LETTER FROM THE LIBRARY DIRECTOR

In 2018-2019, the Simi Valley Public Library entered the second year of its 5-year Strategic Plan, continuing to Make Access Easier, Tell the Library’s Story, Empower Customer Service, and Support Educational Pursuits. Results from these efforts included:

- Customers gaining easier access to Library resources as staff employed a roving model; more frequently engaging customers, staff spending less time behind customer service desks.
- Customers gaining easier access to bestsellers with shorter waiting periods, as additional copies were purchased quickly with funds allocated for titles with high hold ratios and customer requests.
- Customers being empowered to independently borrow materials. Staff demonstrated how to use the catalog, locate items on shelves, and borrow using self-check stations.

In an ongoing effort to ensure that the Library is welcoming and safe for all citizens, training was provided through the California State Library’s Mental Health Training Initiative to prepare staff for responding to uncomfortable and unsafe situations. In addition, capital project initiatives included budget approval for the first phase of Library renovation to begin in 2019-2020.

Throughout the year, a new Library website was developed and scheduled for launch just days into the upcoming fiscal year. In addition to updated website design principles such as a clean visual appeal, mobile-friendly features, and one-click access, the website was developed to include flexible spaces for highlighting new materials, local information, and current events. For the latter half of the year, plans were made to expanded digital book and audiobook offerings, coinciding with the launch of the new website.

The Simi Valley Public Library, its customers and staff, are grateful for the commitment and support of the Library Board of Trustees, the Simi Valley Friends of the Library, Library Systems & Services, and the many local partnerships that make this organization an essential part of the community. We look forward to making continuous improvements that build on the successes of this past year and prior years, as we respond to the needs of this community.

On behalf of the entire staff team, thank you, Simi Valley, for making the Library a part of your lives. It is a pleasure and honor to serve this community.

Sincerely,

Kelly Behle
Library Director
SIMI VALLEY PUBLIC LIBRARY
BY THE NUMBERS

317,085
CIRCULATION

46,406
CARDHOLDERS

4,561
TOTAL REGISTRATIONS THIS YEAR

1,065
JUVENILE REGISTRATIONS THIS YEAR

430
NUMBER OF PROGRAMS

7,246
PROGRAM ATTENDANCE

142,279
LIBRARY VISITS (DOOR COUNT)

1,031
JUNE 2019
HIGHEST HOOPLA CIRCULATION
SINCE LAUNCH
STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

The five-year Strategic Plan, approved by the Library Board of Trustees on July 24, 2017, highlights strategic priorities. Progress was made in the following areas during this year:

**Making Access Easier**

Library staff employed a roving model and was trained and assigned to zones, improving customer engagement and minimizing time behind customer service desks. As a result, staff is now more readily available to demonstrate to customers how to use the online catalog and digital resources, such as e-books and streaming movies, and how to check out items using the self-check stations.

**Telling the Library’s Story**

Materials were highlighted for customers through staff recommendations on social media and in the building. Social media activity became more focused, highlighting the value of the Library as an information source. Monthly themes were used to create programming schedules that correlate with displays of materials for all ages. Books, audiobooks, and DVDs, as well as curated collection of electronic materials were highlighted in the building and on social media.

**Empowering Customer Service**

An online purchase request feature was developed for the new website: this form empowers customers to have a voice in what is purchased for the Library. Mental Health Initiative training for all staff was provided by the California State Library. The training prepared staff to respond to uncomfortable or potentially dangerous situations. This training is important in creating a safe and welcoming environment for all who enter the Library.

**Capital Project Updates**

The first phase of an interior renovation was approved in the 2019-2020 budget. Preliminary features of the proposed renovation were developed, and a specialized library designer was secured. The renovation will include moving the Friends of the Library Bookstore to a location in the northeast section of the building. Two large service desks will be removed and repurposed as public spaces. Customer service will be joined as a single point of service at centrally located staff kiosks.
U.S. Green Building Council-LA: The Discovery Garden

In early 2018, the City of Simi Valley was awarded the 2018 Legacy Project grant funding from the U.S. Green Building Council-L.A. During this fiscal year, the work on garden installation was completed and a grand opening event was held. The Discovery Garden is a California native plant landscape featuring species that attract pollinators, sustainable design elements and water stewardship. Monthly maintenance of the Discovery Garden is done by volunteer groups, and during weekly storytime, children and parents water plants in planters. Numerous children’s events have been held in the Discovery Garden.

