

DATE: November 4, 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 – October 2023

Pima County Public Library celebrated Banned Books Week October 1-7! Most Pima County Public Libraries participated in the Tucson Festival of Books scavenger hunt asking people to find a banned book (or banned book display) and take a selfie.

The Community Engagement and Outreach office participated in several outreach events in October including a community festival at Three Points-Robles Junction, an eclipse event at the Desert Museum, another Health Department Salud de Arte event, and the Dream Job Fair which focused on employment for people with disabilities.

The Library is growing its partnership with Make Way for Books in 2024 by hosting several Story School cohorts at public libraries. Story School is a free early reading program for kids ages 0-5. Kids and their caregiver(s) attend 11 sessions in a five-week period where they practice literacy skills while building social-emotional skills through various activities. Make Way for Books supplies each child with 20 free books for their home libraries, and we will give everyone their own library cards. We will encourage the Story School families to attend library storytimes and Ready, Set, School programs. We hope the library becomes an important lifelong resource for everyone who participates.

I attended the ULC Webinar “Deepening Community Engagement to More Effectively Serve Your Community” on October 17. The Barbershop books program <https://barbershopbooks.org/> was the focus of discussion, and the advice for connecting to a community of ‘barbershops’ can be easily translated to other communities and types of businesses.

PCPL’s Writer in Residence Adiba Nelson provided one-on-one writing advice to community members at the Murphy-Wilmot Library throughout October. She also provided a writing workshop at the YWCA on October 28 titled ‘Show Me What Ya Got: Memoir as Burlesque.’

The Library’s Call to Artists opened in September and we are doing things differently this year to bring in artists from diverse backgrounds and experiences. We hosted a workshop for new and emerging artists to teach them a) how to write an artist statement, b) how to best photograph their art, and c) how to enter their art through the widely used Submittable database. We are also teaching librarians across our 27 libraries to assist artists with this process at any time.

Latinx Community Engagement Manager – Hassael Cazesuz

The Community Engagement and Outreach office has been happily supporting the influx of requests to connect with our community via outreach opportunities. Our team was able to have a library presence at several community events that were celebrating Mes de la cultura (September 15 - October 15). Our team is committed to engaging in opportunities to connect our community with the library, resources, and programming. We had such opportunities at the Mexican Fiesta at the Park event on October 9 at the James Thomas Park. My colleagues were able to engage with participants and reacquaint them with the library and encourage them to visit the Quincie Douglas Library, the area's closest PCPL branch. On September 23, TUSD's Mexican American Studies Student Services department invited PCPL to participate at the Adelante Resource Fair which they helped host at the University of Arizona Bookstore. I was able to bring bilingual books as well as Library informational material to highlight our resources with TUSD parents and students. To kick off PCPL's celebration of Mes de la cultura, alongside colleagues from the Nuestras Raíces affinity team, I organized El Grito. I was happy to have this opportunity to have a cultural program for our communities and reconnect with local youth performing groups to give them an opportunity to showcase the Mexican culture through Mariachi and Folklorico.

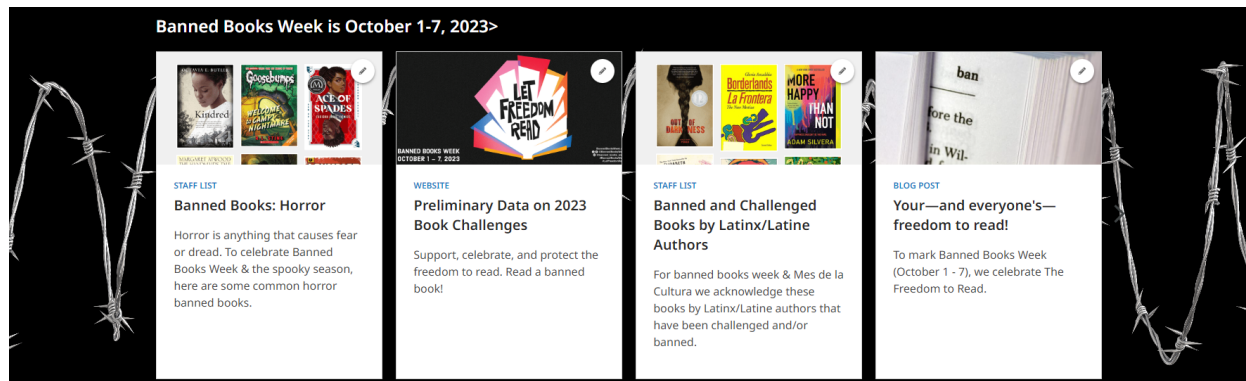
Library Services Manager, Communications and Systems Office – Reneé Bibby

