rena Dubin (Santa Cruz)
- Pamela Woll (Scotts Valley)
- Vivian Rogers (Santa Cruz)
- Tricia Wynne (Supervisory District 2)

STRATEGIC PLANNING CONSULTANTS

- Bâton Global, LLC
- Jeffrey Kappen, Ph.D., Partner
- David Foster, Senior Consultant



SANTA CRUZ PUBLIC LIBRARIES



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Prepared by,
bâton | global

STRATEGIC PLAN

2027 - 2029

MISSION Access • Information • Connection • Inclusion

VISION Transforming lives and strengthening communities

VALUES

- Lifelong Learning
- Intellectual Freedom
- Public Good

ACCESS

- Goals**
- Be a viable and vibrant third space.
 - Promote digital access for all.
 - Deliver SCPL resources and services outside of the Libraries.

- Measures**
- Branch visits
 - Meeting room utilization
 - Public internet use
 - Bookmobile visits
 - Materials checked out from bookmobile and outreach
 - Outreach programs delivered
 - Jail Reach checkouts

- Projects**
- Welcoming environment at Downtown Branch
 - Outreach programming expansion

INFORMATION

- Goals**
- Offer the materials and resources our communities want.

- Measures**
- Physical item circulation
 - Digital content circulation

- Projects**
- Robust and sustainable digital library
 - Collection alignment and optimization
 - Library of Things assessment and alignment



CONNECTION

- Goals**
- Provide meaningful, inclusive, and impactful programming.
 - Partner with community organizations to enhance programs or services.
 - Participate in community events.
 - Connect the community to the Libraries' offerings.

- Measures**
- Program attendance
 - Community partner count
 - Offsite program attendance
 - Newsletter opens
 - Digital patron engagement

- Projects**
- Program priorities and alignment
 - Future Downtown Teen Center plan
 - Program evaluation process
 - Partner collaboration enhancements
 - Newsletters tailored to individual interests

INCLUSION

- Goals**
- Increase engagement with and service to Spanish speakers.
 - Connect vulnerable patrons with relevant services.

- Measures**
- Spanish/bilingual program attendance at branches
 - Bookmobile Spanish speaker attendance
 - Life Literacy Center visits

- Projects**
- Spanish-first outreach service
 - Spanish speakers' programming engagement
 - Spanish speakers' collection engagement
 - Institutional engagement with Spanish speakers
 - Life Literacy Center partnership expansion
 - Unhoused patron advisory group
 - Vulnerable patron social worker

TEAM CULTURE

- Goals**
- Team members are informed and included.
 - Team members are satisfied, fulfilled, and safe.
 - Team members are lifelong learners who are growing in their profession.

- Measures**
- Communication satisfaction
 - Staff satisfaction

- Projects**
- Strong communication = better outcomes
 - Organizational assessment and refinement



Chair Mike Termini
Vice Chair Rena Dubin
Commissioner Timothy Lydgate
Commissioner Charlotte Khandelwal
Commissioner Vivian Rogers
Commissioner Pamela Woll
Commissioner Tricia Wynne



STAFF REPORT

DATE: April 20, 2026
TO: Library Advisory Commission
FROM: Christopher Platt, Director of Libraries
RE: Library Workplace Safety Actions Update

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Accept and file.

DISCUSSION

This is a continually updated compendium of current SCPL activities aligned with workplace safety. An earlier version was shared as an informational item in the August 2025 LAC meeting. To help contextualize actions taken since then, updates are placed within the compendium and appear highlighted and in *italics*.

