

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Unless otherwise noted, articles are written by Holly Schaffer, Communications Specialist

WE ARE CUSTOMER FOCUSED

Literacy Connects reading tutoring: "My brain is firing now."	THE CONTRACT OF THE CONTRACT O
Amado Youth Center outreach: It's not just about the brick-and-mortar build	ings 3
WE HONOR DIVERSITY	
Combating stigma during Mental Health Awareness Month	5
Celebrating Pride Month: "We're here. We're queer. And we have your back."	6
Encouraging understanding and empathy at World Refugee Day	12.7
¡Viva Frank De La Cruz!: A customer celebrates librarian's legacy	8
Event spotlight: Biblio Lotus presents author Dominic Lim	9
WE ARE A RESOURCE FOR YOU	
Career Online High School: "Congratulations to my fellow classmates! And n	myself!"
Our Space: "It's a light when times are dark."	1'
Across five regions and back to the library – author nens first book at Wood	e Memorial Library 1

Our Vision is an educated, connected community of readers, learners, doers, and dreamers.

We transform lives by educating, inspiring, and connecting people.

We value education, excellence, freedom, diversity, innovation, community, and passion.

WE WILL AMAZE YOU WITH ALL WE HAVE TO OFFER Writer in Residence program: "Go! Publish your story!" Youth Health Action Team: "I never realized how much I could impact my community." Recognizing local, young artists with the Worlds of Imagination Art Showcase **DID YOU KNOW?** PLAZA Mobile Market: Produce, produce ... and more produce! 19 Another year, another one million digital checkouts! 20 Program impacts at the Juvenile Detention Center 21 22 Free tax help at your library! Act One Culture Passes for the win! 22 Greatly appreciated: Hotspots & Chromebooks 22 STAFF AND STAKEHOLDER CORNER Arizona Daily Star column celebrates 10 years! 23 25 Former Library Advisory Board Member Lorraine Eiler is a voice for her unacknowledged tribe **CONGRATS!** Library staff named GEMS by Pima County 27 28 Accolades for Matthew Landon from the Arizona Library Association and Publishers Weekly **YOU'RE SO KIND!** Praise from community members ... We appreciate you, too! 29 The Girl Scout Cookies for our Heroes program: "You are our Hometown Heroes" THANK YOU, INTERNS! Summer Youth Internship Program at Caviglia-Arivaca Library 33 Sahuarita Library intern says, "They didn't treat me like I was just a kid." **LOOKING FORWARD TO 2025** Welcome new leadership 35-36

Copywriting by Holly Schaffer, Pima County Public Library Communications Specialist | Design by Carolina Caples, Pima County Public Library Graphic Design Specialist | Unless otherwise noted, photos by Randy Metcalf and Gerald Loew, Pima County Communications photographers

"My brain is firing now"

When I met them, Candace, a Literacy Connects volunteer, and Rod, a customer at Murphy-Wilmot Library, appeared to have known one another for many years. As I approached the table where books were spread out before them, I could hear them chatting comfortably, laughing, and sharing about their days. Only after sitting down did I find out that they had only met a year before, when Rod's social worker introduced him to reading tutoring available through Literacy Connects. It was upon making that connection that Rod sought Candace's help with learning to read.

Upon meeting her, Rod said, "I felt a positive connection right away. I knew I had found help."

Rod was born in Costa Rica and came to the U.S. when he was six years old. He managed to finish high school without learning to read. He said, "The education system failed me. I just got passed grade by grade without receiving any help. It just ingrained the guilt."

It was difficult. Rod recalled, "I had a tutor at home. I was so embarrassed about friends knocking on the door. I didn't want anyone to know."

Despite being unable to read, Rod accomplished quite a bit, working as a car salesperson and in construction.

As Candace explained it, "He's been faking this so brilliantly for so long. All we're doing is taking that brilliance and putting it toward reading." Their time together is paying off. Rod said, "I'm reading street signs. I'm reading captions on the television. Reading makes me feel good."

The Library's Literacy Reads collection has played a

large role in Rod's journey. The books in this collection, curated by the Welcome to America team, are specifically designed for beginning English readers. They feature low page counts, short chapters, and simple vocabulary in compelling fiction and non-fiction books.

Rod said, "But they're not books for kids. Reading stuff meant for kids makes me feel bad, feel embarrassed. The Literacy Reads books are simple and they don't put you down."

"I've not only found the right books, but the right person to guide me," he said, smiling at Candace.

He also credits library staff for his growth. "People at this library," he said, "are fabulous. They gave me a list of all the Literacy Reads books and encouraged me to request the ones I'm interested in, if they weren't on the shelf."

He updates them on his progress, and he can tell they're happy for him.

Rod recently completed a book about Nelson Mandela. Shortly after, he was watching television and there was a movie on about him. "And I knew who he was," Rod exclaimed.

Candace told me, "His confidence has really grown and he's very enthusiastic. We started out meeting in one of the small meeting rooms where he was most comfortable." Now, they're out in the public area and he's confident. The week before I met him, another regular customer overheard Rod reading, walked by, and said, "Nice reading, you're doing great."

Rod explained to me, "My brain is always wanting more. Bing! Bing! Bing! My brain is firing now."

This super-powered reading duo can be found every Tuesday and Thursday afternoon at Murphy-Wilmot Library. Ever enthusiastic, Rod generally arrives about ½ hour early to practice before their sessions.

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"He also practices very hard at home," Candace said.

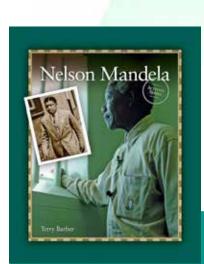
"He is willing to put time into it and it's fulfilling for both of us. As he progresses, the world is opening up to him... doors and avenues he never knew existed."

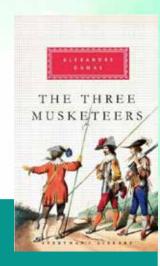
As for his future, Rod wants to work with young kids. He would like to volunteer at the Pima County

Juvenile Detention Center. He said, "I want to show youth who are struggling that there's nothing to be embarrassed about. It just takes time and willpower."

There are two other big goals Rod plans to accomplish, including reading *The Three Musketeers* in its entirety. The other one? Rod said, "I want to walk into this library and pick out any book I want... and read it myself!"

When the time comes, Rod knows the library has plenty of copies of Dumas' classic tale of the young adventurer D'Artagnan and, if he needs any help finding it, there are plenty of people ready to jump in.





Learn more about the Literacy Reads collection

@ library.pima.gov/literacyreads



It's not just about the brick-and-mortar buildings

On the third Tuesday of every month, Joyner-Green Valley Librarian Lupita Flores can be found at the Amado Youth Center hosting a program for teens and tweens. On average, about 15 to 20 youth are in attendance participating in fun activities like making safety pin jewelry, Shrinky Dink keychains, LED lightsaber greeting cards, and more.

On the Tuesday I joined Lupita, they were making container gardens out of egg cartons. Lupita had brought numerous seeds to choose from: Cilantro, Zinnia, Peas, Lettuce, Alyssum, Marigold, Calendula, and Beans—all carefully selected from the Seed Library collection.

As the participants were called in from outside many enjoying time on the beautiful playground that surrounds the center—they sat down and got ready to pay attention and follow instructions. It was clear they knew they were about to have fun!

3 | WE ARE CUSTOMER FOCUSED

Before selecting and planting the seeds, the cartons, of course, had to be decorated. Axel drew characters from One Piece, a Japanese manga series, while his brother Gerardo carefully illustrated his carton with Jeffy.

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Don't know who Jeffy is? Don't worry – I didn't either. Fun fact: Jeffy is from the YouTube Puppet Series SuperMarioLogan (SML). He is the adopted son of Marvin (Mario) and Rose (Rosalina). Now, back to the story...

