

**San Antonio Public Library
Director's Report
February 27, 2008**

Administration

Director's Office

On January 22, Library Director Ramiro Salazar made a presentation on library services to the Bexar County Commissioners Court, in continuation of the process to negotiate a new county library services contract. Library Board Chair Jean Brady, and members of SAPL's management team accompanied the Director at this presentation.

On January 23, Mr. Salazar met with staff from the San Antonio Capital Improvements Management Services Department to discuss the selection of architectural design consultants for 2007 Bond library projects, as well as estimates for further work to be done on the Cortez Branch Library. That afternoon, he served as master of ceremonies for a news conference in the Central Library Youth(wired) Department to recognize the contributions of the Citibank Foundation. Citibank donated funds for upgraded electronics and new furniture in Youth(wired).

Mr. Salazar was interviewed for the January 25 issue of the San Antonio Business Journal, discussing 2008 library capital projects.

Mr. Salazar met with District 4 City Council Representative Philip Cortez to discuss issues related to Internet filters. Informational sessions on this topic are being planned for the Library Board of Trustees, as well as library staff.

Accompanied by Board Chair Jean Brady and Board Trustee John Nicholas, Mr. Salazar and Senior Management Analyst Jessica Ramos attended the Mayor's State of the City address on January 24.

On January 28 Mr. Salazar met with new District 3 City Council Representative Jennifer Ramos to update her on the library generally and library projects in her district specifically. He also met with representatives from the San Antonio Jewish Federation and the Jewish Community Center to discuss the upcoming "Letters from Sala" exhibit.

On February 12, Mr. Salazar participated on a panel to interview potential architectural firms for the new District 3 branch library project.

On February 14, SAPL received a Valentine's Day gift as Mr. Salazar and Library Foundation Chairman Guillermo Nicolás accepted delivery of the Botero sculpture at the airport. The sculpture, which is still in its crate, has been placed in the lobby of the Central Library to generate interest about what is happening next at the library. The crate has been decorated with quotations about horses.

February 15 was somewhat sad for the library, since it was the last day for Assistant Director of Public Services Mark Gretchen, who retired to complete his book on Negro League Baseball star player "Smokey Joe" Williams. In the morning, library staff said goodbye to Mr. Gretchen with a breakfast reception at the Central Library, and at noon, Mr. Gretchen was honored at a luncheon with other COSA Executive Team members.

Library Services Administrator Kendra Trachta has been appointed Interim Assistant Director for Public Service.

Staff is finalizing plans for the implementation of the expansion of branch service hours related to the staffing plan initiative. By way of background, the Staffing Plan funded in FY2008 which added twelve (12) positions included a public service enhancement component that will enable the Library to expand branch service hours by four (4) additional hours a week per branch location. The implementation date for the expansion of branch service hours is scheduled for Monday, March 24, 2008. A public awareness campaign to inform the public of the new branch hours will be initiated on March 3.

Automation

The information technology network has been upgraded for all branch libraries. Upgrade of the Central Library network is currently being planned. One hundred twenty desktop computers have been ordered to replace outdated computers that have failed and the oldest public-service computers in operation. Two Toughbook laptop computers have been received and are in the process of being deployed to support outreach initiatives and remote issuance of library cards. Printer service coin box services have been implemented on the first and fifth floors of the Central library for pre-deployment testing. Branch rollout of this service is anticipated to begin in the coming weeks.

Branch Services

In January, the Branch Services Coordinators worked on a number of projects. A training session for book discussion leaders was planned. Both coordinators have been working with other library systems around the country and the ALA to gather data about their use of Internet filters. Joel Bangilan led the Intellectual Freedom portion of the New Employee Orientation week.

Mr. Bangilan also attended a number of professional development seminars, including COSA Supervisors Basics, the Library's EPDP training, and the book discussion workshop.

Both Mr. Bangilan and Ms. O'Hara made site visits to branches they supervise to connect with staff as a part of their weekly routine to meet in the field with the Branch staff.

Children's Services

Library outreach to children in preschools and child care centers continues to grow. Children's librarians from four branches have begun to work with Avance San Antonio, the local provider of Early Head Start services. The librarians will provide monthly storytime sessions and deliver books to the sites for use in the classrooms between visits. Similar arrangements are in place for ten Parent Child, Inc., Centers, the local Head Start providers.