Simi Valley Friends of the Library: Hoopla

For the third year in a row, the Friends of the Library have generously funded Hoopla, a downloadable and streaming digital service that offers free e-books, e-audiobooks, comics, movies, television shows, and music. The Friends of the Library generously provided $23,809 for residents to enjoy 11,047 free items this year.

California State Library: Mental Health Initiative

Simi Valley Public Library’s application for the Mental Health Initiative was successful. Through the initiative, funding was provided for staff training and the purchase of books and audiobooks related to mental health challenges. More than five hundred items totaling $7,800, including titles such as “Dead Set on Living”, “You Are Enough” and “Brave Face”, were selected and added to children, teen and adult collections based on their relevance to current community needs.
Simi Valley Public Library continued to offer programs that feature literacy, STEM, arts, teen topics, and educational support for K-12 students and lifelong learning for adults. Beginning in January 2019, monthly themes were developed to set the course for program planning: the first phase in structuring programs around a central theme. In the upcoming fiscal year, an updated website will feature an area that highlights the programs and connects them to Library resources.

**Literacy**

Adult Literacy tutoring is offered six hours each week. The program is executed in partnership with Ventura County READ and the Simi Institute. Trained tutors meet, one on one, with students who need assistance with reading proficiency, conversational English, and the citizenship process.

Early Literacy and Family Literacy are purposefully addressed in storytime programs. Young children learn print awareness, vocabulary, phonological awareness, letters and symbols or shapes, story comprehension and narration, and reading motivation. Parents are given techniques that can be used at home to talk, read, sing, write, and play with their children - making early literacy learning a whole-family endeavor.

Emerging and experienced young readers improve their literacy skills as they read to therapy dogs each week.

**STEM: Science, Technology, Engineering and Math**

STEM programs for children featured coding and robotics, as well as natural science learning opportunities in The Discovery Garden, with the use of magnifying lenses, microscopes, and binoculars. Bi-weekly LEGO® Play programs offered early engineering exploration to young children. Teens used virtual reality equipment and adults listened to Dr. Jason Miller of e C.S.U. Channel Islands speak about how he is leading a group of research students using mathematics to resolve some of the barriers to effective study of bats.
Arts

It’s a New Day, part of the Simi Valley Arts Alliance, provided concerts where local teens performed vocal and instrumental pieces. The Simi Valley Chamber Orchestra performed in December, and a local dance troupe delighted Library crowds with Irish dancing in March. Music history experts, Bob and Saul, presented programs about Broadway productions and the legacies of Rodgers and Hammerstein- both fun and fact-filled presentations featured live and recorded music, curated video clips, and engaging narration.

Teen Topics

Many programs were offered in collaboration with City of Simi Valley’s Youth Services division. Topics included entering the workforce, resume workshops, financial literacy, suicide prevention, and anti-bullying. The Teen Library Council was rebranded as the Teen Advisory Group, and successfully recruited teens seeking volunteer hours. The group’s contributions informed much of the 2019 summer teen program plans. An extensive college preparation series was held in August.

Educational Support and Lifelong Learning

One on one afternoon homework assistance was provided to K-8th grade students when school was in session. More than 400 volunteer hours were logged for the program and 553 students were assisted throughout the academic year.

Adults also benefited from learning opportunities at various workshops and lectures throughout the year. A variety of topics were covered, including: health (ex: injury triage, diabetes awareness, advanced health care directives); setting and reaching personal and business goals; natural history; technology assistance; and adult arts and crafts. Adult learning programs were presented by Library staff, CSU Channel Islands lecturers, Rose Family Mortuary, Regal Health Medical Educators, and Ventura County SCORE volunteers.

YEAR IN REVIEW

July

The Library took summer programming outside the building and into the community. The Wacko Show, a comedy and magic program for families, was hosted outdoors at the Simi Valley Town Center and approximately 200 people stopped by to enjoy the show and purchase books at a pop-up bookstore sidewalk sale provided by the Friends of the Library Bookstore.
August

‘A Selfie Situation: Picking a College Major that Fits You’ workshop was presented for teens. The workshop was designed to help teens uncover their true passions and the steps to take once they’ve identified a direction.

