

DATE: November 6, 2025

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: Marissa Alcorta
Deputy Library Director

SUBJECT: Community Engagement and Support Services Report – October 2025

October was a busy month for outreach for many of the affinity teams, as well as staff from Youth and Adult Services. We had a difficult issue with the closing of Baker & Taylor, so I spent time with our TSV and CDO staff to help them in transitioning to other vendors for our book purchases. We are still assessing needs for more staff and space as processing will inevitably increase in house.

I was able to attend the AzLA conference October 22-24th at Casino del Sol and network with library professionals from around Arizona. It was great to make new connections, foster existing professional relationships, and learn about programming and organizational operations at libraries around the state. It is always a great way to renew and come back with new ideas and conviction on the continued importance of libraries to our communities.

Affinity Teams – Alina Rowe

Biblio Lotus:

Blog Post interview with Duncan Ryūken Williams about the Ireichō, a book monument containing the names of 125,284 individuals of Japanese ancestry unjustly incarcerated during World War II, to different camps and communities throughout the US, will be travelling to Poston and Gila River, Arizona in late October and beginning of November.

<https://www.library.pima.gov/blogs/post/we-must-stay-vigilant-and-not-let-history-repeat-itself/>

October is Chuseok and Autumn Festival for various cultures. Quincie and Bear Canyon each had bilingual story times on October 9th at Bear Canyon and 10th at Quincie.

Biblio Lotus and Nuestras Raices participated at the Tucson Meet Yourself on October 18th to celebrate Chinese Chorizo as part of the Chinese Chorizo Project. Members of both teams had cooking demonstrations featuring Chinese Chorizo and tabled with resources and information about each Affinity Team. <https://tucsonmeetyourself.org/performer/nuestras-raices-and-biblio-lotus-chosilog-cornbread-dressing-chorizo-style-as/>

October was Filipino American Heritage Month and one of the members created a booklist to commemorate it.

Nuestras Raíces:

We continued to celebrate Mes de la Cultura this month with outreach opportunities and highlighting programs celebrando nuestra cultura in our library system.

On October 18th, Pima County Public Library's Nuestras Raíces and Biblio Lotus collaborated with the Chinese Chorizo Project and Tucson Meet Yourself to highlight the intersectionality of our cultures through cuisine. Two members from our affinity teams demonstrated a family recipe featuring chorizo and discussed the labor of love that goes into the work we do as a team. Through this collaboration, we hope to honor the diverse cultural landscape of Tucson by capturing our intertwined heritage through the joy of cooking and chorizo. Mary Pastrana worked with CSO to create a lotería-themed booklet featuring the recipes from our members.

Our Latinx Services team attended the Arizona Library Association Conference on October 23rd. Local author Lydia Otero was the keynote speaker. A couple of the sessions we attended included Get Out (Reach) of the Library and Growing Readers, Growing Community. We plan to use the information we learned at the conference in our work.

On October 29th, our team attended Elvira Elementary's Skelebration. We gave out over 300 books including bilingual books.

Nuestras Raíces and Many Nations are collaborating with the Reading Seed Library at Literacy Connects. We are currently preparing for the first workshop of a three-part series which will offer opportunities for volunteers to hone intergenerational strategies and resources that will elevate reading practices. Many Nations will offer the first workshop in November.

Nuestras Raíces hosted our second in-person meeting at Woods Memorial Library. We reflected on the REFORMA Conference, Mes de la Cultura, and planning on programs and events around Día de los Muertos.

Our team continues to develop our panels for the Tucson Festival of Books. We attended the book and author committee meeting on October 6th and received training on the grid on October 16th.

Our team submitted a description of our work at the Tucson Festival of Books for the library's annual report on October 17th.

Interested in reading books by Latinx authors this spooky season, check out these booklists:

[Latina Witches \(a.k.a Brujas\)](#)

[Horror by Latine Authors Published in 2025](#)

Pride:

Autumn was a busy season for the Pride Committee! We tabled several outreaches, including: Queerd Science's Sonoran Sashay at Club Congress, Arizona Theatre Company's Pride Night, and Artistic InQUEERies. During Sonoran Sashay, Queerd Science donated \$550 to the Pride Committee; this is their third year in a row that they have supported our team. At Artistic InQUEERies, we connected with local queer artists and registered many new patrons for library cards. Patrons expressed how meaningful it was that we could register them under both their preferred and legal names, leading to several heart-to-heart discussions about chosen names. We also attended a monthly Breakfast with the Gaymber event, promoting PCPL and the Pride Team to local LGBTQIA+ businesses.

We also celebrated several October LGBTQIA+ observances, including October LGBTQ+ History Month, International Lesbian Day, National Coming Out Day, International Pronouns Day, Ace Awareness Week, and Intersex Awareness Day. We published staff book recommendations, Instagram posts, and even set up book displays at various branches.

On October 25th, we held our annual Pride Author Talk with TC Tolbert at Murphy-Wilmot Library. Now in its 28th year, our author talks expanded accessibility options by providing ASL interpretation and a virtual attendance option. TC Tolbert is Tucson's former poet laureate and holds regular poetry workshops for the Tucson queer community. We were excited to provide a welcoming and inclusive space for people to learn more about poetry and the LGBTQ+ experience.