These outreach visits are supported by a special type of library card, the Youth Outreach card. In the month of January, 953 books were checked out to child care centers and preschools through this type of card. Children's staff is optimistic that the number of children accessing books via outreach efforts will continue to grow in the coming months.

The staff was happy to welcome Karen Sebesta to the children's position at Johnston and Ruth Turner to the children's position at Brook Hollow. Karen comes to SAPL with extensive experience as a school librarian, while Ruth brings her experience working in library programming at the Westbank Community Library in Austin.

Little Read Wagon

On January 29 Little Read Wagon began a second series of *Para los niños* programs. The crowd at the Pan American Branch Library became so large that it was necessary to offer two back-to-back sessions. LRW staff thanks the Pan American staff for their flexibility and willingness to accommodate such a big, and at times rambunctious, group of families!

Little Read Wagon staff had the privilege of presenting storytime at the Brook Hollow Branch Library during the transition between children's librarians. Corinne Sánchez provided a lapsit program on Tuesday, February 19. Cresencia Huff filled in for the Wednesday morning storytime programs. It was a thoroughly enjoyable experience to interact with the Brook Hollow customers and staff.

On February 14 Julia Lazarin and Corinne Sánchez joined Elma Nieto-Rodríguez at the Region 20 Education Service Center's "Parent Super Summit." They had the opportunity to distribute library and early literacy information, and issued a few library cards. Nearly 200 parents visited their booth.

Early childhood professionals gathered for a teacher workshop at the Central Library on February 23. This was the premier of the new "Early Literacy with Everyday Experts" program. Current classroom teachers from high-quality facilities shared ideas for building literacy skills via books, puppets and props. The "Everyday Experts" then guided small groups of teachers in the creation of appropriate puppets and props to use with the selected books. Little Read Wagon staff presented an introduction to early literacy skills, and provided support to the entire group throughout the workshop.

Public Relations

The Public Relations office was happy to welcome graphic designer Tiffanie Wilson, who has been hired on a temporary basis. Tiffanie graduated from the University of the Incarnate Word with a degree in journalism, and during her college years held internships with several San Antonio television stations. Prior to coming to the library, Tiffanie worked for Overland Associates Architects. She will be assisting with major 2008 projects such as The Big Read, the library card campaign, and the Letters from Sala exhibit.

Much of Public Relations Manager Beth Graham's schedule has been taken up with coordinating publicity for The Big Read 2008. Partnerships have been formed with VIA Metropolitan Transit, which will display Big Read ads in buses, and the *Express-News*, Texas Public Radio and KLRN Television, which will all donate advertising in addition to that purchased by the library. The Big Read has already received two mentions in the *Express-News*.

To create interest and excitement around the arrival of the Botero sculpture, it has been left in its crate, which is displayed in the Central Library lobby, covered with quotations about horses. The crate received a mention in Ed Tijerina's *Express-News* column on February 22.

Ms. Graham coordinated the January 23 news conference in Youth(wired) to unveil the technology donations made by the Citibank Foundation. The event was covered by KENS-TV, KSAT-TV and WOAI-TV.

On February 14, Ms. Graham met with HEB's Diversity Specialist Melissa Vela-Williamson to discuss possible partnerships.

Graphics Designer Ana Farr has been on a design marathon, creating art for the Black History Month calendar, the César Chávez celebration calendar and the Big Read.

Kudos to staff - Customer comments

"As an avid reader, English teacher, and graduate student, I spend much of my time in libraries. Hence, I utilize local college libraries and several branches of the San Antonio Public Library. One in particular has become my favorite – the **Forest Hills Library**. Please recognize the superior service of the employees there, specifically **Robert [Zapata]**, **Denise [Johansson]**, and **Marcia [Valvo]**, whose help with research and materials has been outstanding.

"As I often place materials on hold or use [Interlibrary Loan], I now choose to pick them up at the Forest Hills Library because the staff is wonderfully competent and friendly. My 12-year-old niece,

who often accompanies me, tells me it is her favorite too. She participates in the summer reading program every year and prefers to register at Forest Hills, regardless of her proximity to another branch.