Estrella wanted to create a flower garden. She selected Zinnia, Marigold, Alyssum, and Calendula seeds. As one would imagine, her carton was decorated with bright flowers that she had received help drawing from Madian, a library techinical assistant supervisor, who sometimes joins Lupita. Another participant, Anthony, chose to plant lettuce and beans. He was excited to try making chili.

Since its Grand Opening on October 21, 2023, the new Amado Youth Center building has been a dream realized. The Amado Youth Center offers programs promoting life skills, academic advancement, and career development. Situated within Kay Stupey Park, adjacent to Sopori Elementary School, the Center welcomes all local youth to the only safe afterschool space in the area.



As the tweens and teens worked away on the cartons, conversation flowed. Cielo Arochi, the Coalition and **Prevention Coordinator** at the center, and Estrella discussed Calendula

and how it can be used in teas, oils, and lotions. Madian and Axel talked about Cilantro.

Madian said, "Some people say it tastes like soap." Axel didn't mind... "Eh, that's ok. I want to try it anyway."

The conversation wasn't only about the seeds and cartons. I sat next to Estrella, and we started chatting about the things she likes. She told me she wants to be a nursing assistant when she's older. She said, "I want to bring people food and their medicine and make sure they get what they need." She also told me she's excited to play volleyball next year.

I asked some of the youth what they like about the center and Lupita's monthly visits. Jorge told me, "I like that we can do fun things like this, and I get to see my older cousin Francisco." Gerardo and Axel agreed, "We like it here because they do fun stuff. Once we made slime!"

As the craft wrapped up, I got to play my favorite game—UNO with Valentina and her cousin Juan. I lost every time, but still had fun. After my multiple losses, Valentina and Juan joined the others to eat dinner, play other games, and enjoy the playground again.

The Amado Youth Center is clearly an integral part of the community that brings youth together and helps empower them, and Lupita's monthly visits demonstrate how 21st century libraries

aren't just about the brick-andmortar buildings, but building connections where people are



Maria, another Joyner-Green Valley Library staff member, runs another monthly program for students grades 2 through 5.



Mental Health Awareness Month

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issues surrounding mental health and wellness, and stigmas associated with them.

up book displays prominently placed for all community members to see and benefit from.



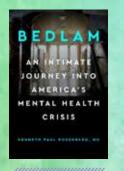
Britney Winn Lee



When Worry Whispers Joyce Meyer



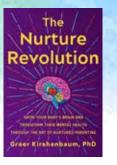
Wendy O'Leary



Bedlam Kenneth Paul Rosenberg

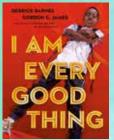


The Mystery of the **Golden Feather** Tessa Strickland



The Nurture Revolution Greer Kirshenbaum





I Am Every Good Thing **Derrick Barnes**



The Gray **Chris Baron**



The Way I Used to Be Amber Smith



The Weight of Everything Marcia Argueta Mickelson

Combating stigma

May marks Mental Health Awareness Month, which offers an opportunity to highlight

To recognize this important month, the Synapse Team worked with branches systemwide in putting



problems don't define who you are. They are something you experience. You walk in the rain and you feel the rain, but you are not the rain."

> - Matt Haig, author of The Midnight Library



Pride Month

"We're here. We're queer. And we have your back."

June marks Pride Month, which is celebrated each year to honor the 1969 Stonewall Uprising in Manhattan. According to the Library of Congress, "Celebrations include pride parades, picnics, parties, workshops, symposia and concerts, and Pride Month events attract millions of participants around the world."

The Library's Pride Team can be counted among them with displays of books by LGBTQ+ authors, and those documenting the experiences of the greater LGBTQ+ community.



"What is straight? A line can be straight, or a street, but the human heart, oh, no, it's curved like a road through mountains."

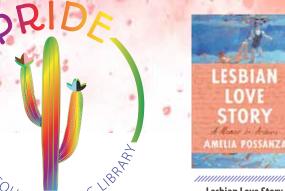
- Tennessee Williams, playwright and screenwriter



Right Where I Left You Julian Winters



Devika Dalal



Lesbian Love Story Amelia Possanzal



Cinda Meets Ella Wallace West



Miles McKenna



Elle Campbell Wins Their Weekend Ben Kahn



Queer As All Get Out



You Don't Have a Shot Racquel Marie







Encouraging understanding WE HONOR DIVERSITY and empathy

Their Story is Our Story (TSOS) is an organization begun in 2015. Their mission is clear: "We collect and share the experiences of refugees and allies to encourage understanding and empathy, advance public policy supporting refugees, and help individuals and communities welcome people forcibly displaced from their homes due to violence, persecution and other events outside their control."

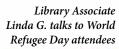
TSOS helps collect and feature on their website events held nationally on World Refugee Day, designated by the United Nations as an opportunity to honor refugees around the globe. One of those events was held at Pima Community College on Saturday, June 22, 2024.

Of course, our Welcome to America Team was there!

More than 600 people came by to visit the library table and hundreds of books were given away in English, Spanish, Arabic, Swahili, Somali, Dari, Pashto and French.

We also gave away free items, including activity books, crayons, pencils, pens, stickers, and bookmarks as well as seeds from our Seed Library.

In addition, team members hosted an activity making colorful origami boats featuring different flags of the world.





¡Viva Frank De La Cruz!

We're excited to share with you this letter we received from Raymond "Ray" Siqueiros, a native Tucsonan of Chicano and Tohono O'odham heritage, about the life and legacy of Frank De La Cruz, former librarian, humanitarian, and social activist who helped establish El Rio Library in 1972.

Frank De La Cruz was much more than a librarian; he was a Chicano Librarian. This means that he was a Chicano first, and a librarian second. He identified with La Raza and working-class people of all colors long before he served us as a librarian, as he participated in the historic Chicano protest movement that established our El Rio Neighborhood Center.

As librarian, Frank was a conduit of service, advocacy, and growth for all, but especially for the oppressed and the youth. I know this first-hand because as an 18-year-old fresh out of Sunnyside High School, I began my life's purpose and work as a Chicano activist and educator by volunteering at El Rio Neighborhood Center in 1983.

In those days as a teenager, I had learned somehow that El Rio Center had Tucson's first and perhaps only publicly supported Chicano library. This trail-blazing beacon of unity and beauty that is El Rio Library is an embodiment of our Chicano movement and Frank's dedication to its aims.

In my youthful search for knowledge and identity, Frank's guidance proved indispensable. For example, as I'd venture into the library almost daily, Frank in his whisper-soft demeanor would say to me, "Hey Ray, check out this new book written by a Chicano," or, "Hey Raymond, you should go to this meeting tonight here at the center on immigration." In other words, Frank's kind and committed presence proved indispensable in my development as a reader, author, and thinker.

More importantly, he also guided me towards what proved to be a time of explosive growth as a youth activist and leader in our community. Last, Frank's great gift to me was as a most humble yet firm, consistent example of how to work as a responsible adult committed to Chicano community empowerment. ¡Viva Frank De La Cruz!

Speaking of Frank

De La Cruz, have

you seen our

FDLC collection,

which comprises
a circulating and
reference collection
available to all
those seeking to
enrich their grasp
of a history worthy
of being known?
Check it out at

library.pima.gov/ frankdelacruz

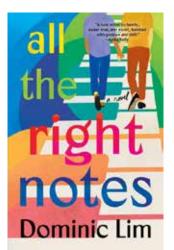


Drawing of Frank De La Cruz by Floyd Thompson

Event spotlight: Dominic Lim on his

"swoony, joyful rom-com"

Biblio Lotus author event spotlight



Over the last year, the Library has had the honor of hosting numerous authors spanning multiple genres, including Gregory McNamee, Kianna Alexander, and Karen Chow. These events bring folks together to celebrate the joy of reading, writing, and the power of the written word.

