



SIMI VALLEY PUBLIC LIBRARY

ANNUAL REPORT

Fiscal Year 2020-2021

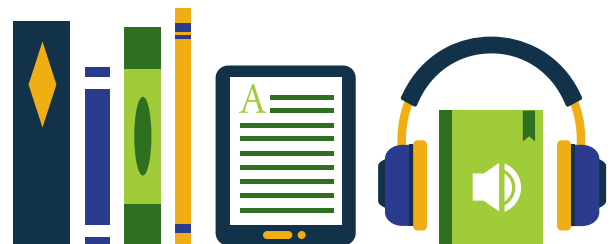


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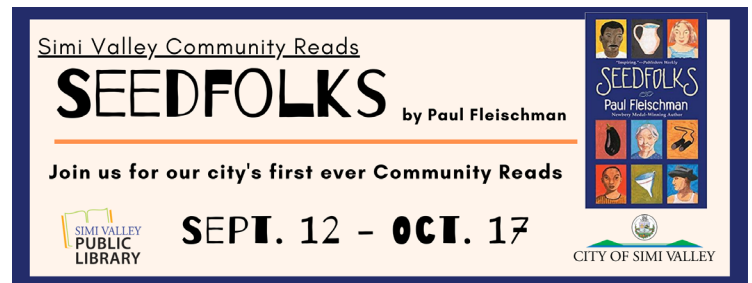
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Letter from the Library Director

Fiscal Year 2020-2021 was a time of inspiration and renewal for the Simi Valley Public Library. While the library building was closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, staff were busy behind the scenes as **180,070 physical items were borrowed**; **2,100 activity kits** were taken home by eager families; **two blood drives were hosted** in the building; and **85 recorded programs enriched the lives of residents**. The Library remained a busy community hub serving as a polling place for four days in November.

It was wonderful to see Simi Valley residents gather around the exterior of their Library to use curbside services, find out about take-home programs and participate in civic engagement.

Speaking of gathering 'round, Simi Valley's first ever Community Read launched during the closure. Seedfolks - a deceptively simple book about communities, gardens, and community gardens by Newbery Award-winning author Paul Fleischman, attracted people to read, share and discuss the book and attend virtual programs.



Curbside Service Success

Walk-up and curbside service began in June 2020 and continued until February 2021. Simi Valley Public Library was one of the first in Ventura County to offer this service. Simplicity and ease of access were the keys to success and robust customer engagement and circulation. The process was carefully designed to remove barriers to Library service. Customers could choose walk-up or curbside service. Staff were in the building and available to provide these services and phone reference Monday - Saturday, 10 AM - 5 PM.

One of the most important factors in providing service with minimal barriers was the timely - and prescient - decision by the Library Board of Trustees to make Simi Valley a fine-free Library. During the building closure (July 1, 2020 - February 15, 2021) 46,595 cardholders borrowed a total of 92,779 books, movies, and audiobooks. An additional 1,639 Library users borrowed 54,597 digital movies, comics, music albums, e-books, and e-audiobooks.

DURING THE BUILDING CLOSURE (JULY 1, 2020 - FEBRUARY 15, 2021)

46,595

CARDHOLDERS
BORROWED

92,779

BOOKS, MOVIES &
AUDIOBOOKS

1,639

ADDITIONAL LIBRARY
USERS BORROWED

54,597

DIGITAL MOVIES, COMICS,
MUSIC ALBUMS, E-BOOKS
& E-AUDIOBOOKS



Joyful Re-opening

On February 16, 2021 Simi Valley residents were the first in Ventura County to enjoy a re-opened library. Some customers even shed tears over this one small step towards a return to normal. Capacity restrictions and masking requirements were enforced with very few problems; most were simply pleased their Library was open. As the fiscal year neared its end on June 15, the Library opened at normal service capacity.