REPORT

SCPL Workplace Safety Actions taken since Summer 2024 (*updated Spring, 2026 in yellow italics*):

Training:

Code of conduct recently updated is clearer on expectations. (2024)

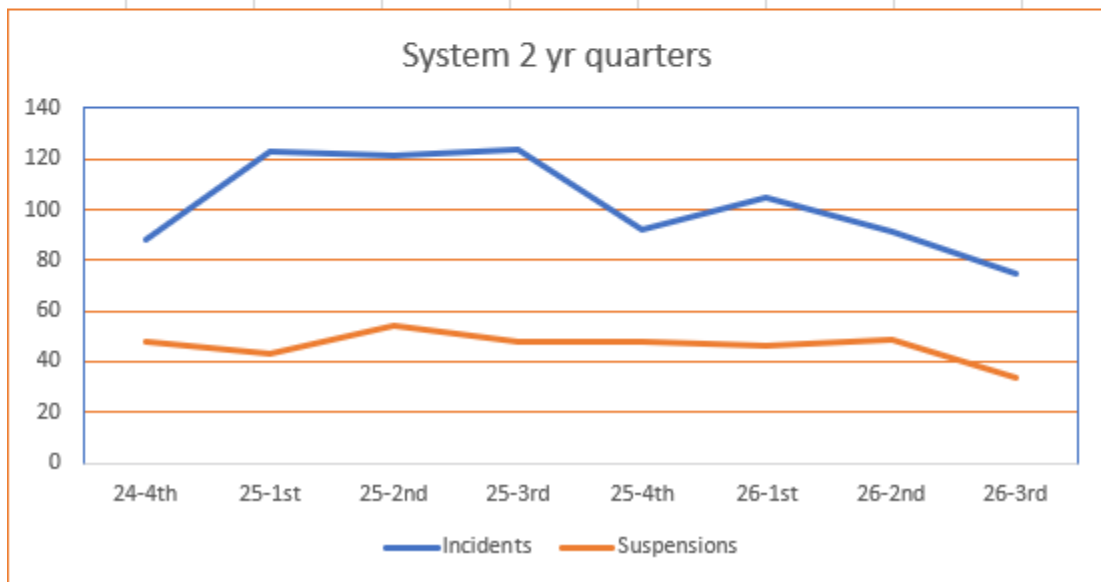
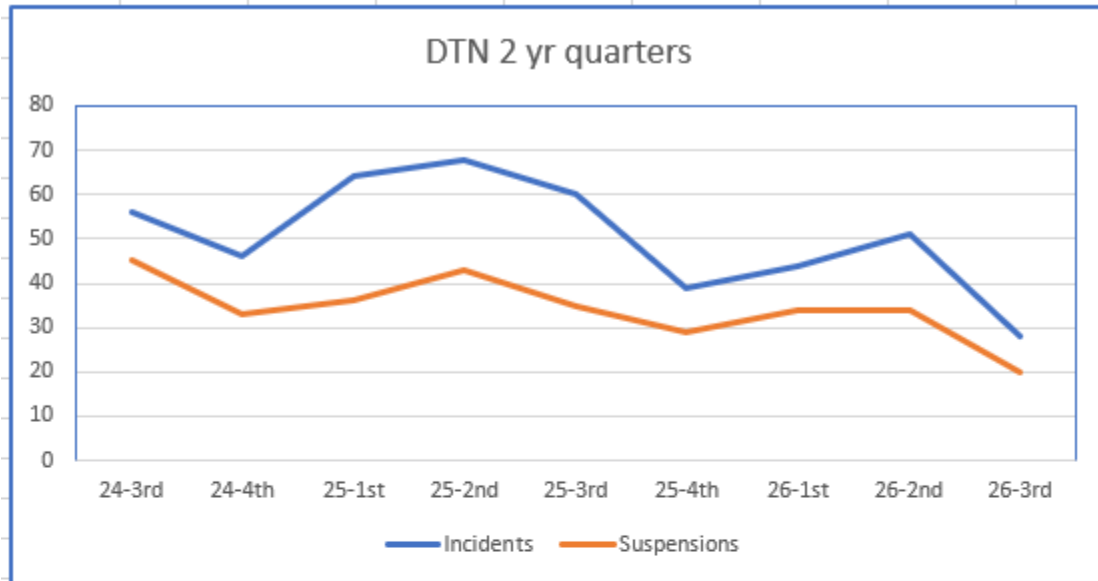
- This policy update was accompanied by trainings and expectations around the new policy, de-escalation, workplace violence, etc in 2023-2024.
- In addition we provide ongoing trainings for dealing with difficult patrons, de-escalation, setting boundaries, etc in our online training suite. Online self-paced trainings are now regularly recommended in the Internal Comms messages.
- We are pursuing a repeat of active shooter training for the upcoming All Staff training day, the last time this was conducted was 2023.
- As of earlier this year, staff are taking the City of SC's workplace violence training regularly as a new requirement.
- At the Spring 2025 All Staff Day we hosted a 'working with vulnerable communities panel of area agencies to better understand their roles for referral, trends in behaviors, staff support, etc. Agencies included New Life, PeopleFirst, City of SC Homelessness Response, and County of SC Mobile Crisis Support. (suggestion came out of a Labor/Mgt meeting)