This year the Biblio Lotus Team hosted Dominic Lim at Eckstrom-Columbus Library.

Attendees enjoyed a discussion about Lim's debut novel All the Right Notes and his journey as a writer. Have you read the book? library.pima.gov/AllTheRightNotes

About the book:

Quito Cruz might be a composing and piano genius, but he's a few notes short of success. Broadway, here I don't come. But Quito knows what the problem is. Or rather who. Because ever since that night in college-with pretty-boy jock Emmett Aoki-his inspiration has been completely MIA ... Now Quito's beloved dad wants him to put on a charity performance in his hometown. And there's one hella big string attached: convince Emmett--now one of Hollywood's biggest stars--to perform. It's all shaping up to be the biggest musical fiasco of Quito's life. Especially when that undeniable vibe with Emmett is still there. But there's nothing simple about falling for a closeted movie star ... even when he's pitch-perfect.

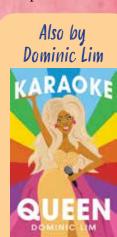
"Light and charming, with a hint of snark, this is a promising start for Lim." – Publishers Weekly

> "Heartfelt, poignant writing and iconic supporting characters." - Library Journal



"A swoony-joyful rom-com." - Entertainment Weekly

"A rainbow-sprinkled delight, wrapped in Lim's fresh voice. The only way to best express how much joy you'll feel is to break out into song." - Sidney Karger, author of Best Men



Dominic Lim has enjoyed a lifelong love affair with music. Dominic holds a master's from Indiana University Jacobs School of Music, is an alum of the Oberlin Conservatory of Music, and has sung with numerous professional choral ensembles. As a proud member of the Actors' Equity Association, he has performed Off-Broadway and in regional productions throughout the US. Although he probably shouldn't admit to having favorites, the thrill of singing "This is the Hour" in the chorus of Miss Saigon still pops up in his dreams.

Lim supports his local writing community as a member of the Writers Grotto and as a co-host of San Francisco's Babylon Salon. He lives in Oakland with his loving and supportive partner, Peter, and their whiny cat, Phoebe.

"Congratulations to my fellow classmates! And myself!"



Thank you to

the Pima Library

Foundation,

Friends of the Pima

County Public

Library, Friends

of the Oro Valley

Public Library,

and Friends of the

Green Valley and

Sahuarita Libraries

for their generous

support of Career

Online High School.



In February 2023, we celebrated the accomplishments of 28 Career Online High School graduates who worked tirelessly to obtain their high school diplomas and career certificates.

Annette Hernandez Carbajal was this year's valedictorian and shared the following words with us at the graduation ceremony. She really captured the spirit of the program and how it is helping to change lives every day.

Ten years ago, I would have never imagined me standing here, especially giving a graduation speech in front of people I don't even know. But here I am. I've been given the privilege to stand here today and tell you what a huge difference I have just made in my life and my kids' lives. I am so grateful to have been given this second opportunity, or in my case, 100th opportunity to turn my life around, change it, and give me and my kids better opportunities.

I am also extremely grateful for the people who kept me grounded, pushed me every day, and reminded me that I could achieve it and deserved it. My kids Roberto and Jose Luis, my grandparents Cande and

> Vicente, my aunt Iveth, my cousins Jesus, Luis and Angel, my supportive husband Roberto, my academic coach Alana Taylor (she sent motivational emails out every time I completed a semester, which helped a lot) and lastly Librarian Jon Meade, who believed in me and was always there for support.

If there is anybody here today that is in the process of getting their high school diploma or thinking about it... please do NOT think twice about going for it. You are capable of it and so worthy of it. It will open doors for you. I've already started Medical Billing and Coding at Carrington College. Wow, I didn't think I would ever be saying that. I am also now employed at a childcare center, which I couldn't do before because I hadn't finished high school. This gives

me the opportunity to be with my kids instead of missing valuable time with them. I will always be grateful for the day I walked into Flowing Wells Library and picked

up the Career Online High School pamphlet, although to be honest when I got in my car, I did throw it on the passenger floor and left it there for a few days. But, one day I remembered it, and thought that I did not want to spend the rest of my life working in fast food at minimum wage where I was not able to grow or progress. So, I went to my car and luckily found it amongst a lot of other paperwork that goes on the passenger-side floor and took the first steps in registering for the program. It took me less than a year, but I did it. I stand here today in disbelief; I still can't believe I am a high school graduate. Jon, pinch me I MUST be dreaming. (Jon said he wouldn't).

One piece of advice I would give is to take advantage of this wonderful opportunity and I want to be the first to say to you I strongly believe in you. I want to thank you for having me here today, and I look forward to seeing you in the future. Congratulations to my fellow classmates! And myself! I am extremely proud of this milestone and what the future holds for us.

The Career Online High School Program launched in 2016. Since that time, 161 individuals have completed the program.

Annette Hernandez Carbaial

Learn more about the program on our website: library.pima.gov/highschool

9 | WE HONOR DIVERSITY PIMA COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY | 10

"It's a light when times are dark."

WE ARE A RESOURCE FOR YOU



Before I tell you all about the Library's bi-monthly Our Space program, I want to start by sharing with you what the program means to the individuals who attend it.

The day I visited the program, I had the wonderful opportunity to chat with Cass, Melissa, Joe, Donovan, Tessa, and a few others who regularly attend. I asked them about how it's been helpful and in what ways they've felt supported by Library staff. I was touched by their willingness to share and the openness with which they spoke.

Here is just some of what they told me:

"This program is a light when times are dark. It's a good place to go when you need help, be it help with an empty stomach, healthcare, housing, and more. A smiling face goes a long way when you're feeling down."

"I enjoy the fellowship with others."

"It's meaningful because I've got nothing. This helps me a lot."

"It gives me hope in humanity."

"It helps so I don't starve. It gives me hope."

"I feel supported in ways that no one has ever supported me. Everybody is respectful, understanding, and kind."

"It means I won't be hungry today and I can get mental health resources and socialize."

Our Space is offered monthly on the 2nd and 4th Thursday in the Tortolita Room at Joel D. Valdez Main Library. Within the walls of the safe space are large windows overlooking Jácome Plaza, plenty of chairs, snacks and water to take, and food from Caridad Community Kitchen. In addition, thanks to the support of community partners, folks can obtain things like flipflops, hygiene packs, flashlights, and blankets.

Staff at Caridad Community Kitchen, a service of the Community Food Bank of Southern Arizona, take great pride in the meals they provide. They most often include a sandwich and burrito, an orange, and a snack such as a granola bar. They also include condiments which might seem insignificant to many of us, but as staff at Caridad





told us, "It's important to us that we not skip the condiments because we want people receiving the meals to get the most enjoyment out of the food. We don't believe in cutting corners... everyone deserves the same quality."

The mood is pleasant and sociable as folks enjoy their meals, play board games and Bingo, listen to music, and chat with one another. On the day I attended, I met Marty, a regular attendee, who carries a sketchbook and was carefully drawing Gertie Lopez of the Waila band Gertie and the T.O. Boyz, who often play live music at the program.

Community partners play an integral role in the program's success. Karl Wagner is a resource navigator from Pima County's Community Workforce and Development. Valerie ElGhaouti is the Arizona Voter ID Organizer from VoteRiders. They can be found at every Our Space sitting at a long table full of essential information.

It's easiest to list all that they do...

