

**Library Board, Santa Monica Public Library
Secretary's Report
September 2021**

Citywide:

On August 27th, Interim City Attorney George Cardona announced his resignation accepting a new position with the California State Bar as Chief Trial Counsel. Cardona has been serving as Interim City Attorney since April 2020, his last day with the City will be September 30, 2021.

On July 27th, City Council approved David White's contract to serve as Santa Monica's next city manager. David is scheduled to start on October 11th.

The City has issued a new [COVID-19 vaccination policy](#), outlining that all Santa Monica City employees, volunteers, members of Council, Boards, Commissions, Task Forces and certain contractors be vaccinated for COVID-19, absent a medical or religious exemption. The policy outlines that you must receive at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, or request a medical or religious exemption, no later than **September 17, 2021**, and in the absence of an exemption, be fully vaccinated for COVID-19 by no later than **October 29, 2021**. Instructions are being sent out by the City Clerk's Office to all Board, Commissions and Task Forces.

City Hall's tentative reopening date to further expand services is now October 4th. Leadership continues to work to ensure the highest levels of safety on site for staff are available.

Hispanic Heritage Month - A Celebration of the Latino Identity. Celebrate National Hispanic Heritage Month with the City of Santa Monica and Santa Monica community partners began September 1st. Opening Celebration with music, dancers, and DJs is scheduled for September 15th. Our own Principal Librarian, Cecilia Tovar, is part of the planning committee.

Go to <https://santamonica.gov/blog/HispanicHeritageMonth>

Santa Monica Public Library Operations:

Farewell to Library Director Patty Wong. Patty announced that she will be leaving Santa Monica for an opportunity in the City of Santa Clara as Library Director. Her last day in Santa Monica was September 4. Erica Cuyugan has been announced as Interim Library Director while an executive search is conducted.

"Patty's commitment to lifelong learning, inclusion, and redefining what a library can be for its community has seen the library through our best days and the hardest days when the pandemic required the closure of our beloved branches," said Interim City Manager John Jalili. "We are grateful for Patty's passion, perseverance, and dedication to Santa Monica."

Reimagining the Santa Monica Public Library – Library leadership continues to move staff forward in its efforts to rebuild the Library following new framework of services that are patron focused. A special all staff meeting was held in August to reintroduce the Library’s focus areas and new direction, followed by an opportunity for questions and answers.

September is Library Card Sign Up Month – Don’t have a card yet? Ask a Librarian. Staff will be celebrating and encouraging sign-ups throughout the month. Show that you have a library card by coming in to take a selfie in our photo booth. Prizes will be given to children and teens when they show proof of library card.

Ocean Park Branch, Open + (self-service) – August 2021

On July 28th, Ocean Park Branch opened its doors for self-service and welcomed 15 visitors. Bibliotheccá’s Open + extended access has been available two days a week (Wednesdays and Fridays), from 10am-4pm providing the community entry to use collections and technology, without dedicated staff. We have a Library Service Officer and staff member working strictly behind the scenes managing returns, shelving, and circulation reports. Ocean Park fans and new users have shown enthusiasm for the model of access. We have heard things like “You are heroes for doing this” to “I started to cry when I came in the doors. I have not been to a library since February 2019”. Staff are continuously working to resolve challenges from utilizing such a new system, overall success rate by patrons for entering the Ocean Park Branch using the Open + access system since inception was 62%.

A month from its opening and Ocean Park Branch has welcomed:

213 visitors

Collections and Technology

The **Integrated Library System (ILS) migration project** has moved forward. All Library locations closed August 30 through September 1 to allow for testing, staff training and full completion of the migration. It is anticipated that it will take approximately 3-4 months to fine-tune system while staff work on adapting and resolving issues that may arise. The focus will be to customize system to suit patron and staff needs over the next year. An updated mobile app will also be available and accessible later in September.

Programming

Summer Reading “Reading Colors Your World” wrapped up on August 15. A virtual family-friendly Insect Discovery Lab was Summer Reading’s finale show where children could explore the fantastic lives of beetles, millipedes, tarantulas, walking sticks, whip scorpions, and more with the staff of SaveNature.org. Bug collection jars were made available for pick up.

1,089 total registered (724 Youth, 202 Teens and 163 Adults)

270,030 overall minutes read (reading goal 500K)

Santa Monica Reads wrapped its 19th year of program on August 22, one of the longest running in the country. This year's featured selection was [The Pull of the Stars](#) by Emma Donoghue. Two special events and five book discussions were hosted throughout the summer program.

57 Special event virtual attendance - *Voices from COVID's Front Lines: A Healthcare Workers Panel Discussion* and *Author Talk: Emma Donoghue on The Pull of the Stars*

61 Book discussions Virtual attendance

29 Post-Program YouTube Views

100 giveaway copies of book

Statistical Highlights:

- 87% of participants are older adults (50+ years)
- 70% of participants both read the book and participated in programming
- 82% of participants felt more connected to their community, by participating in Santa Monica Reads
- 94% of participants learned something by participating in Santa Monica Reads
- 91% of participants rated their experience excellent or good

In-person programming – This month, Youth Services is piloting two in person programs. This will provide an opportunity to implement a covid safe structure and test participant response to restrictions.

- *Pirate Story Time* - Tuesday, September 21 / 11:00 to 11:30 a.m. / Pico Branch Library
- *Watercolor Monsters Art Workshop* - Thursday, September 30 / 4:00 to 5:00 p.m. / Main Library / Central Courtyard

September's Calendar of Events is now available at

<https://smpl.org/uploadedFiles/SEPTEMBER2021CalendarOfEvents.pdf>

Staffing

The Library is welcoming two Librarian I's in its efforts to restore staffing and provide focused support to youth and families. Funding was approved during the FY2021-2023 Biennial Budget. In addition, two Library Assistant II's positions and an additional Librarian I position are being filled due to a combination of recent vacancies and funding made available.

Partnerships:

Library Board – Council appointed Abby Arnold to the Library Board, filling the vacancy left by John Hart. Ms. Arnold will join the September 9, 2021 Library Board meeting.

Friends of the Santa Monica Public Library – The Friends of the Library are working towards reopening the Bookstore. Book and material donations continue to pour in and have approximately 600 books listed for sale online through ABE books. At the August 18th Board meeting, the Friends approved their FY 2021/22 budget.

Safety/Health & Security:

The LSO team continues to patrol the Main Library and branches during service hours. Three as-needed LSOs were welcomed back, allowing the team to expand along with library services. Including assigning an LSO to support the opening of Ocean Park Branch Open +. LSOs continue to ensure all library book drop boxes are picked up daily. Due to unforeseen vehicle issues, additional runs had to be scheduled to keep the pace. A continual problem is increased activity of unsheltered in the Main Library parking garage. LSO Supervisor has been working with the City's Police Homeless Liaison Program team, City Manager's Office, Parking and SP+ to create a plan to address and lessen incidents in the parking structure. Acceptance of book donations continue to be taken in by the LSO team every Friday.

August 2021– Data below reflect incidents and not day-to-day rule violation interactions

19 monthly incidents (12 major/ 5 minor)

16 incidents at Main / **3** Branches

3 calls in to police

Respectfully submitted,

Erica Cuyugan, Interim Director of Library Services