

## FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY BOOKSTORE SUPPORTS NUMEROUS LIBRARY PROGRAMS

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The month of August provided many reasons to get excited — students returning to school, the first hints of cooler weather ahead and a little eclipse to which a handful of people paid attention. For me, every August is a special time because of the annual meeting of the Friends of Redwood City Public Library board to review funding requests from library staff.

The Friends recently approved \$97,190 for library activities and events for the 2017–18 year, an impressive amount of financial support for key library programs. Remarkably, most of the funds come from a used bookstore in the lobby of the Downtown Library, staffed by a crew of very dedicated volunteers who sort, price and sell the hundreds of gently used hardcover and paperback books, DVDs and CDs that are donated every single day.

With books for all ages, including seasonal specials — available in the store; at pop-up sales at community events like Kidchiella (come see them when local favorite Andy Z. performs on Courthouse Square Sept. 10), the Fourth of July festival and the library's annual Kindercard celebration; and online via Amazon and eBay — the Friends sell thousands of books per year to raise money for some of the library's most popular activities.

The summer learning challenge is the annual centerpiece of library programming, with weekly education and entertainment events for the whole family at all four library locations, incentives to keep kids reading throughout the summer, and a fun celebration of everyone's reading achievements at the end. This year, over 23,000 children signed up — that's over half the kids in Redwood City and North Fair Oaks combined!

Many other programs for youth and families receive generous support: monthly cultural and holiday celebrations at all four libraries, the annual Kindercard outreach effort to make sure every kinder in Redwood City and North Fair Oaks gets a library card, and Traveling Storytime, which utilizes volunteers to read weekly stories in about 50 daycares and preschools. Dame la Mano/Hand in Hand is a new bilingual program targeted to children 18 months to 3 years old with speech delay, autism or other special needs. The Friends sponsor an annual author visit to multiple Redwood City schools, making

sure every student receives a book signed by the author. Fair Oaks Library gets its own allocation to provide craft activities, coding workshops, cultural events and STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and math) programs, all tailored to the local neighborhood.

In addition to children's programs, the Friends also fund activities for the Teen Center (activities centered on food, comic books or technology are especially popular!). Adults aren't left out, with tai chi, Kaiser health lectures, Phase2Careers workforce development programs, musical performances ranging from jazz to world music to indie rock, author lectures and more.

The Friends support the library's online users as well, funding Brainfuse, which offers subject-expert online tutors for students from grades K through college from 1 p.m. to 10 p.m., seven days per week. Discover and Go is another online resource that allows cardholders to download free and reduced-price passes for dozens of Bay Area museums and cultural institutions.

The next time you buy a book from the Friends bookstore, you can not only enjoy the fact that you got a great deal, but you can know just how much good you did for the community as well!

*Editor's note: This article and information is supplied by Derek Wolgram, library director at the Redwood City Public Library.*