- Receiving ID and birth certificate assistance
- Acquiring a cell phone
- Finding food resources and utility assistance
- Obtaining pet food
- Understanding eviction prevention
- Completing paperwork for emergency housing
- Connecting with legal services and veteran and employment resources ...and more!



Of the partnership with the Library, Valerie says, "I think of librarians as magicians.
Everyone I've encountered has been very helpful." Karl emphasized that his department could not reach the community where they are without the support of the library.

Jessica Miesner, who oversees Our Space programming, is overjoyed with the partnerships that have been formed. She's also glad that it's hosted at the library. She said, "People are meeting inside our fabulous library with all our helpful and talented staff who can help them get on a computer, access Wi-Fi, get an email address... all of the things that are increasingly necessary in finding success."

Linde Furman, PCPL's manager of customer experience, programs, and community partnerships, told me, "Our Space is a prime example of how people coming together and engaging with one another creates far more success and far more powerful results with tangible, positive impact."

Within its first year and a half, Our Space has exceeded expectations. For those working on the program, it's an opportunity to help people get what they need. Perhaps, though, it's a little more about giving back one's dignity, showing kindness, and empowering others... all over a shared meal, a friendly game of Bingo, and some good music.









Last year, Caridad provided <mark>2,222</mark> bagged meals



Community members enjoying time at Our Space

Across five regions and back to the library

For the most part, Isaiah Ortiz's book Starry Sky Adventures: Arizona was researched and written at Woods Memorial Library.

Before we get to that, though, I'd love to tell you about Isaiah.

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13 | WE ARE A RESOURCE FOR YOU

A transplant from Las Vegas, his interest in photography began with a phone, taking snapshots and selfies. He said, "I always enjoyed taking pictures, but once I started photographing the night sky, I was hooked. It blew my mind." He purchased a professional camera and honed his skills for more than 10 years.

Members of the Sonoran Insiders— a group dedicated to amplifying good stewardship in Arizona landscapes—
spotted his photos on Instagram and soon after, he was contacted by FalconGuides
publishing to write a book about his outdoor adventures and photography.

He said, "They had just published a guide in Utah and wanted to expand to Arizona. It came at a perfect time for me. I was wanting a change in my life." And so, he set off!

"I had been to some of the places, but not all. They were all on my bucket list, though, so it was a great opportunity," he said.

Starry Sky Adventures: Arizona features 50 trips across five regions in Arizona: Northern, Southern, Central, Eastern, and Western. He kayaked, camped, back- and bike-packed, and stargazed his way across the state.

After all these amazing trips, Isaiah had to get to writing.
And that's where Woods Memorial Library comes in.
He told me, "I did most of my research here. I uploaded photos. It was my full-time job, and the library was a place where I could focus and felt supported. I would see neighbors and library staff would ask me how the book was coming along. I became close with the security guard. This place is really important."

WE ARE A RESOURCE FOR YOU





Isaiah and I spoke at length about the library, but the conversation quickly turned back to his adventures. I wanted to know more!

He told me about his trips to the White Mountains, Lowell Observatory, Glen Canyon, and Canyon de Chelly, many of which he did solo, but some with his parents and friends. I got to hear about his most strenuous trip when he and his mom tackled Topock Gorge Moonlit Kayaking. "It was 16 miles done at night. It took us seven hours. We couldn't see them in the dark, but there were beavers jumping in and out of the water. It sounded like bowling balls being tossed in." He also recalled going to Mount Graham-Hospital Flat and the Grand Canyon with his dad. "It was a wonderful way to connect with my parents."

Starry Sky Adventures: Arizona is available at bookstores and REI, and it's doing great. He was recently volunteering in a project at the Salt River and another volunteer told him they had bought the book and were inspired to do the Glen Canyon kayak camping trip.

It's also available at your local library. Isaiah said, "It was a full circle moment for me when the library ordered it. This is my neighborhood, my community... and my book is here. I love that I can gift my enthusiasm to readers and travelers. It feels like a win."

Isaiah is very busy with a full-time job as a ranger at Catalina State Park. His job involves taking care of the park in every way from maintaining trails and leading night hikes to answering visitor questions and participating in search & rescue operations.

That doesn't mean Isaiah is finished adventuring. He would like to continue his travels and add 25 new trips in an updated edition. His first additions will be the Salt River, Madera Canyon, and the Rincon Mountains.

We hope he'll come back to Woods Memorial Library when it's time to get writing again!



PIMA COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY | 14

"Go! Publish your story!"

As the Communications Specialist at Pima County Public Library, I met Myrna to talk about her positive experience with former Writer in Residence Adiba Nelson and Myrna's children's book *The Butterfly Tree*. However, both of us being lovers of stories and sharing, we got sidetracked.

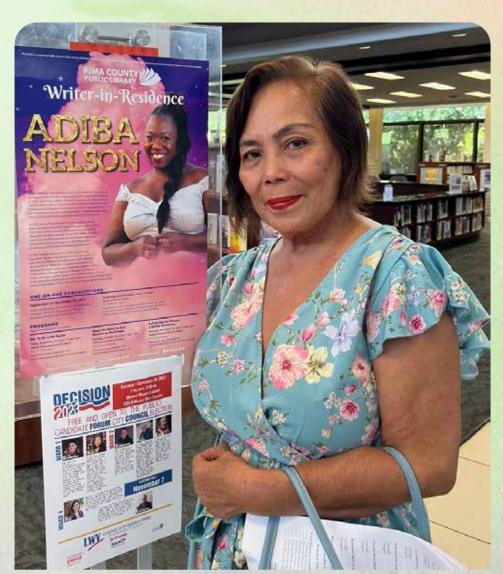
We chatted about her childhood in the Philippines, learning to speak English from Peace Corps volunteers, being selected to attend the World Youth Assembly, her training as an early educator, and her time teaching at numerous schools in New York City. Of teaching, Myrna told me, "You teach to inform facts, but also to appreciate the form. It is a science and an art. It's about colorful language, mood, and music." She then shared a story about her best experience as a teacher:

"A student told me grammar is boring, so I set it to music and asked, 'Is this sentence declarative?' The student replied, unenthusiastically, 'I don't know.' In a singsong voice, I spoke these lyrics... I am going to Scarborough Fair. Excitedly, he said, "It's declarative! He's declaring where he's going! That makes sense."

I mention this story because it perfectly captures Myrna's personality and her outlook on life. She told me, "I want to gather people and teach and share. I was born with a dream and to look beyond. I am a muse."

She also had a dream to write a book. And with the help of the Library's former Writer in Residence Adiba Nelson, she did.

The Butterfly Tree: A Retold Fantasy Tale is a Filipino fantasy tale reinvented in which three butterflies discover why it's important to care for others. She said, "The book was in my head for years. Upon meeting Adiba at our first one-on-one session, I felt the seed of creativity being nurtured."



Myrna had a loose manuscript before meeting Adiba. "The first time I read to her," she said, tearing up as she spoke, "She listened intently. I felt heard." Adiba said, "There was such a connection with Myrna. I could almost hear the click."

Adiba continued, "She was such a joy to work with, and I always looked forward to meeting with her. She was so passionate about getting her story out into the world, and was willing to hear feedback, take it back to her home and work on her story. The finished result was a beautifully touching fable from her homeland of the Philippines that moved me to tears. She's a natural storyteller!"





15 | WE WILL AMAZE YOU WITH ALL WE HAVE TO OFFER PIMA COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY | 16

"I never realized how much I could impact my community."

Keertana Konkimalla served on the Library's Youth Health Action Team (YHAT), a program which earned the title of Extraordinary Program by the Arizona Library Association. The youth-centered project, hosted at Woods Memorial Library, offered teens an opportunity to work on media projects addressing the topics of youth mental health and helping to reduce the stigma associated with mental health challenges.

