
DATE: June 1, 2023

TO: Library Board, Pima County Public Library

Pima County Board of Supervisors
Pima County Administration
Friends of the Pima County Public Library, Board of Directors
Friends of the Arivaca Library, Board of Directors
Friends of the Esmond Station Library, Board of Directors
Friends of the Kirk-Bear Canyon Library, Board of Directors
Friends of the Oro Valley Public Library, Board of Directors
Friends of the Pima-Green Valley Library, Board of Directors
Pima Library Foundation, Board of Directors

FROM: Karyn Prechtel-Altman
Deputy Library Director

SUBJECT: Community Engagement Report – April & May 2023

On April 18 I had the honor to co-present a ULC Webinar with Librarian Heather Severson titled How to Support Mental Health and Wellbeing in the Public Library. We talked about how the Synapse team was formed and the very engaging work they are doing in the community. There seems to be interest from other library systems to create a similarly focused team.

I met with two new potential partners in April. The UA Museum of Art reached out to talk about their Mapping Q project <https://artmuseum.arizona.edu/mapping-q> which is a series of virtual art workshops for LGBTQIA+ youth ages 14-24. We are going to connect this program to youth in libraries to expand their reach.

Two organizations from Maricopa County, the Arizona Pet Project and Lost Our Home Pet Rescue, are expanding into other Counties. They spent two weeks Southern Arizona talking to Pima County departments, other jurisdictions, non-profits, and community organizations to do a needs assessment. The Library will be able to bring awareness to these organizations when they begin their work in Pima County.

Latinx Program Manager – Hassael Cazesuz

April has presented itself to be a great month to work with our community on organizing and planning events. In Latino culture, Día del niño is a celebration of youth. Furthermore, Día del niño, Día de los libros was created to also include a literacy component to the celebration of youth. PCPL honors that celebration and for the second year since the global COVID-19 Pandemic, I have worked alongside community partners to set up a block-style, outdoor celebration with music, food, and lots, lots of free books for our community. I believe that every year we can grow this annual celebration and continue to bring cultural significant programming that also promotes literacy. I had the pleasure to hand pick culturally relevant bilingual and Spanish books from our contracted partner for book giveaways and it truly made a difference. Children and even adults were ecstatic about the selection of books and were excited to take books home to read.

As far as May preparations, I am working alongside community partners for a large community event called Pueblos de maíz fiesta. This event will take place on May 6, 2023, at Kennedy Park and PCPL was invited to participate and represent the family section of this festival. This is a great opportunity to work alongside all the affinity teams at PCPL to offer an opportunity to

promote and take their services to the Southwest side of Tucson. I am excited for the potential of this program and how we can continue to promote our services to the public for their benefit. Lastly, in May will also be the planning phases for our CEO department to gear up for Summer Reading and to plan for the annual Kickoff happening at the Tanque Verde Swap Meet.

Quarterly Reports for Cultural Affinity Teams and Seed Library

Biblio Lotus – Sharon Yang-McNeil

A Capstone project (graduate student from University of Washington Library & Information) sponsored by Biblio Lotus Team conducted a survey, aiming for research on what program and services can support members of the Asian community in Pima County. The survey was especially trying to reach to those who were not very engaged, such as Southeast Asian and Pacific Islanders.

To celebrate Asian American and Pacific Islander month, the Biblio Lotus team collaborated with the Seed Library and community partner Mission Garden to host a seed swap on May 27. Members from local Green Thumbs group and Tucson Chinese Cultural Center are the special guests, all families are welcome to attend. The event will highlight the stories of heirloom seeds at Mission Garden, sharing planting information and recipes from the local community. Both teams also worked on the 1st Grab n Grow kit with local seeds and recipes. These are available to all library customers starting the week of May 22.