Our department has had two big transitions. First, the Web Team transitioned from Support Services to the Communications and Systems Office, under LSM Reneé Bibby. Since the two teams work closely together on many projects, the move makes sense and will streamline the processes of much of the work we do. And, secondly, Alexa Greer joined the team as the Library Technical Services Manager, which is the role previously occupied by Jen Maney. This position, formerly known as the Online Services Manager, oversees our web services and the web service team, Chris Williams, and Amy Bivins. In this role, Alexa will plan and prioritize user and organizational needs and strategic vision for web content, as well as the intranet.

Alexa is new to the library system. Prior to joining us, she worked in Project Management and UX Design with non-profit education organizations, start-ups, and retail companies. She's successfully overseen major projects, including the redesign of websites, which required leading a team in conducting user interviews and usability tests, managing multiple workstreams, and collaborating closely with stakeholders. She brings a strong track record in executing user interviews and incorporating their insights to shape the design of user-friendly, accessible wireframes focused on ease-of-use. Going forward, the website highlights will now fall under the Communication and Systems Office Report. On that note, of special highlight for the web team is the ongoing work with the Seed Library team. The web team is updating the catalog images for our entire seed collection. Templates created by the design team add a cohesive and recognizable style to the images, look more appealing in the catalog and on web pages, and have the polish that this outstanding special collection deserves.



The marketing team, including the web team, focused on several projects this month including Digital Inclusion Week where we ran a week-long competition giving away an iPad, Apple Watch, and Laptop; a push for Karen Chow author event; a push for the Pride Author event with Kainna Alexander; a special story time with Xelena Gonzalez, and Banned Book Week, which featured this great highlight on the website:



Quarterly Reports for Cultural Affinity Teams and Seed Library

Biblio Lotus – Sharon Yang-McNeil

Members continue working on the collection that reflects Asian cultures. Biblio Lotus member completed part three of the Asian language learning blog series- Learning Japanese.

October is Filipino American Heritage month. Biblio Lotus members are working on interviews with Philippines and Indian community members and will post them on the library website. Biblio Lotus members also worked on a blog of the Mid-Autumn Moon festival that falls in late September to October. Books on the same theme are also displayed in some libraries. A customer received help from us and checked out 50 library books to showcase at the Tucson Chinese Cultural Center. People who attended the event were very interested in the collection.

We invited Taiwanese American Author Karen Chow to Tucson. She presented “The Music of Miracle” at Oro Valley Library On October 4. The program is intended for tweens and teens, Author Karen Chow had a wonderful presentation that was very engaging. Customers are from late elementary to senior aged, some mother and daughters, and some on their own. Some customers shared their connection to her through similar examples. Karen Chow is having another writing workshop at Himmel Park Library on October 18.

Kindred – Jessica Pryde

There have been staff additions to the Kindred team in the last quarter. Chinyere Olumba, the new manager at Woods Memorial Library, and Le'Sheland Fultz, also at Woods Memorial Library, joined the team over the summer, and have already begun to strongly contribute to the team’s mission. In continuing activities, Read Black Book Club is still well attended, discussing three books that look deeply into the historical, current, and potential future psyche of mankind. Books read include *Dawn* by Octavia Butler; *Citizen: An American Lyric* by Claudia Rankine; and *Skin of the Sea* by Natasha Bowen. The team now continues to plan programming and materials for calendar year 2024.

Nuestras Raíces – Hassael Cazesuz

Mes de la cultura was at the epicenter of the focus for the Nuestras Raíces affinity team for this quarter. As a team, we were able to kick off the celebration on September 15 with El Grito, an event dedicated to the Mexican heritage and ancestry present in our Pima County communities. El Grito commemorates the

'Grito de Dolores' or 'El Grito de Independencia' celebrating Mexican Independence Day. We organized cultural performances from local youth groups. Mariachi Las Aguilas de Davis enchanted the afternoon with their Mariachi music, a staple of the Mexican traditional music. Ballet Folklórico Tapatío showcased their talent with their Mexican folklore dances.

