

June 17, 2019

TO: Library Advisory Commission
FROM: Monique le Conge Ziesenhenné, Library Director
RE: Joint meeting with City Council

In preparation for agenda items for a joint meeting with the City Council. Per your request, I am providing you a list of potential topics of discussion for your joint study session with the City Council. In your role as library advocates, you can certainly highlight use statistics, and where we have had increases or decreases, with ideas about why. Furthermore, your observations of the libraries, the staff, and how we compare to other libraries (including the subject of fines, which is another item on tonight's agenda) are topics which we've covered in previous years.

By focusing on the Library's accomplishments, I believe you can move into the work we have underway and perhaps develop additional items.

2018 Highlights and Accomplishments

Education and Learning

In September 2018, the Library and the Palo Alto Unified School District (PAUSD) fully implemented the Student Asset Card initiative, integrating all Palo Alto City Library (PACL) services into the PAUSD identification cards of more than 10,000 students K through 12 in our community. PAUSD students are now able to visit Palo Alto City Libraries and enjoy full services with their student ID cards.

Received a total of 113 essays submitted for the Youth/Teen Writing Contest entries this year, nearly doubling from last year. Winners were awarded at a reception, and winning essays were displayed in the branches. The significant increase in entries is attributed to strategic use of the Library's new website banners for marketing.

Community Partnerships

Honored our diversity through the "Celebrating Cultures" initiative, which provides various programs, services, and collections that reflect Palo Alto and the Greater Bay Area. Key 2018 events included the Chinese New Year Fair, which drew a crowd of 2,000, and our 2nd Diwali Celebration, which attracted 425 attendees.

Held a RE:Maker Fair in Summer 2018 that generated interest and engagement in reuse, environmental preservation, and sustainable living and created opportunities for the public to engage in environmental technology. The event drew a crowd of 200 people.

Technology

Continued to develop virtual maker programs for improved public access to, and knowledge for, emerging technologies. Implemented 3D Design Coach sessions; teen volunteers teach the public to create virtual models. Demonstrated Virtual Reality technology at community events.

Developed and implemented a cybersecurity education program for youth based on the popular computer game Minecraft. This project has garnered much attention in the Minecraft and library sectors. PAFL presented at Minefaire 2019. This was a collaboration with the State Library through a grant.

2019 Priorities

Capital Improvement/Master Plan Projects

Investigate sustainable and efficient library practices by adding Automated Materials Handling Machines to College Terrace, Children's, and Downtown Library Branches.

Carpet replacement at Children's Library (scheduled CIP Budget item).

Education and Learning

Train PAUSD teachers on using library databases and other educational resources, focusing on those available online to maximize Student Asset Card use.

Introduce Brainfuse, an online tutoring service to parent and student groups.

Work with PAUSD to engage students by providing summer learning, recreation and volunteering opportunities.

Technology

Provide equipment access to customers to digitize documents, photos, and sound and video recordings.

Expand services, turning occasional services into ongoing services (e.g. eResource workshops, digital literacy programs), holding more occasional services (e.g. Robo Dojo, VR Hackfest) and technology lectures and discussions and offering more coding workshops.

Consider advocating for addition of technology as a separate line item in the library's budget with funds that will be sustainable.

Marketing and Publicity

Create several marketing and publicity staff work groups to effectively market the library's services and programs; revise outreach based on staff availability.

Revenue generation

Seek out new opportunities for revenue generation to contribute to the fiscal sustainability of the Library, such as potentially opening a Passport Acceptance Facility at the Downtown Library branch.