Network of Support

The guidance, support, and partnerships of several organizations were highly valuable and deserve special thanks. The Library Board of Trustees were great advocates encouraging the Library to reopen, and the City Manager's Office ensured it was done safely. Wi-Fi access was extended to the parking lot thanks to the direction of the Board of Trustees and the work of Information Services. Administrative Services provided Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES) funding which made it possible to install Bibliotheca Open Count+ building capacity monitor. Additional CARES funds were used to purchase low-touch self-check machines. Rancho Simi Recreation and Parks District accommodated Pop-Up Library days at neighborhood parks where the public could browse and borrow items outdoors.

California State Librarian Greg Lucas advocated for California's library workers to be classified with educators for vaccine eligibility, allowing Library staff to be among the first to receive their vaccines. The State Library also administered funds to the Southern California Library Cooperative which provided additional laptops and hotspots for outreach and extra purchases of e-books and e-audiobooks. Library Systems & Services provided ongoing support, guidance, and PPE for staff members throughout the year, and the technology team responded with solutions to the frequently changing remote access and modified service needs. The combined support of this network of providers strongly benefited the Simi Valley community!

Kelly Behle | Director



Erik and Mikki were the first customers to enter the Library building on February 16, 2021 after re-opening. They thanked staff for the books and the activity kits that were so important for their children during the pandemic.

Simi Valley Public Library

BY THE NUMBERS



52,922

DIGITAL ITEMS BORROWED



180,070

PHYSICAL ITEMS BORROWED



1,797

NEW REGISTRATIONS



136

JUVENILE/TEEN REGISTRATIONS



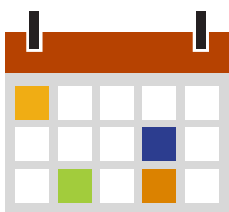
46,595

NUMBER OF CARDHOLDERS WHO USED OUTDOOR OR CURBSIDE
JULY 1 - FEBRUARY 15



25,552

LIBRARY VISITS
FEBRUARY 16 - JUNE 30



19

IN-PERSON PROGRAMS AND OFFSITE EVENTS



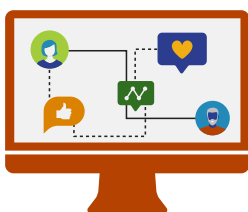
1,509

IN-PERSON PROGRAM AND OFFSITE EVENT ATTENDANCE



85

RECORDED PROGRAMS



10,372

VIEWS OF RECORDED PROGRAMS



623

NEW HOOPLA USERS

Data From
FISCAL YEAR
2020-2021

Strategic Plan Implementation and Capital Projects Updates

Fiscal Year 2020-2021 was the fourth of a five-year Library strategic plan.

Plan service priorities are

Make Access Easier, Tell the Library's Story, Empower Customer Service, Cultivate Community Creativity, and Support Educational Pursuits.

Progress was made in the following areas:

Making Access Easier

Library staff continued to find new ways to make access to materials and information easier for customers during building closure. For example, personal phone calls were made to more than 100 cardholders in the senior age group to offer reading recommendations and delivery of books to their vehicles in the parking lot. In response to a high volume of reference questions about voting, the Library's website was updated to provide a portal page to official election information.

Improved access through the website continued with space dedicated to COVID-19 vaccination information. The Library joined a California State Library initiative to use the graphics provided by 'Vaccinate all 58' to increase visibility for that website.

In April, Southern California Library Cooperative Couriers added Simi Valley Public Library to the route of member libraries in Los Angeles and Ventura counties. This service makes it possible for Simi Valley residents to more easily receive inter-library loans or simply return items borrowed from member libraries.

Pop-up Library programs throughout the community were held during fall and winter in partnership with Rancho Simi Recreation and Parks District. More than 170 people enjoyed easy access to materials in outdoor locations at Pop-up Library events, borrowing books and DVDs, registering for new Library cards and picking up activity-to-go packets for children. Staff took bins of books and DVDs for all ages to the park locations and used laptops and hotspots to check out materials to visitors.

Intensive Veterans Resource Training was completed by two staff members who then taught the rest of the team where to get easy access to information when assisting veterans with their reference needs.