Our main event was a special performance from representatives from the Consulate of Mexico performing the "El Grito" ceremony and speaking to the participants on the significance of this celebration. Besides the showcase of Mexican culture, Nuestras Raíces team members were available to distribute free books and a Seed Grab & Go kit (in collaboration with the Seed Library). We also highlighted an exhibit of books from the Frank de la Cruz Collection inside the El Río Library. Attendees had an opportunity to check out this special collection that centers around Borderland culture, history, and arts. El Río Library staff were also working alongside Nuestras Raíces to encourage our community to sign up for library cards in honor of Library Card Sign-up Month.

PRIDE – Casey Short

October is LGBTQ+ History Month and the PRIDE Affinity Team was excited to attend Tucson's Pride in the Desert Festival at Reid Park. Our table provided information on library resources, flyers about our future Author talk at the Loft Theater, PRIDE flag bookmarks and Grab & Go bracelet kits, and free book giveaways. We were able to greet many friends and make many new ones.

Coming on October 22, the PCPL Pride Team LGBTQA+ Author talk is at the Loft Theater with [Kianna Alexander](#). Kianna will be in conversation with PCPL Librarian Jessica P. Pryde, followed by a Q&A and book signing with book sales by Mostly Books. Kianna Alexander is the author of over 50 romance novels, but her most recent novels, *Can't Resist Her* and *Can't Let Her Go* both focus on the lives and loves of Black sapphics, offering the same Happily Ever After more often offered to other groups in romance. And with *Carolina Built*, Kianna Alexander stretches her historian legs and digs into the life of Black real estate magnate Josephine N. Leary. The event is slated to be a celebration of love, life, and pride!

This month the team also met to discuss future planning including outreach events, author presentations and reintroducing Rainbow Storytime to our library programming. We also discussed potential community-building projects and what that would entail from the team. Team leads discussed the best way to preserve the PRIDE teams archival objects and what that looks like for future team members to study.

Synapse – Katie Westfall

The Synapse team coordinated efforts with the [Southern Arizona Psychological Association](#) (SAPA) to offer a program for both adults and teens about current mental health concerns. Library staff and nine psychologists presented information to community members and offered an open forum format to address any questions. The Synapse team has been focusing on strengthening this partnership with SAPA. We are meeting regularly with them to plan out future endeavors.

Our team has also been partnering with the Pima County Health Department to support their initiative in encouraging youth aged 13-24 to complete an online course on mental health called 'Be There.' Nine library branches have been offering monetary gift cards to youth who earn a certificate of completion. The health department has asked us to expand this program to three more branches, near specific neighborhoods in Tucson to support their emphasis on equity. Some youth who have been coming into the libraries to collect their gift cards have reported that they hadn't yet been to the branch before, so we have been happy to welcome these new people into our libraries.

A member from our Synapse team organized a second tabling event at the Joel D. Valdez Main Library in the teen space with a focus on mental health. [COPE Community Services](#), [Goodwill Metro](#), and [National Alliance on Mental Illness](#) attended to support our regularly visiting after school teens. The event

continues to be a success with high attendance and engagement with the youth. We hope to share this program model with library colleagues so that it may be beneficial in other regions of the county.

Welcome to America – Tara Foxx-Lupo

As the only member of [Welcoming America](#) in southern Arizona, Pima County Public library and the Welcome to America team participate in an annual effort titled Welcoming Week. This week is dedicated to demonstrating our commitment to being a welcoming community for immigrants of all backgrounds: asylees, refugees and migrants of all nationalities. Libraries around the system created Welcoming Week displays highlighting authors who have come to make the US their homes.

The Welcoming Week displays included promotional materials and an education and activity guide meant to bring awareness to [The Walk: Little Amal](#). Little Amal is a twelve-foot puppet who tours the globe spreading awareness of the immigration experience from the perspective of a Syrian refugee child. This year Tucson will be one of the stops on the Little Amal tour and the Pima County Public Library is one of many partners around the globe helping to welcome Little Amal. Little Amal's visit will culminate in a block party event hosted by the Tucson Children's Museum. The Welcome to America team will be there with free books for kids, and a great opportunity to promote the many services Pima County Public Library has to offer.