September

Rock Painting Night was hosted by Simi Youth Council in partnership with Library staff. The evening event, held in the Rose Garden, was well-attended by residents of all ages. The purpose of the activities was to spread messages of hope and kindness as part of a suicide prevention awareness campaign.

October

Library staff hosted a table at the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District’s Heritage Halloween event at Strathearn Historical Park. In addition to handing candy out to hundreds of attendees, information was provided about youth programming and the Grand Opening of the Discovery Garden.

The annual Spooktacular at the Library was enjoyed by more than 200, who participated in craft projects, carnival games with prizes for every player, and a holiday storytime.

A favorite author of middle grade readers, Brandon Mull, visited for a talk about his writing process and book signing. There was standing room only as avid readers of his Fablehaven series gathered to meet him.

November

The Discovery Garden Grand Opening and ribbon cutting ceremony was held on November 3. U.S. Green Building Council-LA President, board members, and members at-large joined local elected officials, and City and Library staff in the celebration of the completion of the project and opening to the public. After the ceremony and refreshments, native plant specialist and Discovery Garden designer, Lisa Novick, provided a workshop on California native plants. Families enjoyed child-friendly garden activities throughout the afternoon.
December

Winter Wonderland, an annual family event, celebrated the season with craft stations and a holiday performance by local musician, Craig Newton. One of the craft stations was a gift-wrapping table. The Friends of the Library donated 75 like-new books and children learned how to wrap gifts which, were later delivered by Library staff to children at the Samaritan Center’s Holiday Party the same day.

January

The Library partnered with Ventura County SCORE to offer a workshop about setting and keeping goals for the new year. Presenter, Sylvia Crew, a real-estate investor and small business owner, guided participants in setting objectives – both personal and professional. The two-hour workshop was attended by twenty local business owners.

February

The annual Family Book Festival was held in February. This festival is sponsored annually by the Friends of the Simi Valley Public Library. Featured author, June Sobel, read her book, “Shiver Me Letters: A Pirate ABC” and answered questions about her writing process. Younger children enjoyed pirate-themed activities. This year a new, element was added for older youth, which was very successful. Teens attended a presentation about becoming an animator by Aaron Hammersley, a professional animator.

March

In partnership with Simi Educators Association and Simi Valley Unified School District, the annual Read Across America event was held and attended by more than 800 people. Partners, volunteers, and Library staff worked together to provide a celebration of Dr. Seuss’ legacy and positive impact on literacy. Performances were presented by students from Monte Vista, Crestview, Hillside, and Santa Susana High School. Readers throughout the 3-hour festival included Simi Valley Police Officer Colato; Library Board President, Keith L. Mashburn; Library Trustees Ruth Luevanos and Elaine Litster; Simi Valley Unified School District Board President, Bob LaBelle; SVUSD Trustees Kareem Jubran and Scott Blough; SVUSD Clerk Dawn Smollen; Children’s Librarian, Katey Dager; Library Director, Kelly Behle; and Children’s Library Assistant, Alexandra Ungerma. Ventura County Fire Department also helped kids with reading-related craft and game projects.
April

New In Town, a social organization unique to Simi Valley, has hosted monthly meetings at the Library for several years. In April 2019, Library staff were invited to speak to the group of more than 80 women about materials, programs, and volunteer opportunities at the Library. Several staff members were on hand to offer quick registration of Library cards and answer individuals’ questions about accessing digital materials, especially audiobooks and streaming movies from Hoopla.

The Annual Volunteer Appreciation party celebrated the work volunteers throughout 2018 and early 2019. Most often, volunteers work alone and do not meet one another due to differing schedules so this year’s event was intended to bring volunteers together and make connections. The event was held in the Rose Garden where volunteers, staff, and a Library Trustee enjoyed music, pastries, and raffled door prizes. The event brought together people of varied ages from the many volunteer programs at the Library, including: Summer Reading, Book Buddies, Homework Help, Friends of the Library, Busy Hands Garden Club, and therapy dogs (and handlers) from Bark Buddies and Waggin’ Tails.

May

In partnership with Simi Valley Chamber of Commerce and Ventura County Library, a shared Library booth was sponsored at the Simi Valley Street Festival. This event was the first community outreach for Ventura County Library’s brand-new Mobile Library. Together, the Libraries were able to reach thousands of visitors and handed out free books and provided information about services. This partnership yielded an additional benefit to Simi Valley - $1,000 worth of high-interest books (chosen by Simi Valley’s librarians) were gifted to the local collection as part of the grant that funded the Mobile Library.