“Mr. Salazar, the Forest Hills Branch is an excellent place which exemplifies the meaning of library – a place to gather information, sit for study, connect to the Wi-Fi, learn with the community, and escape into the pages of literature and film. Sincerely, **Patricia Portales,**” January 18

“I was so lost when I came to the library looking for any information I could find on preserving persimmons. A dear girl, **Jessica Jones** [*The Tobin Library at Oakwell*], assisted me most graciously and came up with the idea to go to Google after she had already searched in vain for my particular subject. She found an abundance of info and was so kind in sharing everything. She is terrific!! Give the girl lots of money. Sincerest regards.” – **Barbara Arnold,** January 22

“I had a friend who had an old, falling-apart article from 1972 about her grandparents. I decided to ask Andy Crews [*Texana/Genealogy*] to see if it was possible to find the original article and get a copy of it for my friend. I was amazed at how quickly he responded with a PDF of the article! Too cool!! What a great service the library provides. And, Mr. Crews was very professional and prompt with his response.” – **Linda Brazil,** January 23

“...we went out to the **Thousand Oaks Branch** last night; my daughter who is seven had her first research project on the Greek goddess Hera, and the lady at the research desk was so wonderful, helping her use the computers to look up information, and helping her find books, and in doing so really having Katie feel as if she was a real scholar. I wish I had gotten her name, but she did a wonderful job. Thanks again!” – **Curtis A. Ruder,** Financial Accountant III, City of San Antonio Department of Finance, January 29

Central Library

Children’s Department

The sad news in the Central Children’s Department is that Rosa Vásquez resigned from her position as Library Assistant this month. Fortunately, the remaining staff members are rising to meet the demands for service with a spirit of good will and cooperation.

The good news is that the lighting in the computer area has been enhanced, yielding a much improved functionality to the area. The alcove across from the main elevator has received enhanced lighting as well. This new lighting, along with the installation of floor-to-ceiling safety glass in the alcove’s window slot is allowing for the reconstruction of the “Kiva,” the round seating unit that was displaced during earlier departmental renovations. When the Kiva reinstallation is complete, customers exiting the elevator will find a much safer and more welcoming environment.

Circulation

The Central Circulation Unit has continued to produce the overdue, hold notice and bill mailers for San Antonio Public Library. For the month ending January 2008, the Unit transmitted 33,536 overdue/hold/bill notice electronic mail messages. Additionally, 23,165 overdue/hold/bill mailers were printed and processed. The task is accomplished through the teamwork of the entire circulation staff.

Reference

On February 6, the University of Texas Health Science Center Libraries presented two training sessions for SAPL staff on the National Library of Medicine’s PubMed service. Forty-three staff

members attended from the Central Library and several branches. Two additional sessions on MedLine and other consumer-oriented online resources from the National Library of Medicine were offered on February 27. This training is part of SAPL's collaboration with UTHSC libraries on the Express Outreach Grant from the National Library of Medicine. Natasha Arguello, Jimmy Jiménez, Adam Spana and Sally Bauer submitted an application for this grant on February 1.

Carmen Roja and Pannaga Prasad were invited to participate in the Annual College Access Conference, "Road to Success 2008: a Transition from High School to College," presented by the San Antonio Education Partnership at Our Lady of the Lake University on February 2. There were workshop sessions led by presenters from colleges and universities, high schools, the business community, Partnership scholarship recipients, and alumni. They attended sessions and established contacts to present a similar program for the San Antonio Public Library. The conference also provided an opportunity for exhibitors to share information. Carmen and Pannaga represented SAPL in the exhibitor's section, distributing bookmarks promoting Tutor.com and information on databases for students and teachers and the Learning Express Library. The attendance was nearly 1,500 students and parents, representing more than 18 high schools.

Diana Starrett and Pannaga Prasad organized a program about insurance, "Are You Covered?" presented by Citibank Financial Center Manager Juan Solís. Mr. Solís discussed the basics of insurance coverage and how to plan for unexpected events and provided hand-outs for attendees to take home.