Synapse Mental Health:

On October 11, the Synapse team hosted its first author talk event in honor of World Mental Health Day (October 10). Our featured author for this exciting event was cat rescuer, community organizer, and creator of @PoetsSquareCats on TikTok and Instagram, Courtney Gustafson, whose book 'Poets Square: A Memoir in Thirty Cats' debuted on the New York Times bestseller list this past spring.

The event took place at Martha Cooper Library, where 63 attendees listened to Courtney's vulnerable and passionate insights on mental health, animal rescue, and community. A representative from local bookstore Mostly Books attended to facilitate a book sale and signing with Courtney. Staff and volunteers from the Humane Society of Southern Arizona attended as well, sharing information and resources about caring for feral felines and introducing visitors to 3 precious kittens available for adoption.

Local artist Audrey De La Cruz, known as Annotated Audrey, created an exclusive coloring page for us to distribute at the event, featuring 3 cats sitting atop a stack of books, crowned with the affirmation 'You Are Purr-fectly Enough'. Attendees were smitten with the design!

The 4 Synapse team members staffing the event enjoyed connecting with patrons and sharing information about our team and our work within Pima County Public Library and wider Pima County community. At our info table, we shared branded swag included brain-shaped stress balls, bookmarks, pens, stickers, and more, as well as a brand-new Mental Health Safety Plan template that individuals can complete and refer to in moments of crisis.

This event was a great success, and we are looking forward to planning more author talk events in the future!

URL for event: <https://pima.bibliocommons.com/events/68b8b6434dd6ed48004e4968>

Welcome to America:

The Welcome to America team has been invited into important community spaces in recent months as agencies and providers face impending cuts to resources and programs. One notable example included representation at the Community Collaboration Meeting, hosted by Tucson Police Department (TPD.) Typically held at least twice per year, Tucson Police Department invites the many stakeholders who serve refugee communities to come together to discuss many of the challenges faced by those in this status as they become members of the Tucson community.

Many challenges exist for new community members, including barriers to obtaining legal identification, lack of affordable housing and navigating the systems used when receiving public benefits, just to name a few. The library is a valued participant, and this meeting afforded an opportunity to spread the word widely about free printing services for those receiving benefits, helping to alleviate one of the many barriers these community members face. Representatives from the National Center for Policing Equity were in attendance and presented on their organization and the ways in which they work directly with TPD toward ensuring Tucson law

enforcement is working from a place of inclusivity and support. Our team plans to attend these meetings in future as they are valuable in creating connections in this larger community of practice.

Meheria Habibi, Director of the International Rescue Committee's (IRC) Tucson office, and her team have been meeting semi regularly with many stakeholders, including our Welcome to America team chair, as the realities our immigrant community members will face starting in November continue to become evident. The Welcome to America team has leveraged and fostered positive relationships with all three primary resettlement agencies, IRC, Lutheran Social Services Refugee Program and Catholic Community Services Migration, Refugee, Tax and Asset Services Department.

Beginning in November, legislative changes will impact most of those receiving public benefits, starting as early as November 1st. As a safe space, libraries are likely to see more community members seeking supplementary support and resources. These agencies understand the importance of libraries in moments such as these and are planning to offer public forums providing community members with information and support around topics like public benefits programs and immigration process supports. The Welcome to America team and Martha Cooper library will host the first of these forums in November in partnership with the three primary resettlement agencies mentioned.

Kindred:

The Kindred Team held their monthly meeting at the beginning of the month, in which they began planning their goals for the next calendar year and for the team's future in general. With the coordination of the Communications & Systems Office, they were able to send 1500 copies of their Books Invited to the Cookout publication to bookstores and libraries across Arizona. Their regular ongoing book club, Read Black, meets the fourth Saturday of the month. The meeting on the 25th will be a book share, in which attendees will offer recommendations of their recent reads by Black authors that center the Black community.

Many Nations:

Three staff members: Lindsey, Kristen, and Mylo attending the 2025 International Conference of Indigenous Archives, Libraries, and Museums in Cherokee, NC (October 7-9). Lindsey and Kristen co-presented a one-hour session titled "Developing Indigenous Community Services in Public Libraries." The presentation offered a model that Lindsey created to explain how their team navigates Public Librarianship to serve Indigenous patrons throughout Pima County. The presentation discussed how Library and Information Science (LIS) can help bring Indigenous and non-Indigenous community members together through beautiful and thoughtful programming, outreach events and partnerships. The presentation was intended to encourage and to demonstrate to other Library Practitioners across the country that Indigenous Knowledge Systems can work symbiotically with more Western Scientific based approaches in LIS. Examples of this work were provided by pictures throughout the presentation, printed handouts of the model, as well as swag/giveaway items to inspire others to create their own library materials for their communities. All staff attended and participated in sessions around Librarianship, archives, and oral histories and connected to other practitioners in the nation as a resource of information to this work.