The interns, Keertana among them, completed 19 distinct projects, including a bookmark project that resulted in 14 bookmark designs with pro mental health messages that were printed and distributed; a community spotlight program where inspirational youth were

interviewed over Zoom; a poetry project where interns learned from the Tucson Poetry Society; an author interview at the Tucson Festival of Books; a weekly zine making workshop to support youth health called Lifeline; a monthly tech time for adult learners with technology questions; 3D printing of pro health messages; collage art; crochet art; screenwriting and more. The project culminated in a four-day Digital Storytelling Bootcamp in which participants created digital stories on the theme of resilience and belonging.

We sat down with Keertana to learn more about her experience on the team:

How did you learn about the Health Action Team?

I was first introduced to the team in an email from the library during my freshman year of high school. I had never seen a program with youth-driven action on mental health related topics. At the time, I didn't know how much the Youth Health Action Team would impact me, and the level of influence it would have on me and my community today.

Why did you decide to get involved?

At the time of the applications for YHAT, the Covid-19 pandemic was just ending and I realized there was a lack of resources and support in schools and that libraries could help bridge that gap. I was excited to be part of a team that could increase awareness and outreach. I wanted to be involved in a youth-driven program to better our community.

Did you learn anything new about yourself? If so, what?

Before I joined YHAT, I never realized the amount of power I had in impacting my community, especially as a highschooler. I learned that with lots of determination, hard work, and guidance, youth can achieve anything they put their minds to. In the future, I hope that other organizations continue to allow youth to advocate for the needs of their peers and community to better enrich our lives and provide the resources for all youth to be able to succeed in what they put their minds to.

Why do you think it's important for the Library to offer opportunities like this?

It is crucial to offer opportunities for youth to be able to speak up and influence decisions and programs that are affecting them in their day to day lives. After the Covid pandemic, there was a massive increase in youth mental health cases, and with programs like this, we can address it and help youth find the support they need. Programs like this allow youth to speak up about topics they are passionate about and to make a positive impact in our community no matter how big or small.

As an applicant to the Youth Health Action team, Keertana stood out for her reliability, good humor, insight, creativity and generosity." - Heather Severson, former PCPL Tween Services Librarian

WE WILL AMAZE YOU WITH ALL WE HAVE TO OFFER

Recognizing local, young artists!



Adventure in Space by Idary

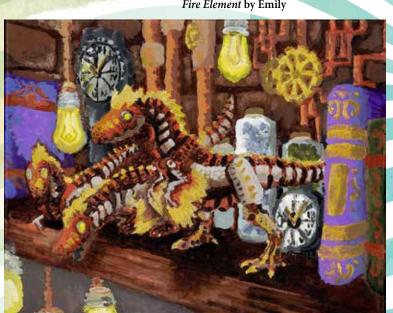
The annual Worlds of Imagination Art Showcase recognizes local, young artists for their 2D science fiction, fantasy, comics, or mangastyle artwork. In 2023, we received more than 150 submissions. All of the entries were displayed at Joel D. Valdez Main Library and the showcase culminated with a reception for the artists and their families.

The submitted pieces featured multiple mediums, including photography, digital art, watercolor, pen, ink, pencil, colored pencil, and marker.

Victoria Loving, an art teacher from La Cima Middle School, made Worlds of Imagination a project for her students. Speaking to KGUN 9 News, she said, "For students interested in pursuing art as a career, it's really good to start building a name in the community. Being able to see your artwork on display is important. The collaboration with Pima County Library has been positive... and simple. I'm thankful for the Library for making this possible."



Fire Element by Emily



The Mechanical Collection by Sofia



Salvation by Portia

"It's an exciting showcase and artists really enjoy seeing their work displayed. We encourage all students to participate!"

> – Alisa Wenker, Youth Services Librarian



Warp Speed by Tae

Produce, produce ... and more produce!

The PLAZA Mobile Market at Valencia Library is a collaboration between the Library and

The Garden Kitchen, the University of Arizona Cooperative Extension, and AZ Health

Zone. It launched in January 2024. The program saw great success in its first year!

Meredith Glaubach, Local Food System Coordinator for the Garden Kitchen, reports:

- We've infused the Sunnyside neighborhood with 3,600 pounds of food – 2,700 pounds of produce and 900 pounds of staple goods (bread and flour).
- We've supported the local economy by purchasing over \$10,000 of goods from local farmers and organizations. Over \$4,200 is going directly to small farmers in Tucson.
- We've had over 1,100 transactions, and on average 40% of sales are made with government benefits (Farmers Market Nutrition Program coupons, SNAP, or Double Up Bucks).



Community members

attending the PLAZA Mobile Market at Valencia Library



DID YOU KNOW?

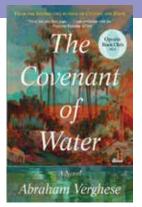
Another year, another one million digital checkouts!

Pima County Public Library reached a record-breaking one million digital book checkouts on July 23, 2023 ... more than a month before hitting one million the previous year! In 2024, the record was reached even earlier on June 9, 2024!

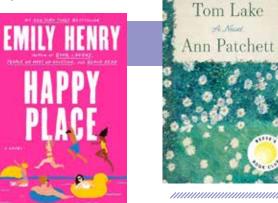
Top 5 eBooks







The Covenant of Water Abraham Verghese



Tom Lake Ann Patchett

Top 5 Audiobooks



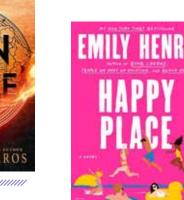
I'm Glad My Mom Died Jennette McCurdy



Fourth Wing Rebecca Yarros



Iron Flame Rebecca Yarros



Happy Place **Emily Henry**

Happy Place

Emily Henry

"We're very proud and excited to have reached this

milestone. Our community members are enjoying

digital content on the Libby app and it shows. It's

wonderful to know we're providing customers who

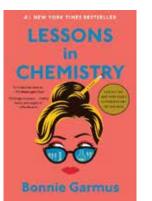
prefer digital materials with what they want most."

- Amber Mathewson

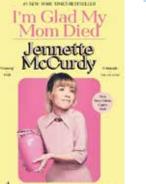
Pima County Public Library Director



Freida McFadden



Lessons in Chemistry Bonnie Garmus



Program impacts at the Juvenile Detention Center

DID YOU KNOW?

PCPL's library outpost program at the JDC has been serving the needs of detained youth for over 20 years. Last year, the youth in juvenile detention engaged in a range of library services and programs that reflect those available to their peers at library branches.

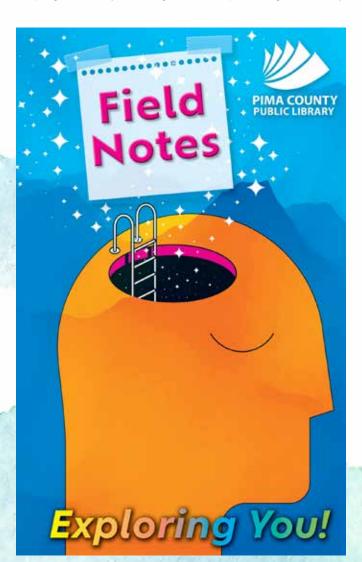
Interactive programs held included:

- Seed Library: What the heck is that?
- Library Card Boot Camp: Magical things to do with a library card!
- More than just 'hood books: Explore the wide world of book genres
- Holiday crafts and storytelling

In addition, every Wednesday youth enjoyed programs spanning reader's theatre and yoga to career readiness and art.

A laptop, portable smart monitor, and Pima-Staff Wi-Fi connection were added to the space, helping to assist youth to gain and improve digital literacy skills.