- Christopher reached out to colleagues on the CoSC's Commission for the Prevention of Violence Against Women for any suggestions they have for trainings/resources for our staff dealing with sexist harassment. He was referred to the Downtown Association to see if they offer resources for their retail clientele:
 - The Downtown Association conveyed that the DTN Library is part of their Ambassador Service area so they can be called to assist with problem patrons. This info was shared with DTN Leadership.
 - They also referred a member of the Encompass Downtown Street Team for her de-escalation training that she presented to the DTN Association. That individual no longer provides that training but did refer to the CRC as a good alternative source of trainings. This info was shared with the Safety team for assessment and referral for additional & potential recurring trainings.
- **April FY26 Staff Day includes two relevant trainings:**
 - **Sheriff's Office workplace violence (formerly active shooter training)**
 - **CRC's Building Resilience Through Balanced Empathy (2 hrs)**

Incidents & Suspensions:

Q3 YTD FY26 Suspensions (serious incidents that result in patron suspension) have continued to decrease from 143 to 129: indeed compared to the same period (Jan-Mar) year over year they've reduced from 48 to 34.

- **Suspension and incidents were down across the board. At Downtown Library specifically the year-over-year comparison of Jan-Mar 25 to Jan-Mar 26 showed a decrease in incidents from 60 to 28, and a decrease in suspension from 35 to 20. See charts below:**



Incident reports have gone to Risk Mgt and as of April 2025 now require us to submit separate workplace violence reports for certain levels of incidents. These are in place, staff were oriented to these at the FY25 April All Staff day.

Downtown Library Specific Support:

- We reconfigured the security arrangement to place the security guard office at the entrance to the building and added an additional security guard (started April '25.) The Downtown Library Branch Manager has indicated his has helped.
- We have worked with HR closely to tighten hiring processes so that vacancies at the Downtown Library get filled more quickly.
- Downtown has a tested & working panic button. In addition, Downtown staff have walkie talkies and if necessary can use the PA system to communicate in situations that necessitate this. Branches have doorbell buttons at the desk that ring in the workroom when they need staff backup.
- Replaced two security cameras at Downtown so that the quality of video is better for identifying individuals who are part of incidents.

- We reached out in Spring 2025 to the County to restart the notion of social workers in the library. The Library had a grant-funded pilot program pre-COVID.
 - In the period between Spring and Fall of 2025, we met with various members of County Behavioral Health to discuss needs and opportunities.
 - Sustainability issue to solve: I sat on an advisory board for RAND that tested a version of this for rural libraries in TX over 3 years and while everyone loved it the two takeaways were it was successful because the social workers were managed by an organization that specializes in this work (rather than reporting to the library director) and that without funding it dries up. The RAND \$ gave way at 3 year mark and now the participating libraries are almost all losing the program.
 - *Update 4/6/26: we are baking this into the next strategic plan and have solicited a consulting quote from a national expert on social workers in libraries, Beth Wahler to help us craft a workable model and assist us in finding partners/funding. Ms Wahler is already known to many staff via her webinar trainings in our online training academy pertaining to de-escalation, boundaries, serving difficult patrons, etc.*

