



LIBRARY COMMISSION AGENDA REPORT

November 3, 2022
Item 4

TITLE: REVIEW AND DISCUSS PLEASANTON PUBLIC LIBRARY PROGRAMMING STATUS

SUMMARY

The Pleasanton Public Library fully re-opened to the community on August 9, 2021, during the COVID-19 pandemic. At that time, in-person library programs returned as allowable under the Alameda County guidance. To determine which programs continued in-person, remained online, or paused, staff created a plan proposal that identified community need, program gap areas, and health and safety practices for in-person programs. This report serves to describe that decision process and discuss the plan for library programs entering 2023.

RECOMMENDATION

Review and discuss Pleasanton Public Library programming status.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

None.

BACKGROUND

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Pleasanton Public Library (Library) offered a number of in-person library programs for all ages, including Paws to Read, Book and Film Clubs, cultural programs, STEAM programs, story times, and the Summer Reading Program. The Library also facilitated school field trips, the Booklegger program in Pleasanton schools, and Literacy and ESL services for adults.

On March 14, 2020, the Library facility closed under the Alameda County Shelter-in-Place COVID-19 emergency order. The facility closure immediately paused all in-person library programs and staff converted programs to virtual platforms. The Library supplemented the community's needs with digital resources, such as enhanced ebooks and streaming services, and the grant funded Brainfuse HelpNow and Niche Academy with online tutorials and homework and career assistance programs. Library programs were converted to virtual offerings included Literacy and ESL tutoring and volunteer trainings, Paws to Read, the Library Book Club and Film Club for adults, and Storytime recordings hosted on Facebook.

In the Summer of 2020, the Library Reboot Team, composed of staff at all levels, worked to create a phased plan for re-opening the Library. With health and safety as a priority, the team considered the core services most essential to the community, which included the checkout of books, audiobooks, movies, music, laptops, and printouts through Sidewalk Service. The Reboot Team plan focused on these services, as well as identifying how to re-open the building safely when it was allowable. The plan also outlined which services would be delayed under State, County and City health guidance. In-person programming and events were most impacted due to occupancy limitations for community and staff.

From November 12 through December 5, 2020, the Library successfully re-opened the building for limited services, before a surge in local COVID-19 cases closed the facility again. During the second closure, virtual programs and Sidewalk Service continued. In March 2021, the Library re-opened with a metered increase in hours, services, seating, and visitor and staff occupancy.

On August 9, 2021, the Library officially resumed its full hours of operation, seven days a week. The full re-opening adhered to the health and safety guidelines provided by the Alameda County Department of Public Health and the City of Pleasanton. Using the Reboot Team's plan, the first in-person programs included literacy tutoring, conversation groups, and trainings—programs that focused on the areas of greatest community need.

In Fall of 2021, library divisional and administrative staff collaborated with the Reboot Team to identify recommended health and safety measures for the Library. Staff created phased program proposals based on need as identified through community feedback (e.g., in-person requests, email suggestions, and surveys), along with gap area analysis (e.g., age groups and DEI goals). In planning programs, staff considered the safety of participants and the ability to socially distance in physical spaces. In September 2021, Paws to Read returned in-person and teen programs such as NaNoWriMo (National Novel Writing Month) took place. Each program ensured health

and safety measures were observed, with the flexibility to convert from in-person to virtual if needed.

DISCUSSION

Current Year Programming

In 2022, programs continued to resume in-person, including Adult Literacy and ESL, Mobile Outreach for Veterans, storytimes, and Summer Reading Program. The Library re-introduced cultural, multi-lingual, and science programs such as Black History Month, the Dia de Los Niños program, the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Celebration and Storytime, and STEAM Saturdays. New virtual and offsite programs for teens were introduced, such as the Adulting 101 series and the Teen Poet Laureate Open Mic night at the Firehouse Arts Center.

In the Fall of 2022, the Library planned the return of school outreach programs such as class field trips and Booklegger volunteer visits to the Pleasanton schools. However, the much-needed replacement of the Library's roof and windows was commencing, a two-year priority project recommended by the Library Commission for City Council approval. In planning meetings, staff learned that the scale of the roofing project included a scheduled building closure, construction noise, closed sections, and limited access to Booklegger book collections. Staff recommended that school outreach programs be paused until construction is complete in 2023, to provide the best possible experience to Pleasanton students and volunteers.

Library Program Status

Library programs have returned in-person, while a few programs continue online, and some continue in both formats, to meet a variety of community needs. For example, the Library Book Club and Film Club program participants were surveyed as to their meeting preferences, and they overwhelmingly expressed interest in staying online. With that feedback, both of these library programs continue to remain virtual, as do services like Lawyer in the Library, which is coordinated by the Alameda County Bar Association. Adult Literacy and ESL tutoring services are offered both online and in-person, to meet the needs of tutors and their learners.

The chart below outlines Library programs with the program's format of either in-person and/or virtual, its status (continuous, paused, converted to a new program), frequency (if adjusted), and the reasoning that the Library considered in each of these decisions.