Last year, 56 youth (39% of those detained) left JDC with a library card in hand, ready to continue their journey of discovery.



Last year also saw the release of *Field Notes: Exploring You*, an expressive arts journal authored by Marge Pellegrino. Created specifically for the JDC program, *Field Notes* found a broader audience in the Library's Summer Learning program where it was offered to all Pima County tweens and teens.

All JDC youth receive a copy directly from the Librarian during their library orientation. After being encouraged to engage with *Field Notes*, many youth took advantage of this private, quiet space to explore and learn more about themselves. Here is what some of them said about the experience:

- "I write and draw in it. Drawing helps to escape reality."
- "I write in it daily. What I am thinking and some drawing."
- "(My therapist) told me I should keep a journal and write down my thoughts and feelings so this is where I can do that. I can get a second opinion on my own thoughts."
- "I write songs in it and describe my day... I will most definitely take it with me (when I leave detention)."



Stephanie Mitchell
Librarian-in-Residence Juvenile Detention Center

Free tax help at your library!

Tax help was offered by the AARP Foundation at six libraries. This free service was designed to support low to middle income taxpayers aged 50 and older. AARP membership, however, is not required.

Drumroll ... here is how much they helped!

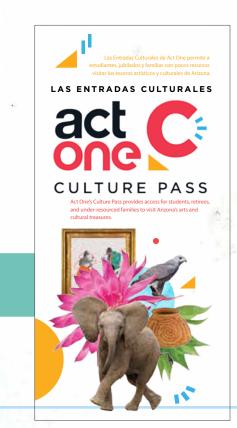
- D Federal Returns e-filed: 5,257
- D Questions answered: 1,407
- D Federal Refunds: \$9,620,953

Act One Culture Passes for the win!

Last year, we circulated **22,625** Culture Passes! The top five destinations? Drum roll...

- **₹** The Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum
- **♥** Reid Park Zoo
- **▼** Tucson Botanical Gardens
- **♥** Tohono Chul Park
- **♥** Tucson Museum of Art

Have you used a Culture Pass? Learn more and check 'em out today: library.pima.gov/culturepasses



Greatly appreciated: Hotspots & Chromebooks

Last year, we circulated hotspots and Chromebooks 565 times!

"I just wanted to take the time to thank you for all that you do. I am a single Mom and I live at the Gospel Rescue Mission. The laptop and smart spot program has been a true blessing for me. I have currently received my Peer Recovery Support certification and through you I will have a much greater chance of obtaining a career that will allow me to support my son and I as well as allowing me to live out my purpose and to also make a difference in our community by allowing me to live out my purpose to help others survive and thrive from homelessness and addiction." – *Anonymous customer*

Thank you to this year's contributors!

Since 2014, staff have shared their passion for the work they do and what the library means to them in a monthly column running in the Arizona Daily Star.



Elizabeth Taylor The best part of the best job is there's always new materials to buy. Not a single day passes without adding cool and interesting materials to PCPL's collection...and if you ever wondered who ordered ten different cookbooks about pie, well, that was me.



Paulina Aguirne-Clinch Sometimes we forget. Se nos olvida que ... "there is no shame in our parents' struggle, they show us what courage, resilience, and sacrifice look like. A veces se nos olivida how privileged we are to receive an education, have jobs we enjoy, have rights, and resources our parents didn't.



Kelsey Blackman are many other important aspects of my job, my most fun and fundamental

task is working with and around books. Being able to connect patrons to new books, old favorite books, and books they'd never try otherwise brings me the utmost joy.



Briana Turner My great grandma would often tell others that she wanted to be reincarnated as a librarian. If she were alive today, I think she'd be proud of me and maybe a little shocked to hear that librarians don't exactly spend their entire days reading.



Casey Short

We all deserve to be seen and supported by the people around us, no matter who we are. The Pride Team exists to make that possible. Having an entire library team dedicated to the LGBTQ+ community isn't just a fun exercise in finding the gayest romance novels; it's a symbol and a statement that we are not going anywhere.



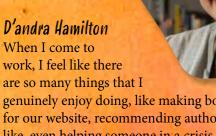
Christine Russell

When people ask me why the library isn't quiet anymore, I tell them it's because a library, while still a place to get and read books, is a community hub. We are the place for you to build trust with your neighbors, and to feel welcome as a newcomer, retiree, teen, or anyone in between.



Jon Meade

Working as a Career Support Librarian and a liaison between Career Online High School and the Library is to help connect people to information and resources. It's our mission to connect people to jobs just as much as it is to connect people to reading materials.



genuinely enjoy doing, like making booklists for our website, recommending authors I like, even helping someone in a crisis. I can't imagine an atmosphere I would love more.



So, what does the word "library" really mean? To me, it means energy, life, learning, community. It

Jen Glass

means opportunity. It means access. Where else can any member of the public find information, food, job help, computer help, homework help, arts and crafts programs, and more—all for free? Maybe what "library" truly means is the most democratic institution in our democracy.

We are an institution built to encourage lifelong learning, and as such we have something

for all ages and all walks of life. The library is ready and waiting to be explored by you, provided you take the first leap- and I, for one, can't wait to see you there!

23 / STAFF AND STAKEHOLDER CORNER PIMA COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY | 24

A voice for her unacknowledged tribe

Lorraine Eiler, an elder in her Hia-Ced O'odham community, served on the Pima County Public Library Advisory Board from April 2021 to December 2023. In her time on the board, she advocated for and helped shape the future of the library. We're grateful for her contributions!

In January 2024, Eiler was recognized in a story by John Washington that appeared in Arizona Luminaria. In it, he wrote about her donation of anthropological, archaeological, and ethnobotanical books to the Salazar-Ajo Library. Here is an excerpt from that story:

"It's all here at Lorraine Eiler's booth in the 3 Nations Market and Swap Meet in Ajo. Cigar boxes, Halloween lights, lavender sachets. A night-light angel playing a flute and a display of dusty Arizona Highways magazines. Also a stunning and heavily-beaded maroon flapper dress.

Lorraine is an elder in her Hia-Ced O'odham community.

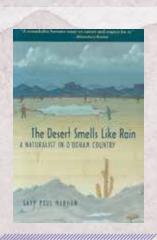
For as long as she can remember, she has advocated for her people. At 87, she is working as an alternate for the Tohono O'odham Legislative Council and is president of the International Sonoran Desert Alliance.

Lorraine is a local historian. A keeper of stories. Recognizing Hia-Ced O'odham people – their belongings and their lands – is how she makes it known that the U.S. federal government has failed to recognize her people and their lands as sovereign in Southern Arizona."

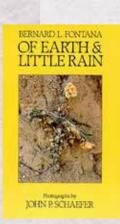
Continue reading the article at library.pima.gov/LorraineEilerArticle

Lorraine Eiler Collection

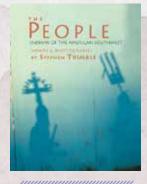
The Lorraine Eiler collection features nearly 200 titles that are kept for inlibrary use at Salazar-Ajo Library to ensure availability to community members.



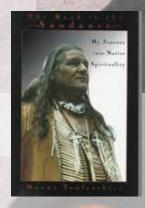
The Desert Smells Like Rain: A Naturalist in Papago Indian Country Gary Paul Nabhan



Of Earth and Little Rain: The Papago Indians Bernard L. Fontana



The People: Indians of the **American Southwest** Stephen Trimble



The Road to the Sundance Manny Twofeathers



STAFF AND STAKEHOLDER CORNER



library.pima.gov/LorraineEilerCollection



Shine on, GEMS!

Between December 2023 and June 2024, seven Library employees earned the title of Pima County GEMS.