Based on community and staff feedback, the next strategic plan also includes elements to make the Downtown Library more welcoming and relevant to all users:

- *Improve the entrance experience to the building to make it more logical and welcoming.*
- *Start a vulnerable population advisory group to help inform our services and programs particularly in the LLC.*
- *City of SC is activating the adjacent parking lot more to prevent camping and considering installation of restroom facilities in the lot which should reduce impact on library restrooms.*

Broader Systemwide Team Support:

- SCPL's Safety Team is regrouped to review onsite protocols, training needs, and update the Problem Situation Manual. (May 2025)
- Staff do have recourse to EAP support services and we have reaffirmed for staff that during the immediate aftermath of a serious incident if they need to regroup in a safe space or go home their supervisor will support this.
- The Asst Director has confirmed a process with the Safety Team whereby a staff member or their supervisor will alert Management of a serious incident to make sure there is timely followup - it has been a practice for someone from the mgt team to head out to meet with an impacted staff member in the wake of such an occurrence--we are now articulating an expectation around it. *Continued negotiations between City HR and the bargaining unit pertaining to "Critical Incident Leave" are underway.*
- We confirmed that staff in library branches can choose to wear a generic STAFF name badge instead of one with their name on it to avoid stalker situations.
- *AEDs are installed in all library locations.*
- New Child Protection Policy was approved at 6/5 LJPA.
- SCPL Director attended a Library Director's Safety Summit in Hartford, CT in September of 2025.
- *SCPL Assistant Director is attending this year's iteration of the Safety Summit in July.*

Objective Standards on Public Library Workplace Safety:

The American Library Association offers a range of suggested guidelines and resources around safety related policies, trainings, and design recommendations that favor security:

<https://www.ala.org/advocacy/resource-guide-library-safety-and-preparedness>

In terms of objective standards on public library workplace safety to compare SCPL to, research turned up an active New York State Senate Bill (S7993) that would require public libraries implement the following safety protocols to prevent workplace violence (Spring 2025). As an example of standard requirements, we compared to it and SCPL meets each of these articulated requirements already:

- *“Making High Risk Areas More Visible to More People”*
 - This is incorporated into new and renovated libraries by design and at DTN most of the seating is in open areas.
- *“Installing Good External Lighting”*
 - This is incorporated into new and renovated libraries and libraries currently close no later than 6 pm.
- *“Providing employee training”*
 - Regular and self-paced trainings on a variety of topics from working with difficult patrons, setting boundaries, mental health issues, de-escalation, and workplace violence are available and in some cases required.
- *“Establishing and Implementing Reporting Systems for Incidents” and “Annual review of incidents to make changes to Workplace Violence Policy as Necessary”*
 - We have a PITS system that flags incidents and suspensions and additionally as of this year some of the suspension-level incidents require an additional Workplace Violence submission form. These get routed to Risk Mgt at CoSC.
 - We review as they happen and report statistics quarterly. The above measures indicate changes as a result.
- *“Every Library Shall Install Panic Buttons”*
 - Downtown Library already has this, we are reviewing the remainder of the branches. This will require installation of dedicated phone lines and comes with a cost. Additionally we are reviewing which locations have ‘doorbell’ buttons that alert in the staff room of need for assistance at the desk.
- *“Security guards” for “Libraries that have experienced a certain number of violent incidents in a given period of time, as determined by the department”*
 - SCPL has this in place at Downtown library since it has by far the most incidents with a full time security guard recently supplemented by a part time guard to assist in patrolling.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no additional fiscal impact to the approved budget on this item.

Reviewed and Approved by: Christopher Platt, Director of Libraries