Telling the Library's Story

Library staff energetically promoted Library programs and events. Staff were eager to ensure community members understand the Library provides service continuity focused on their well-being. Simi Valley residents respond well to personal event invitations and word of mouth promotion, either by phone or in person.

Social media continued to be an important communication tool and the community engaged most with photos of things happening at the Library – simple things like emptying the book drop or setting up a Pop-Up Library at a park. The Library's Facebook page gained almost 300 new followers; Instagram gained 274 followers and Twitter gained 89.

Staff continued to tell the Library's story 'around town,' even though most of the meetings were virtual. Rotary Club, Soroptimist of Simi Valley, PTA, Community Council, and virtual classroom visits all highlighted Library updates on modified services and reopening plans.

When the City of Simi Valley Vitalant Blood Drive coincided with National Library Week, gift packets including candy and a Library card were provided to Vitalant staff and blood donors. Hosting a Blood Drive during a pandemic is one small part that the Library played in strengthening Simi Valley this year.

Empowering Customer Service

All new customers who registered for Temporary Internet Use Only cards received a personal phone call reminding them to switch their accounts to permanent status. These personal-touch phone calls gave new customers a chance to ask questions about current and updated Library services. Phone service was also important for customers who needed help choosing something to borrow.

Window shopping displays were another popular feature of modified services. These displays contributed to strong circulation numbers and customer satisfaction during the closure. Many customers thanked staff for displays which made it easier for them to choose something to enjoy, particularly important during stressful pandemic months.

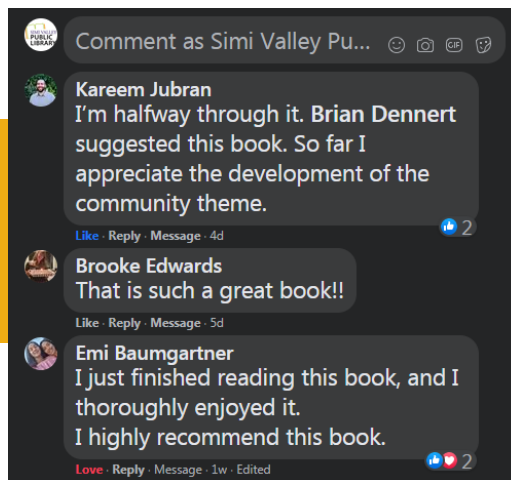
Service improvements continued while the building was closed. CARES funds were used to purchase four self-check kiosks that require only a one-finger touch to complete a full transaction for up to 30 items. Self-checks comprised 65% of check-outs, compared to 16% before the new kiosks. As more and more customers place holds online or by phone and use self-check-out, staff are freed to engage with customers.

The Suggest a Purchase web form grew in popularity during the past year. Customers submitted **228 purchase suggestions this year** compared to 85 during the previous year.

Cultivating Community Creativity

Simi Valley's first Community Reads launched while the building was closed. The chosen book, Paul Fleischman's *Seedfolks*, generated creative connections within the community. Youth Council members came up with interesting questions to ask Mr. Fleischman, who generously gave of his time. Local gardeners shared their knowledge, best practices, and provided virtual tours of the 'Simi at the Garden' on Sinaloa Road.

(comments below from SVUSD Board Member)



November's National Novel Writing Month (NaNoWriMo) is an annual Internet-based creative writing project. The Library provided virtual workshops for collaboration and feedback and sponsored a Story Slam event where creative writers of Simi Valley shared excerpts of their work. Writers Workshops were held twice each month throughout the year for ongoing creative collaboration.

Supporting Educational Pursuits

More than 60 Simi Valley Unified School District faculty members attended the four Library presentations at the district's virtual Professional Development Days in August 2020. Teachers learned how to access free digital books to support student work and for classroom instruction. Library staff created digital bookshelves for teachers that provide one-click access and spare students and parents from a searching and filtering for the titles they want and need.