An employee recognition program, the "We A.R.E. Gems" recipients are recognized for exemplary performance and customer service, and for upholding the County's values: Accountable, Respectful, Ethical.



Here's what their nominators had to say:

"Leslie White treats everyone with care and respect and is regularly complimented on her customer service skills. She takes pride in representing the Library and Pima County in her interactions with the public."

"Jane Devereaux is a professional and caring public librarian, enthusiastically planning and presenting weekly Storytimes and Babytimes, which draw huge crowds."

"Sandy White demonstrates excellent problem-solving skills, honors her commitments, and takes responsibility for projects and tasks assigned to her."

"Toby Wehner is thorough in everything he does. He takes a degree of care that makes him consistently stand out. He is an exemplary ambassador for Pima County."

"Vanessa Valencia's commitment to fairness and equity are admirable. She treats every individual she encounters with kindness and consideration, ensuring that all voices are heard and valued."

"Hassael Cazesuz genuinely embraces differences by recognizing the unique strengths and contributions of each individual, fostering collaboration and understanding."

"Holly Schaffer is at the forefront of the Library's work to highlight the voices of those who have not often had a voice. She excels at creating strong, lasting connections to fellow humans."



September 2023

Jane Devereaux, retired Children's Librarian



Holly Schaffer Community Relations Manager



Has<mark>sael Cazesuz</mark> Latinx Program Manager



December 2023
Leslie White, Administrative Specialist



Toby Wehn<mark>er</mark> Library Associate



June 2024
Vanessa Valencia
Administrative Support Specialist



Congrats to an outstanding, stigma-busting Mover & Shaker!



Matthew Landon

The Library wishes to congratulate Matthew Landon, Workforce and Economic Development Librarian in the Community Engagement Office.

This past year, Matthew was recognized by the Arizona Library Association (AzLA) and Library Journal for his work with young adults on the Youth Health Action Team (YHAT), a youth-led project that used art, writing, and the media arts to address the youth mental health crisis in Pima County. The YHAT was also recognized by the AzLA as an Extraordinary Program.

The AzLA named Matthew the Outstanding Young Adult Services Librarian, an award which is given to an individual who serves as a model for the important role Teen Services plays in public libraries. In a public statement, Matthew was praised for his work:

Librarian Matthew Landon has long served as a quiet, steady, and calm model for the impact a public Librarian can have on youth and vulnerable members of our community. Matthew has been an inspiring team leader for library colleagues, community partners, and the youth interns who participated in the Youth Health Action Team.

One example of his leadership was adeptly handling the emotional content that was shared by the interns during their structured conversations and expressive arts activities. Matthew gave support to one of the interns who experienced trauma by acknowledging what was shared, expressing positive support, and offering warm hand-offs to community resources that may be of help. A certified Youth Mental Health First Aid provider, Matthew brings empathy and skill to the sensitive emotional landscape of youth in our community.

Matthew also earned the title of Mover & Shaker in the Community Builders Category by Library Journal, the most trusted and respected publication for the larger library community. The award recognizes library staff nationwide whose work is deemed innovative, proactive, imaginative, and brave. The fifty recipients—a vibrant cohort of advocates, community builders, innovators, change agents, educators, and ban battlers from all corners of the field—demonstrate the many ways library values are being moved forward.

Of being named a Mover & Shaker, Landon says, "I'm honored to be recognized by Library Journal in this way. It's important to me to share my story, to reduce the stigma associated with having a mental health diagnosis, and to show people that you can succeed despite facing obstacles."

"Our 2024 Movers
represent a range of
innovative, proactive,
and supportive work;
they are imaginative
and kind and brave
in a world that needs
those qualities—and
the results they
produce—very much."

Lisa Peet
 Library Journa





27 | CONGRATS!

We appreciate you, too!

Thank you to all our customers who took the time to share with us what the library means to them.

These are just a fraction of the comments we've received this past year.



"Big selection, easy to locate what you want. Endless possibilities!"

"More folks should make use of our public library!"

"Free access to an amazing library with so many things to do." "I love the inclusive approach to books and community."

"My library is awesome!!! I tell everyone to go."

"I love libraries and to be frank, you don't have any competition." "I recommend the Pima County Public Library to people all of the time!"

"| always find what | need ... and things | didn't know | needed." "Terrific library with wonderful and extremely helpful staff. Always a pleasure to visit."

"You offer so much! Tickets, meditation, yoga, tech support, Kanopy, music, etc.!" "Being able to access everything from the comfort of my home never gets old or ceases to amaze me."

"Thank you for what you do. Thank you for not engaging people who want to take away books that represent all. Thank you for not falling under that kind of pressure. Thank you!"

"Everything is so easily navigated and if you can't find something there's always someone there that can help you."

"Courteous, welcoming library."

"Your libraries are magical places."

"It's everything! Right at your fingertips! I love it."

"It's the only game in town."

"PCPL is a fantastic resource that deserves endless praise."

"I <mark>dee</mark>ply appreciate the inc<mark>lusive environme</mark>nt and welcoming language used on signs."

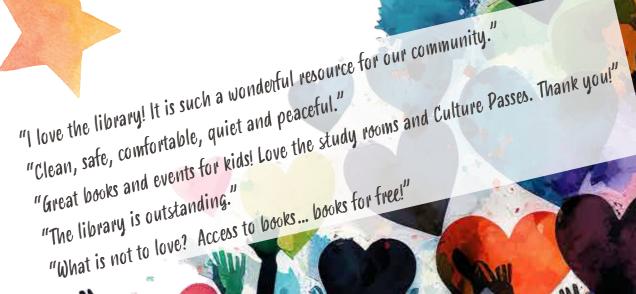
"I love the vibe. I always find something to take home to enjoy!"

"Programming for kids is heaven sent."

"PCPL gracefully demonstrates the ability to stay connected to the wider community."









"You are our Hometown Heroes!"

Libraries that received cookies:

Dusenberry-River

Eckstrom-Columbus

El Rio

Flowing Wells

Himmel Park

Murphy-Wilmot

Quincie Douglas

Sam Lena-South Tucson

Santa Rosa

Southwest

Valencia Wheeler Taft

Woods Memorial

Abbett Sr.

The Girl Scout Cookies for our Heroes program is a community supported effort. Girl Scouts Leia, Ari and Marley (The Begay Girls) of Troop #789 delivered over 180 boxes to places that are meaningful to them, including select library locations.

According to Tia, mother of The Begay Girls:

"When Troop #789 first started, we would hold our meetings at Quincie Douglas Library. The meeting space was free and allowed our families to come from many places to meet. Many of our troop families are avid patrons of our public libraries. Leia, Ari and Marley offered to deliver cookies as spokespersons to as many libraries as we could. They did this to let staff know that libraries are pillars in our community. Public libraries are places that support everyone in our community. You are our Hometown Heroes!

The cookies that libraries received were donated by the community to our troop. The 3 Begay girls raised over 180 boxes of cookies to donate to places that are meaningful to them.

The girls felt like library staff are heroes because they provide access to anyone who needs technology, information, a place to cool off, snacks, books, movies, games,

a safe place for families to enjoy time

for adults, and so much more.

together, education for children, skills

Anyone who works in our public libraries a HERO. Thank you for dedication and service to our community."



YOU'RE SO KIND!

"The wonders and goodness of this Girl Scout community, re-blessing the very people who shower them with support, are the feel-good stories of community we all need to hear! Their generosity in donating cookies to our heroes and beyond is a beautiful example of how kindness comes full circle. It's a powerful reminder that, together, we can make the world a better place through small acts of love and appreciation."

- "E" Elizabeth Locke-Thomas, Chief Mission Delivery Officer, Girl Scouts of Southern Arizona



"We can't wait to see what the future holds for them!"

