Mission of the Palo Alto Library Foundation (PALF)
The Palo Alto Library Foundation (PALF) is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization working with our community to provide significant resources to our five libraries, which make up the Palo Alto Library system. PALF was founded in 2001, operates with a Board of Directors and two part-time staff members, and has over 1,000 donors. The foundation’s nonprofit status was obtained in 2002.

The mission of the Palo Alto Library Foundation is to spearhead fundraising campaigns to support a modern, dynamic library system that meets the needs of everyone in our city.

History of the Foundation
The renovations and rebuilding of the City of Palo Alto Library system is a true example of a public/private partnership among the City of Palo Alto, the citizens of Palo Alto, private donors, and the Palo Alto Library Foundation.

In our first campaign, the Palo Alto Library Foundation raised $38,000 to expand and refurbish the Teen Zones at Mitchell Park and Main libraries. With that small but successful campaign under our belt, we initiated a larger capital campaign in 2007 to renovate and expand the Children’s Library. The foundation has raised just over $1,000,000 in private donations specifically for this cherished library.

Passage of Measure N (November 2008)
Palo Alto’s Main Library and the Mitchell Park Library and Community Center were opened in 1958 and, by 2008, no longer supported the changing needs of the community. Downtown Library was built in 1971. These facilities had inadequate electrical systems to meet the demands of today’s electronics. They were not seismically safe and were not ADA accessible. They lacked spaces for people to work together and for programming to be offered.

In November 2008 the voters of Palo Alto overwhelmingly passed Measure N. This $76 million library bond measure funds a brand new Mitchell Park Library and Community Center, study and program spaces and a complete renovation for Main Library, and a reconfigured and renewed Downtown Library. The new Mitchell library will be more than four times larger than the present outmoded library and will provide shelf space for many more books.

Launch our Libraries Campaign
Bond measure monies from Measure N can only be used for design and construction costs. They cannot be used for furniture, computers and other electronic resources, as well as additions to the collections.

The Palo Alto Library Foundation launched its largest fundraising campaign in 2010 to fill these new and fully renovated libraries with all the things that make them work—comfortable, modern furniture, the latest in computer technology and electronic resources, and thousands of additions to the collections. Our campaign includes $1 million for new books, ebooks and other resources.