The Library was awarded \$7,827 in Library Services and Technology Act funding (administered by the California State Library) for Discovery Kits. These circulating kits for early learners contain books, manipulatives and learning toys for families to enjoy at home. Each kit has a theme such as animals, cooking, or numbers, and families can choose Spanish, English or Bilingual kits. Guided activity guides are included to help families prepare young children for school. Twenty kits are available at the Library and an additional 20 kits are exclusively for families at Justin Early Learners Academy. This partnership is just one way the Library amplifies efforts to promote early literacy in Simi Valley.

Special Projects and Additional Funding

The Simi Valley Public Library received more than \$38,000 in grant funding during Fiscal Year 2020-2021.

This funding made a variety of special projects and purchases possible, all of which **enhanced the Library's services to the community.**

California State Library Crisis Funding, Round 2

The Simi Valley Public Library received \$5,000 last year and applied for a second installment of \$5,000 this year. The second round of funding covered the cost of 182 e-books and e-audiobooks.

Library Services and Technology Act

The Library was awarded \$7,827 in Library Services and Technology Act funding (administered by the California State Library) for Discovery Kits. Twenty kits are available at the Library and an additional 20 kits are exclusively for families at Justin Early Learners Academy.

CARES Act: Bridging the Digital Divide Project Funding (Southern California Library Cooperative and California State Library)

Simi Valley Public Library was eligible for up to \$7,000 in funding to acquire laptops, hotspots, and data plans for the first year. These items will be available for customer use and for staff use at offsite outreach events.

Friends of the Simi Valley Public Library

The Friends of the Simi Valley Public Library generously donated \$19,000 which was used for the Hoopla audio, music, video and eBook streaming service.

Community Partnerships

Rancho Simi Recreation and Parks District

Pop-Up Libraries in local parks were very popular for those who wanted a chance to browse items while the building was closed. The Library also participated in RSRPD's well-attended Halloween event.



Boys & Girls Club

Children's Staff provided weekly virtual book clubs for Boys & Girls Club members. The 'Around the World' program which took kids on an interactive tour of far away places and cultures via the Library's digital resources.



Simi Valley Chamber of Commerce

Library partners at the Chamber of Commerce provide a community calendar and feature special events on their social media channels, resulting in valuable publicity. The Chamber's 'Boomers and Beyond' fair for senior citizens was the Library's first in-person outreach event of 2021.

Read Across America: Various Community Partners

Read Across America, an annual event celebrating literacy, is popular in Simi Valley. Many community partners joined the Library in celebrating and promoting literacy with recorded videos of familiar faces of leaders reading stories. The videos premiered during Read Across America week.



Library Board of Trustees Chair Keith Mashburn and Board Members Dee Dee Cavanaugh, Ruth Luevanos, and Elaine Litster were featured readers. They were joined by the following:

- Linda Bosley, Strathearn Historical
- Deputy Chief Robert Brill, SVPD
- Dr. Cai, Taylor Pediatrics Adventist Health Simi Valley
- Commander Adam Darough, SVPD
- Administrative Technician Vivienne DeLuca, SVPD
- Deborah Dennert, Bottle Village
- Officer Matt Gage, SVPD
- Officer Paul Garcia, SVPD
- Sue Goetz, Strathearn Historical
- Shelley Howard, Strathearn Historical
- Chief David Livingstone, SVPD
- Officer Andres Marron, SVPD
- Susan McElvogue, Strathearn Historical
- Officer Sara Rodriguez, SVPD

Civic Engagement



Census 2020

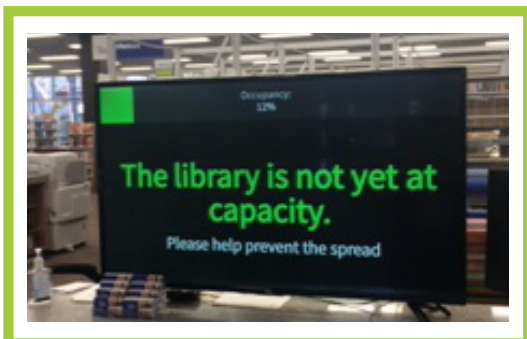
The Simi Valley Public Library was highly involved in the 2020 Census count. In August 2020, Library staff and volunteers joined other City participants in a Census Caravan which was estimated to bring in a minimum of \$5,000,000 in new funding to the community.