By Madian Romero, Circulation Manager at Caviglia-Arivaca Library

At the Caviglia-Arivaca Library, we believe in fostering a welcoming and inclusive space for everyone, especially our teens and tweens. Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, we've worked hard to create programs tailored just for them. We want them to know that we're here for them. We have a teen section full of manga, comic and dystopian books. We offer craft programs, Homework Help, resume writing resources, and a Teen Advisory Board (TAB), which we hope will grow over time. We have lots to offer and we fear that teens don't know about it.

Our main goal is to let them know we're here for them and that we're trying our best to help them. This past summer, we supported two teenagers by providing them with work experience. Every summer, Pima County One-Stop Center sponsors the Summer Youth Internship program that gives youth an opportunity to work during the summer.

Jasmine is 15 years old; she just started high school and was looking forward to her automotives class. She's been a TAB member for almost two years. During one of the meetings, she learned about the program and the potential to work near home. Since Jasmine already knew the staff and enjoyed volunteering, she was excited to apply. She worked with us for 2 months!

When we asked her what she thought working at the library would be like, Jasmine said, "I thought there was going to be more shelving and less art. I got to decorate the library; I was not expecting that." Jasmine excelled at creating book nooks, which are miniature dioramas typically displayed on bookshelves. She made four for the library, each bringing a fun touch of creativity to our shelves! She also helped with library programs that we hosted at the Arivaca Community Center. "I'm not very extroverted, so having to be with a bunch of people was challenging. I'm not used to it."



Like Jasmine, Denalli, a 17-year-old with a passion for photography and graphic design, also joined us as an intern. Denalli has had babysitting jobs and works in her family business, a butcher shop. One of the staff members had asked her if she had any plans for the summer, and she said she wanted to get a job. That's when we introduced her to the program. Denalli said, "I wanted to try something new, so I didn't know what to expect." Her favorite part of the job was shelving. "It gave me something to focus on and was very calming."

Denalli was a huge help creating our popular outdoor activity, the Secret Garden Scavenger Hunt. We have a board outside with 10 pictures of little figurines or painted rocks that are hiding in plain sight in our garden. The goal is to find them and claim a prize from our treasure chest. Denalli helped design and come up with fun sentences to add to the scavenger hunt list. When asked what the most challenging part was about her job, she said getting the hang of it and getting used to doing things she never thought about before.

Multiple libraries hosted Summer Youth Interns, including Wheeler Taft Abbett Sr., Himmel Park, Flowing Wells, Sahuarita, and Valencia, among others.



Book Nool



Scavenger Hunt



Scavenger Hunt

They both agreed that they learned the importance of shelving correctly and the importance of alphabetization. Denalli enjoyed learning about Microsoft Publisher to make fliers and Jasmine enjoyed making all the awesome book nooks showing her growing creativity. Jasmine said, "Working here was a great first job for me, especially here in Arivaca. The librarians are friendly." Denalli adds, "It was easy and fun!" When asked if they would want to work at the Caviglia-Arivaca Library again in the future, they both said yes.

We loved having Jasmine and Denalli work with us. Hopefully we gave them the initial work experience they need for their future jobs and who knows... maybe they'll pursue a library career. We were so lucky to see another side of them that we normally don't get to see when they come in as customers. Hopefully, other youth in Arivaca will pursue the opportunities we can give them—from books and resources to a safe place to hangout.

We can't wait to see what the future holds for Denalli, Jasmine, and all the youth in Arivaca.





"They didn't treat me like I

was just a kid."

Daymin Casillas was a Summer Youth Intern at Sahuarita Library. At the culmination of his internship, he took the time to share these words with us about his experience at the library.

"I have learned many new things and skills by working in a library this summer. One of the first things that I learned was the Dewey Decimal System. This Dewey system is used for nonfiction books. I picked up on the Dewey Decimal system fast. I also picked up on putting the fiction books in the right order and I can sort the books easily now and put them in the correct spot.

Having a job at 14 is hard but it taught me that talking to customers is way different than talking to your friends. Working in a library was nice this summer because it was an inside job not a job outside in the heat. It is amazing that Sahuarita Library hosts so many events and activities each week. They host Read to a Dog on Monday and Wednesday. There are two dogs—one big and one small. They have crafts on Fridays, and they have so many more events throughout the year. It is good to see families coming in and attending these activities for babies and kids. There are events for teens, too.

It was nice to work in a place where people who haven't been inside before walk in and say that this library is nice. They have study rooms and more. It was hard to wake up early to come to a job in the summer, but my coworkers made it easier for me because they were all nice and appreciated me. The library is a great space to work in, especially with kind people. The library is a calm job and that made it easier to get up and go to work.

I also liked how my coworkers didn't treat me like I was a kid just because I am not that old or just an intern. They talked to me respectfully and treated me like I belonged there, too. I will miss my coworkers at the library, but I am going to try and get this job again next summer. I will come by the library here and there and say hi. I am grateful I got to spend another month here and I had a good time. It was great!"



Looking forward to 2025



Marissa Alcorta **Deputy Director of Community Engagement**

My name is Marissa Alcorta. I'm from Tucson but have strong family roots and connection to New Mexico. I've worked for Pima County Public Library for 16 years and have been a branch manager at Southwest, Sam Lena-South Tucson, and Quincie Douglas libraries. When I'm not working, I love spending time with family and chosen family/friends (cats and dogs included). I love connecting with nature and traveling when I can and have been known to binge a series or two over the weekend or listen to a paranormal podcast. I do love reading a good book and wish I made more time to do so! My favorite food is my mom's enchiladas and anything with New Mexico red or green chile. I have a deep commitment to equity work and advocacy and have focused much of my work in finding ways to break down systemic barriers and increase access to our resources and services. I hope to continue this work in my new role as the Deputy Director of Community Engagement.

Anthony Batchelder **Deputy Director of Finance and Facilities**

My name is Anthony Batchelder. I am originally from Carlsbad, CA and moved to Tucson in 2015 to obtain a Bachelor of Economics at the University of Arizona and continued my education to obtain my Masters in Agricultural and Resource Economics immediately after. I love to get outside and be active by exercising or playing sports, or just having fun at the park with my 3 kids (2 sons, 1 daughter). I am a huge sports fan and can watch almost everything (I love the competitive aspect, BEAR DOWN!). My favorite food is sushi, with pizza and tacos not far behind. I look forward to working with and having a positive impact on the Pima County Public Library and the Pima County organization!



Em De Meester-Lane **Deputy Director of Public Services and Customer Experience**

My name is Em DeMeester-Lane, and I am thrilled to join the Deputy Director team this year. I've worked for Pima County Public Library since 2008 starting out as a Library Associate while going to school for my MLS. My journey at the library has taken me to many locations from Dewhirst-Catalina to Valencia and everywhere in between. I've been honored to manage El Rio, Wheeler-Taft Abbett, Woods Memorial and Joel D. Valdez Main libraries before joining administration in 2022 as a Library Services Manager. In my

spare time I like to spend time with my wife and our three dogs especially the apple of my eye, my chihuahua, Professor Ichabod Biscuits. I love being outdoors and enjoy gardening and am an avid hiker and yoga enthusiast. Riding my bike to and from work is my favorite way to begin and end the day. My favorite reads are nonfiction audiobooks and LGBTQ+ literature. As for favorite foods, I'll always pick pizza! I have centered my library career in equity work especially in youth services, vulnerable populations and restorative practices. I am looking forward to continuing that work on a broader scale and finding creative ways to help support frontline library staff and our daily library users as Deputy Director of Public Services and Customer Experience.

35 | THANK YOU INTERNS!-LOOKING FORWARD TO 2025 PIMA COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY | 36

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