

NEIGHBORHOOD BRANCH LIBRARIES REFLECT LOCAL COMMUNITIES

In addition to the flagship downtown Redwood City Public Library, three smaller neighborhood branches provide services tailored to individual communities, and each library has a history as unique as the neighborhoods they serve. The Schaberg Branch Library, located on Euclid Avenue near Roosevelt School and Key Market, is the only Redwood City branch library located west of El Camino Real. Named for Herman Schaberg, San Mateo County clerk from 1903 to 1907, the branch was built as the result of a \$20,000 bequest to the library by Mrs. Hannah Schaberg in memory of her late husband. The branch opened in 1957.

Schaberg is popular early in the day with neighborhood seniors who don't drive or don't like to drive downtown, although young families also enjoy the storytime programs every Tuesday and Wednesday, and every other Saturday. After school lets out, a number of Roosevelt students can be found in the library, and an intensive after-school homework support program in partnership with local nonprofit Generations United and Redwood City Parks, Recreation and Community Services serves the needs of these youth.

The Fair Oaks Branch Library has served its neighborhood since 1974. Originally opened in the Fair Oaks Community Center in 1974, it moved to its current location in the County Human Services

Agency building in 1995. Because of its location on the border of the City of Redwood City and the North Fair Oaks community in unincorporated San Mateo County, the library is jointly funded by the San Mateo County Libraries joint powers authority and the city.

At 3,200 square feet, Fair Oaks is the smallest library branch in the Redwood City Public Library system, but an expansion is planned to begin in the next few months to create space for a dedicated teen area, an early-childhood learning activity center designed to look like an old-fashioned farmers market truck, and more space for popular children's programming like storytimes, STEAM programs and cultural celebrations.

Because Fair Oaks has a large concentration of low-income residents, many of the library's technology initiatives to bridge the digital divide, such as wireless hotspots and early-literacy iPads that users can take home, are based at this branch. Fair Oaks Branch also serves a large concentration of Spanish-speaking residents, and all of the regularly assigned staff at the branch are bilingual.

The newest branch library in Redwood City is the Redwood Shores Branch, which opened in 2008 in a scenic spot adjacent to the Belmont Slough and the Bay Trail. Featuring a museum-quality interpretive center about the wildlife and environment of the San Francisco Bay, a café, several community meeting rooms, dedicated spaces for children and teens, and an

automated sorting system to help manage the heavy circulation of materials, Redwood Shores is the largest and busiest neighborhood branch.

Looking forward, the Redwood Shores library has two projects in the works to continue to ensure that it meets community needs. The first is a fundraising campaign by the Redwood City Library Foundation to update the interpretive center with modern technology that will provide for more interactivity and more flexibility in updating or changing the information displayed. Library staff partnered with a group of students from Design Tech High School, who will soon be the library's neighbors across the slough, to do the design thinking work to inform the changes that will best respond to customer needs.

Another upcoming project is the creation of an outdoor play structure to be located near the library, which will feature a public art piece called the Pirate Ship by internationally known artists Ilya and Emelia Kabakov. The Pirate Ship will be secured by enclosing the play structure for children's use, will sit in an open area alongside the Bay Trail, will meet the community need for a recreational opportunity, and has great synergy between the playground theme and the nautical theme of the Redwood Shores library.

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