November 2020 Elections

The Library developed a dedicated webpage with election information in response to a high volume of calls and questions about the 2020 voting process. Social media posts directed viewers to the page, which had been the most visited page on the Library's website for a three-month period, and Google searches for 'Simi Valley voting' listed this webpage at the top of the retrieval list. A permanent ballot box was positioned outside and for five days in October and November the Library was a very active in-person polling place.



Photo sent by library customer.



Library Facility

Facility upgrades made the building a more COVID-19 safe environment. An automatic door at the entrance improved safety and dramatically improved the Library experience for visitors. Entry and exit is now much easier for people with small children, in wheelchairs, or just carrying armloads of books. Automatic flush toilets and sinks were installed in public and staff restrooms and people counter devices were installed at the main entrance and the children's area to monitor building capacity. Digital screens were placed throughout the building to give customers and staff a quick view of the dynamic capacity numbers.



Library Collections

Children’s Fiction circulated the most during the year while Children’s Easy Readers came in at a close second. Next were Children’s Picture Books. Children’s books accounted for 39% of total circulation. Adult Fiction and Adult Nonfiction comprised 16% of total circulation.

The collection grew with more than 1,400 new e-books and e-audiobooks purchased on Cloud Library, and approximately 6,000 physical items were added this year.

A collection of nearly 1,500 California plate maps and topographical maps were organized and readied for display at the library.

Library Programs

Building closure meant more virtual programs. Weekly storytimes and chapter book readings were supplemented by monthly bilingual storytimes and more than 2,000 take-home science and art activity kits for all ages. Ongoing Movie Mondays, Adult Crafts, Virtual Loteria, Virtual Bingo, Writer’s Workshops, and Literazzi Book Club meet-ups were also provided virtually for adults. Other virtual, outdoor or passive programs through the year included:

- Adult Coloring series
- Among Us series
- Chair Yoga
- Community Garden Best Practices Workshop
- Community Garden Tour
- Community Reads Author Talk with Simi Valley Youth Council
- Create the Business Plan that is Right for You
- CSUCI Lecture Series
- Discovery Garden Self Tour / Scavenger Hunt
- How to Start and Grow a Profitable Consulting Business
- Escape Disaster! Workshop
- Holiday Craft for Kids series
- Holiday Zoom Party
- Juggler, Michael Rayner



- Library Pop-Up events
- Local Artist Gallery
- Meditation Workshop series
- NaNoWrimo Workshop Series
- Origami Creations
- QuickBooks Online and Best Accounting Practices for Small Businesses
- Read Across America on Facebook
- Spring Zoom Party
- Storytime in the Discovery Garden
- Stress Management During COVID-19
- Summer Kick Off Zoom Party
- Teen Advisory Group meetings
- Valentine's Day Zoom Party
- Virtual Escape Rooms



Simi Valley Public Library and the Simi Valley Community Garden present

VIRTUAL GARDENING BEST PRACTICES WORKSHOP

Saturday, Sept. 12 at 9am via Facebook Live

.....

Unable to make it during that time? Submit your questions early to Stephanie.Erbe@simivalleylibrary.org to have them answered during the workshop. The workshop will be available for viewing later.



POP-UP

Rancho Santa Susana Community Park
(5005 Los Angeles Ave)
Across the street from the train station, by the softball fields

**THIS
FRIDAY.
12/4.
2-4PM.**




**CHILDREN'S ZOOM
HOLIDAY PARTY**

**December 18
at 1pm**

SIMI VALLEY PUBLIC LIBRARY



**Children's Zoom
Valentine's Day
PARTY**

**February 13
at 1pm**

SIMI VALLEY PUBLIC LIBRARY



Relax with
Virtual Adult Coloring

Questions? Email us at AskUs@simivalleylibrary.org.