June

The Showtime At Your Library summer kick-off event was the first day of the Summer Passport program, a partnership between Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District (RSRPD) and the Library. Many events were offered throughout the day, commencing with a morning magic and comedy performance by Abbit the Average, attended by more than 130 people. Afterward, there was a procession from the Library to an adjacent park, where RSRPD hosted outdoor carnival games and the Kiwanis Club provided hot dog lunches for $1. Later in the afternoon, classical guitarist, Andre Giraldo, performed to a delighted group of adults in the Community Room. The kick-off also highlighted the unveiling of ‘Showtime’ themed decorations, including a photo booth with props and themed movie and book displays. Almost 200 people registered for the Summer Passport program on the first day, approximately 17% of the summer-end totals.
Simi Valley Public Library Board of Trustees

Keith L. Mashburn, President
Dee Dee Cavanaugh, President Pro Tem
Mike Judge
Ruth Luevanos
Elaine Litster

The Board of Trustees provides oversight to staff responsible for Library operations. The Board is committed to supporting Library services, planning for the Library’s future and ensuring the Library’s fiscal health.

Simi Valley Friends of the Library

Lisa Trent, President

Board Members
Claudia Allen      Julia Hammon
Diane Annis       Gloria Hasson
Sonja Bennett     Caroline Hucker
Helena Clynick    Roshni Khiantani
Teresa DeGagne    Cathy Meininger
Beryl Fisher      Susan Miller
Fran Harders

Simi Valley Friends of the Library Board Members and volunteers received and sorted donations, shelved items, and served as cashiers in the Friends of the Library Bookstore on a daily basis. The Friends generously agreed to be the sole sponsor of Hoopla digital services again this year, and also donated funds for summer programs and augmented the collection development budget. In total, this committed and hardworking group donated more than $75,000 to Simi Valley Public Library during this fiscal year period. They act as Library ambassadors in the community and they support programs with interest and attendance.

Staff

The Library is staffed by a team comprised of four MLIS-degreed Librarians, Circulation Supervisor, Marketing and Volunteer Coordinator, IT Specialist, Adult Library Assistant, Children’s Library Assistant, Administrative Assistant, and ten highly-skilled Library Associates. Staff training this year equipped the team to be better prepared to address uncomfortable or potentially dangerous situations and to respond to medical triage incidents. Other training included preparation for new digital resources and how to use a new staff intranet platform. More staff engaged with promoting the collection through displays and speaking with customers about reading recommendations. Librarians also received technical training on collection analysis and collection management.
Community Partners

The Library expanded its commitment to partnerships with local organizations for programs and services to further benefit the community. The following organizations were active partners with the Library during the 2018-2019 fiscal year:

- American Suicide Prevention Foundation
- Boys & Girls Club of Simi Valley
- Busy Hands Garden Club
- City of Simi Valley Public Works
- City of Simi Valley Youth Employment Services
- Community Coalition United
- Custom T-Shirts 4 U
- Esther Maron, Artist
- Foodshare
- First 5 of Simi Valley/Moorpark
- It's a New Day
- Imagynation
- The Junkyard
- Kopy King
- Michael Gorn, Ph.D.
- Monte Vista School
- Macaroni Kid
- Museum of Ventura County
- National College Planning Solutions
- NASA
- Old Susana Cafe
- Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District
- READ Ventura County Library Adult Literacy
- Regal Medical Group
- Rose Family Funeral Home
- Simi Educators Association
- Simi Institute for Careers and Education
- Simi Valley 10 Cinemas
- Simi Valley Chamber of Commerce
- Simi Valley Community Chamber Orchestra
- Simi Valley Friends of the Library
- Simi Valley Police Department
- Simi Valley Task Force on Homelessness
- Simi Valley Unified School District
- Strathearn Historical Society
- Scoil Rince Daryl Rose Dance School
- Ventura County Library
- Ventura County SCORE
- Ventura County United Way

Library Volunteers

Teen and adult volunteers helped keep the Library neat and clean, assisted with events and programs, provided homework assistance, shelved hold items and DVDs, and helped customers with questions about Library computers and printers. The Busy Hands Garden Club tended to the Rose Garden each week, as they have done for many years. Approximately 10,000 hours of volunteer service made the Library a more welcoming and useful space for the community.