Kindred – Jessica Pryde

Kindred continues to promote and celebrate literacy and community in the Black community. Ongoing projects include Read Black Book Club, which discussed both *On Juneteenth* by Annette Gordon-Reed and *South To America* by Imani K. Perry in March; and Ann Petry's classic novel *The Street* in April. The team also recruited for new members, who will join regular meetings later in the summer. The team continues to make plans for community engagement and appearances, including having representation at the annual Tucson Juneteenth Festival and other summer events. The team maintains a sporadic but meaningful presence on social media, and hopes to expand their avenues of outreach later in the year.

Nuestras Raíces – Hassael Cazesuz

I am really proud of the teamwork of our team with helping organize and working the Día del niño community outreach event. Staff showed up ready to work and were integral to the success of this event. I do believe that our community benefited from a culturally relevant outreach in which they were exposed to Mexican culture through the music and folklórico performances. There were also other Latino influences through food, and language with representative staff and books in their language to take home. There was nothing but smiling and thankful faces walking around, and I want to encourage our team to continue working towards putting together events like Día.

Additionally, our team is gearing up to collaborate with other affinity teams to promote and show our affinity team combined presence in our community. Pueblos de maíz is an annual event and this year there will be a fiesta component in which PCPL has been invited to participate. We are in the organizing and preparation stages. However, we hope that our other affinity team colleagues will be able to have a presence at this event and promote their services to the community. Especially the community in which the Fiesta will be held that has a large population of underserved and underprivileged communities.

Many Nations – Sila Gonzales

Many Nations is working on nurturing stronger relationships within the team and our Indigenous community.

Current projects and upcoming events

- STEM Family Night at the San Xavier Education Center
- Children's Day at Pascua Yaqui
- Cultural relevant informational bookmarks and articles

PRIDE – Vicki Lazaro

March was a transitional month for the PRIDE Affinity Team as leaders Ray Baca and Kaitlyn Sparks stepped down from their roles and Vicki Lázaro stepped in as the Administrative liaison. The PRIDE Team met virtually in March and in-person and virtually in April. This was the first in-person meeting post COVID19. The meeting was festive and helped build the camaraderie of those who were able to attend. In the April in-person meeting Librarian II Casey Short of the Joel D. Valdez Main Library stepped up as the staff lead for the team. We have over 30 people in attendance in our virtual meetings and the group has been positive and motivated.

In our last in-person meeting, the group finalized plans for our June PRIDE month Grab and Go kits for the community and the bookmarks. This included weaving PRIDE flag bracelets and the bookmarks in all of the flag representations for staff and patrons. We also had a special guest, our upcoming Annual LGBTQ+ Author Talk presenter Kianna Alexander. Kianna is the author of *Can't Let Her Go* and *Can't Resist Her*.

Outreach events: The PRIDE Team was invited to be a part of the Reveille Men's Chorus opening night! Our two staff that attended had a wonderful time and were able to talk to many about PCPL and the great resources and support available for the LGBTQ+ community. The team have also been working on information to put on our library website PRIDE Community Resources Page in addition to a statement to be posted down the road in support of our trans community. <https://www.library.pima.gov/content/lgbtq-community-resources/>

The Pride Instagram page is still looking for staff replacements since Ray Baca's move.

Seed Library – Lu Guerrero

Spring offered frequent outreach and collaborative projects through which the Seed Library Team connected with community members. Staff represented the team at the Tucson Organic Gardeners Spring Fair and the Santa Cruz River Farmer's Market, sharing information on library services and distributing seed packets to visitors. Seed Library team members also tabled at the Little Leaf Farm Spring Festival, and South Tucson's Earth Day in the 'Hood, Rio Vista Elementary Family Night. In May, the team also joined community activities at Pueblos de Maíz Fiesta and Mission Garden's AAPI event, collaboration with affinity teams, Nuestras Raíces and Biblio Lotus.

Attendees at these events are consistently excited to learn about the Seed Library collection and additional library resources made available to the public. The Seed Library shared seed packets with our colleague at the Juvenile Detention Center. These seeds will be shared with youth upon their release, along with information on Seed Library resources and details on community gardening groups. This effort may become routine in the future.