Contributors

Simi Valley Public Library Board of Trustees

Keith L. Mashburn, Chair
Dee Dee Cavanaugh, Trustee
Mike Judge, Trustee
Ruth Luevanos, Trustee
Elaine Litster, Trustee

The Board of Trustees provides advocacy and 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. The Library and the community are grateful for the Board's support for reopening the Simi Valley Public Library.

Friends of the Simi Valley Library

The Friends generously donate funds each year to assist with program supplies and to cover much of the cost of the Hoopla streaming service. While COVID19 closed the bookstore and Friends normal operations, it did not put a damper on their enthusiasm to support the Library. The Friends held a Drive Thru Book Sale to provide safe book buying experience for the community.

Lisa Trent, President
Claudia Allen
Diane Annis
Sonja Bennett
Helena Clynick
Teresa DeGagne
Fran Harders
Julia Hammon
Gloria Hasson
Caroline Hucker
Roshni Khiantani
Cathy Meininger
Susan Miller



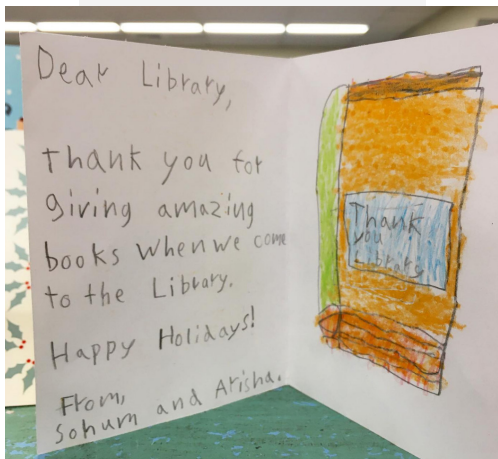
Library Staff

Staff members worked diligently and creatively throughout building closure to provide service and much-needed human connection to Library customers. Simi Valley Public Library staff members took advantage of many relevant and affordable training and development opportunities. A partial list of training completed by one or more staff members includes:

- Children's Virtual Programming: Rethink, Renew, Transform
- Code Adam: How the Mission Viejo Library personalized the national movement to protect young customers
- Countering Authoritarian Use of Disinformation: The Road Ahead in 2021
- CPR / AED Certification
- Deep Dive into California Library Literacy Services Values and Essentials
- Designing Effective Online Learning Experiences for Children
- Evidence-Based Curriculum in Storytime
- Learning to swim in a Sea of Data: Data literacy for Librarians and their Communities
- Libraries respond in crisis and beyond: demonstrating your library's value to your local decision makers
- Library Journal Virtual Summit 2020
- Partnering with Families Virtually
- Phased Reopening of Libraries
- Post-COVID Renewal: An Opportunity to Reconsider, Rebuild, and Reenergize Library Programs, Services, and the Workforce
- The Public Library's Role in Elections: Voter Education in a Post-Truth Era
- Reimagining School Readiness
- Recovering Together: How libraries support their customers and strengthen their communities following a disaster
- Reopening Archives, Libraries, and Museums: Materials Testing and Resource Overview
- Self-Care and Collaboration: Working Together While Working Remotely
- Veterans Resource Training
- Welcoming Immigrants through cultural programming
- Young Adult Library Services Association Symposium

Community Partners

The following organizations were valuable partners during 2020-2021:



Art of Living, Purvie Shukl Pathak, Meditation Instructor

Boys & Girls Club of Simi Valley

Busy Hands Garden Club

California State University, Channel Islands

City of Simi Valley Public Works

First 5 of Simi Valley/ Moorpark

Homes with Heart Ventura County

Justin Early Learners Academy

Kopy King

Literazzi

Nora Hayes, Health Educator and CPR Trainer

Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District

READ Ventura County Library Adult Literacy

Regal Medical Group

Simi at the Garden

Simi Institute for Careers and Education

Simi Valley Art Association

Simi Valley Chamber of Commerce

Simi Valley Community Council

Simi Valley Friends of the Library

Simi Valley Police Department

Simi Valley Unified School District

Simi Valley Youth Council

Stephanie Hicks, Confidence and Style Coach and Educator

Strathearn Historical Society

Ventura County SCORE