Library Programs	Status/ Frequency/ Format	Reasons/ Considerations
Adult Literacy & ESL Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous - Virtual from 3/2021 until 8/2021. • New tutor training paused 3/2020-9/2021 • Since 8/2021, both in-person and virtual options available. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued with interruption based on grant funding and the Library's commitment to the DEI goals of the program • California State Library (CSL) and City support made conversion to online meetings easy for interested tutors and learners. CSL provided funding for tutor Zoom accounts.
Booklegger Program (School Outreach Program)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Originally paused until 2022-23 school year • Currently paused until Fall 2023. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Originally paused due to limits on PUSD volunteers, vaccines for children, and to allow time to connect with PUSD and prep • Currently paused for Library roof and window replacement, unknown closure date and limited material access • During the pause, staff will work on program updates including reviewing survey input from PUSD, updating the Booklegger collection and offering refresher training to volunteers.
Cultural Programs (All Ages) Bilingual Storytimes New Year Celebration/Storytime Onye Onyemaechi AAPI Celebration & Storytime Lunar New Year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Originally paused due to COVID-19 and the social distancing requirement and limitations on gatherings • In terms of frequency, each of the cultural events are single programs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the pandemic period, the library offered virtual multi-lingual storytimes. • Library resumed offering cultural programs in-person as part of the DEI goals and as learning opportunities for children.
Library Book Club (Adults)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Converted from in-person to virtual in March 2020 • Occurs once a month. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remains online due to participant feedback.
Books and Coffee (Adults)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offered up until 2020 at the Senior Center • Converted program due to lack of demand, replaced with virtual Library Book Club. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Library Book Club is online only, due to participant feedback.

<p>Classic Film Series/Library Film Club (Adults)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Converted from in-person Classic Film Series to virtual Library Film Club • Occurs once a month. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remains online due to participant feedback • Kanopy software offers free film access to library cardholders, whereas the classic film series required a paid annual licensing fee.
<p>Drop-In Computer Help (Adults)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program provided tech assistance through volunteers, cancelled prior to 2020. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-person library staff assistance is available during all library hours • 24/7 availability of digital resources • Tech tutoring offered at the Senior Center • California State Library Digital Navigators program.
<p>Lawyer in the Library (Adults)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Converted to virtual/online • Occurs once a month. 	<p>Program provided by Alameda Bar Association which determined virtual format.</p>
<p>Paws to Read (Elementary Age)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resumed virtually in June 2021 • Returned in-person in October 2021 at the Senior Center • Occurs 6 weeks per season (Fall, Winter, Spring, Summer). 	<p>Brought back in-person because of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community demand • Connects with library's core services • Assists readers through a PUSD partnership with resource specialists.
<p>School Field Trips to the Library (Elementary Age)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paused until Fall 2023. 	<p>Paused due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Library roof and window replacement project and unknown closure date affecting access to books and spaces • Noise due to construction also limits ability to present library resources in a fun, effective manner.

<p>STEAM Programs (Elementary Age)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STEAM resumed in-person in 2022 • STEAM Saturdays held one time per month • The Robot Garden Fix-It Clinic is a monthly community event on Saturdays for learning how to repair small household items. • Python Coding/ Coding Club is a weekly program, for nine total weeks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STEAM Saturdays includes the Dot & Dash Robots (Robots on the Loose, a PLP grant program) • Python/Coding is an interactive, introductory group for students to learn the foundations of computer science.
<p>Story times (Babies, Toddlers, Preschool, Family)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offered virtually in 2020 and in 2021 • Brought back in-person in 2022 – first every other week in January through April and then twice a week in the Summer • Currently occurring offsite for 6 weeks in October and November 2022 and in Spring 2023. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brought back in-person in 2022 due to demand, an equity gap for early literacy resources, and the ability to safely maintain social distancing in the theater • Since August 2022, Story time locations have been impacted by the library’s roofing project, so frequency has been adjusted temporarily.
<p>Summer Reading Program (All Ages)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offered virtually in 2020 and in 2021 • Resumed in-person in 2022. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brought back in-person due to demand, as a program that served each age group in the community.
<p>Teen Programs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resumed in-person, and virtual programs in 2022 • Adulting 101 Series held bi-monthly, including Bullet Journaling, College Application • Teen Poet Laureate “Inspiration” workshops resumed in-person in March 2022. • NaNoWriMo was introduced in Fall 2021 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brought back in-person and online in 2022 due to demand, an equity gap for teen library and social connections, and the ability to safely offer teen programs.

Future Program Planning

The Library fully re-opened to the community on August 9, 2021, and in-person programs returned as allowable under the Alameda County guidance. Pleasanton was one of first public libraries in the Bay Area to re-open its facility in the COVID-19 pandemic, and one of only a few libraries to bring back in-person programs in 2021.

As the Library continues to navigate the COVID-19 pandemic and review facility and format options for programs, staff are developing a Library Program Plan for 2023 and beyond. The near-term plan will outline both in-person and virtual programs and frequency, and will be guided by the health and safety of the community and staff, the Library and Recreation Department Strategic Plan, and the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Date	Library Program Plan - Milestones
October 2022	Staff program planning initial workshop (complete)
December 2022	Staff program calendar workshop
February 2023	Staff share Program Plan with the Library Commission

Submitted by:



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