PCPL has checked out over 28,000 seed packets in 2023 (Jan-April)! Seventeen branches currently house Seed Library locations and more will be added each year. Seed Library Central (Sam Lena-South Tucson Library) continues to organize seed orders, calculating the quantities needed based on circulation data, working with TSV to get them into Sierra, and overseeing packaging at numerous branches. Seed Library team members are also busy adding barcodes, creating Seed displays, facilitating programs, planting branch seed gardens, creating informational flyers, tabling outreach events, and answering customer questions that come in via email every week.

Warm season sowing is in full swing, and the Seed Library is teaming up with library branches around the county for a collaborative Grow Out project. Participating branches chose three varieties to grow in their demonstration gardens, for the purpose of harvesting the seeds

produced and incorporating those into the circulating collection. This sowing season is also being highlighted on our library website, through the recurring Now Sowing blog April and May blogposts, featuring information on growing thyme and lovage.

Synapse – Beth Matthias-Loghry

Following a ULC Blog, Colleen Morsli, Membership Executive and Senior Advisor for the Urban Libraries Council invited blog author Heather Severson/PCPL to present to the ULC community about Synapse, which she called an “awesome concept/program,” and well worth replicating.

Thanks to Karyn who agreed to be Heather’s co-broadcaster and they both did a wonderful job of reviewing Synapses origins, team focus, mission, and direction, and well as the valuable assets that Affinity teams are, all around.

Synapse is very lucky in the talent and dedication of our Communications sub-team. The team is rolling out periodic Meet the Team interview/blog series on our website. Check out the most recent one about our Teams Programming lead Jusdina Nolin-Brown.

Members of the Synapse Team recently formed a task force to work with the Pima County Health Department related to an online peer support course for youth, which is part of the Health Department’s Not Alone initiative. To help the PCHD track the objectives of the project, select PCPL branches will participate as points for youth to check in upon completion of this online self-paced course and award gift cards. Matt, who started the conversation(s) about the Not Alone in conjunction with his Youth Health Action Team project, says, “The ultimate goal of the partnership is to enhance the peer-to-peer aid that is given to young people, given that peer to peer is the primary source of information about mental health that young people rely on.”

Overall, the Synapse team is prioritizing its actions by developing collaborative relationships like those with the Health Department and Cope Community Services. We are reaching out internally as well, to see about how the group can support the continuation of initiatives such as Trauma Informed services and the Youth Health Action Team

Welcome to America – Tara Foxx-Lupo

The Welcome to America team was thrilled to host our first author talk this quarter with Printz Award winning author Daniel Nayeri. Nayeri immigrated as a refugee from Iran to Oklahoma at a young age and used that experience as the basis for his acclaimed book Everything Sad is Untrue (a true story.) The program was a huge success with many attendees who came with questions and stories to share. The event was a great kickoff to the Tucson Festival of Books. The team was very proud of the success and content of this first author event and hopes to host more events like it in the future.

Our team was proud to introduce the Literacy Reads collection in every public library in Pima County this year. This collection provides high-interest books with accessible vocabulary for English language learners and adults with lower-than-average literacy levels. The collections project includes an outreach and marketing component that engages partner organization Literacy Connects in cross promotion of materials and services. This is a long-term project that has come to fruition after a long planning phase. We look forward to being the destination for those who need additional supports in the adult learner community.

The team is ramping up our outreach efforts and will be part of a larger Pima County Library presence at the upcoming Pueblos del Maíz Festival. The festival is part of a month-long international food and culture celebration of maíz (corn) and its cultural and nutritional relevance globally and locally. The festival is a partnership across four diverse and border proximate communities in Arizona and Texas. The team will provide both an on-site craft and a grab and go craft in addition to library and Welcome to America team promotional materials.