

NEW YEAR, NEW PROGRAMS AT REDWOOD CITY PUBLIC LIBRARY

H

appy New Year! Here's hoping you had a restful and festive holiday season. As we move into 2018, the library has several new innovative programs launching that will continue our work to meet the needs of the Redwood City and North Fair Oaks communities.

Early literacy

The library recently launched a new bilingual online service for children called ABC Mouse, which is an interactive and engaging resource with over 3,500 fun-filled interactive books, educational games, puzzles and other learning activities for children ages 2 to 8. Children can learn and explore in a safe, secure, comprehensive and engaging online educational environment. In addition to providing access on library computers, the library also has ABC Mouse licenses available for checkout for home use, and the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative provided 10 ABC Mouse iPads for home checkout from the Fair Oaks Library.

Another new initiative that will launch on Jan. 7 is providing access to Starling Early Engagement Kits. Research has demonstrated that one of the most significant factors in young children's development is the number of words they hear before they reach age 5. The Starling device is essentially a Fitbit for words, counting the number of words a child hears and providing feedback to caregivers

to let them know whether they are reading, singing and rhyming with their young children enough to reach their personal goals. The devices work in any language, and the kits include books to read with kids, developmental toys, recommended activities and a copy of the book *Brain Rules for Babies* to help educate parents.

Wireless hot spots for home checkout

Late in 2017, the library began lending Wi-Fi hot spots for home use in an effort to help bridge the digital divide. For families with no home internet connections or limited data plans for mobile devices, the hot spots provide wireless access for up to 15 devices and can be checked out for three weeks at a time from either the Fair Oaks Branch Library or the Downtown Library.

Social service office hours

The library, in partnership with the Redwood City Police Department and San Mateo County Behavioral Health and Recovery Services, has been exploring opportunities to provide more proactive support to homeless residents and other marginalized individuals who frequent the Downtown Library. A pilot program will launch in January for community partners offering social services to provide "office hours" out of the Small Conference Room. To begin, Street Life Ministries will have staff available from 10 a.m. to noon on the second Tuesday

of the month, and LifeMoves will be present 10 a.m. to noon on the fourth Tuesday of the month.

Fair Oaks Library renovations

Construction is anticipated to begin early in 2018 to renovate and expand the Fair Oaks Branch Library. By increasing from 3,200 to 3,800 square feet and rearranging existing spaces, the renovation will provide additional space for a dedicated teen area with technology similar to what's available at the Downtown Library teen space, an expanded area for children's programming, numerous additional electrical outlets for customers to plug in laptops or device chargers, a smaller yet more ergonomic service desk for staff, and a children's interactive play area modeled after a farmers market truck, which will help kids develop early literacy skills in English and Spanish while also educating them about food and nutrition. The library will be closed for three to four months for the construction, and we will open a small temporary space in the Fair Oaks Community Center to provide access to technology, library staff and a very small collection of materials.

These initiatives are just a sampling of the new offerings from the Redwood City Public Library in 2018. Be sure to visit redwoodcity.org/library to learn what else is happening at the library!

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