Additional resource: https://libguides.ala.org/ld.php?content_id=81700744

The Many Nations team has ongoing projects they are working on:

- Partnership and preparation with Literacy Connects to do informative Storytime demonstrations with LC's coaches and volunteers, a professional development series

entitled “Reading with Purpose: A Series on Intentional Storytelling for Community Enrichment” throughout 2025/2026. Many Nations will organize workshops that highlight various cultures & heritage with other Affinity Teams. These offerings will create opportunities to hone intergenerational strategies and resources that will elevate LC volunteer practices. Lindsey will kick off and facilitate Many Nations’ demonstration entitled “An Offering: Recipes of Gratitude and Cultural Resources” with *Fry Bread: A Native American Family Tradition* by Kevin Maillard with support from Admin Liaison Alina Rowe and Many Nations team member Mary Pastrana.

- Poetry fall-zines in the works for Indigenous Heritage Month 2025 at the branch level, created by Lindsey.
- AZ Humanities MOA grant: signed MOA returned 10/1
- October meeting w Sarah Evins to discuss Indigenous Children programming for Indigenous Heritage Month
- Working on a release party to highlight the collection donated to the Ajo-Salazar Library by O’odham elder Lorraine.
- Created 13 titles into an "Indigenous Joy" booklist that hasn't been published yet.
- Gathering Indigenous-authored books together for two Indigenous Heritage Month displays, one in the children's section and one in the adult section.
- Reached out to New Pascua for potential Spread the Wealth drop off
- Plan to have a small lantern making activity as well as distribute free books and Many Nations swag.

Adult Services/Workforce and Economic Development-Ken Zambos

The Community Engagement Office works closely with library partners to coordinate programming at libraries. This involves scheduling presentations and designing and arranging for publicity through flyers we create and through the efforts of PCPL’s marketing department.

We made service to seniors in the community a focus for October. We coordinated Scam Prevention workshops at four libraries presented by Tucson Police Department Volunteers and Pima County Sheriff’s Auxiliary Volunteers where seniors learned how to spot common email, phone and internet fraud. We arranged for Pima Council on Aging to conduct cognitive screenings for seniors following two of the Scam Prevention workshops. These non-diagnostic screenings are designed to identify possible cognitive decline. We worked with Osher Lifelong Learning Institute to have one of their presenters give a two-hour in-depth intro at Quincie Douglas Library to Medicare and how Medicare coordinates with Social Security.

We invited a representative from Pima Council on Aging (PCOA) to our Adult Services meeting on October 3 to introduce their organization to library staff and coordinate referrals to PCOA. Pima Council on Aging plays a vital role in the Tucson and Pima County community by offering a broad network of programs and resources designed to support older adults, caregivers, and families. Through services such as in-home support (like PimaCare at Home, home repair, and meal delivery), caregiver support groups and training, Medicare assistance, health and wellness classes, housing and transportation assistance, and legal and financial planning resources, PCOA helps seniors maintain independence, dignity, and quality of life. They also maintain an extensive resource directory of over 1,700 services in Pima County.

CEO staff participated in the planning committee and attended the DREAM Workshop on October 23 and the DREAM Job Fair on October 28, serving people with disabilities and connecting them to resources and job opportunities. We set up computers and a printer for online job applications

and resume help and participated in resume review and mock interviews. 26 people have graduated from Career Online High School so far this year with 46 people actively enrolled. There were 126 requests for loanable technology in September, more requests than for the spring and summer months.

Collection Development/Support Services – Kate DeMeester-Lane

The library world experienced a major shift during the month of October, with the closure of the leading vendor for library materials and shelf ready processing, Baker & Taylor. We are fortunate to already have additional materials vendors on contract. Many libraries throughout the country relied solely on B&T and are now having to go through the process of opening new accounts with other vendors. We are working with our remaining vendors to get a realistic sense of their capacity for fulfilling orders, and while we don't have many firm answers yet, we are optimistic that we will find our way through this challenge. We do expect some disruption to the delivery of new materials for customers and are focusing on how to continue to provide as many materials as possible, as quickly as possible. We are planning frequent communication with staff and the public and will share solid information as we have it.

Youth Services - Monique Perez

October has been a busy month for the Community Engagement Office and Youth Services Team attending a variety of outreach events, especially trunk or treats and fall festivals. On October 18, we attended the Spooktacular Safety Fair at Tucson Medical Center Rincon where we shared 785 books and 550 fun bookmark timers with young people of all ages.

On October 7, many staff and community members attended the screening of "The Librarians" at The Loft Cinema. The sold-out show featured a post-film Q&A with PCPL librarians Monique, Jessica, and Perri, as well as a table hosted by Leila (Student Support Librarian) and Roberto "Tito" (Community Engagement Manager – Youth Services), sharing a variety of library resources, including information about the Top 10 Most Challenged Books of 2024 and Banned Books Week.

Members of our team had the opportunity to attend two conferences this month. Lindsey (Birth-8 Librarian) attended and co-presented at the 2025 International Conference of Indigenous Archives, Libraries, and Museums in Cherokee, NC (October 7-9). Community Engagement Office team members also attended the 2025 Arizona Library Association (AzLA) Annual Conference here in Tucson (October 24-25). The theme of this year's AzLA Conference was Arizona Blooming: How Libraries Empower Community.