Technical Services

The Technical Services managers developed new procedures on the handling of shelf-ready materials ordered from Baker and Taylor with the goal of getting these materials distributed quickly to all locations.

The sales representative from the library's newest media vendor, Midwest Tapes, met with Technical Services and Collection Development staff to begin setting up the electronic ordering, digital processing, and other services. On February 12, staff attended a webinar training session to learn how to order DVDs and music CDs from the Midwest Tapes' website.

Cataloging Manager Katie Enright presented Create Lists classes for SAPL staff on January 28 and February 21. Martha Knott presented training on the use of the Fines Paid component of Millennium Circulation module to the library's fiscal staff on February 19.

Millennium Update

Technical Services Coordinator Martha Knott and Igo Branch Manager Cheryl Sheehan created instructions on how to download, set up, and use the Millennium Offline Circulation program. The plan was to have all locations download the program in early February and have everyone use the offline circulation program on February 22 as a test. The test period was unexpectedly moved to February 6 due to problems with the Millennium Circulation Module. Nine branches installed the offline circulation program and checked out material before the Millennium Circulation module was operational again. Another test period will be scheduled to give all locations the opportunity to use this program.

Texana/Genealogy

On January 24, Unit Manager Frank Faulkner spoke to the Friends of the Bulverde/Spring Branch Library on beginning genealogy research. The Bulverde/Spring Branch Friends plan to start a sub-group for those interested in genealogy this spring.

Mr. Faulkner attended the awards banquet of Los Bexareños Genealogy Society held on January 25. The Texana/Genealogy Unit was recognized for three books Los Bexareños published in

conjunction with Texana/Genealogy and the Friends of Texana/Genealogy: *The Texas Biographical Gazetteer- the Texas 200*; *The Mexican-American War: A List and Description of Deserters from the United States Army*; and *1895 San Antonio Voter Registration List*.

Mr. Faulkner spoke at the February 2 Los Bexareños meeting, on the department's oral history projects and the book *Historic Photos of San Antonio*. Sylvia Reyna taught a class on "Beginning Genealogy" to sixteen attendees, and Deborah Countess taught a class on "Census Research" to eleven participants.

Five individuals learned about and practiced on Cyndislist and Heritage Quest Online in the Training Room during a session conducted on February 4 by Mr. Faulkner.

On February 9, Ms. Reyna taught a group of eight about using "Religious Records in Genealogical Research." Ms. Countess followed with a discussion of "Vital Records" attended by nine.

A group of Heritage Middle School students visited the department on February 15 to work on History Fair Projects.

The Friends of Texana/Genealogy held their annual book sale on February 16; Mr. Faulkner taught a class on "Using Maps in Family History Projects;" and Matt DeWaelsche discussed "Courthouse Records" with the group.

On February 23, Andy Crews presented a workshop on "Immigration and Naturalization Records," and Mr. Faulkner conducted a class entitled "Introduction to Military Records for Genealogists."

Displays in Texana/Genealogy included antique valentines from Harry Hertzberg's collection and, in another case, railroad materials in commemoration of the arrival of the railroad in San Antonio on February 19, 1877. The larger cases held displays on African American history, and highlighted the local funeral programs collection which is edging closer and closer to the two-thousand mark.

Web Services

The Web Services Team is working with key members of Library Automation and the City IT Department to plan the implementation of the DotNetNuke Content Management System. This includes server acquisition and configuration requests, database upgrades, and the establishment of product and data migration procedures. The IT infrastructure, along with the appropriate developer and user permissions, will play a key role in making the web redesign project a success. Along with building SAPL's IT foundation, the web redesign team is also testing the DotNetNuke application to see how it can best be used to support library web content.

In addition to pursuing new products, the team continues to provide a wide variety of updates to web content, photo uploads, event publications, and pages to promote special events, including Black History Month, the Big Read, the Big Read pie contest, and book club kits. The Google map of San Antonio Library locations continues to be a great success with over 4,000 views. Along with the map of branch locations, the web unit also created a map for library staff showing VITA tax assistance locations.

Youth(wired)

Weekly Programs

Mondays with Regina Almanza: Game On! The monthly Guitar Hero tournament was held on February 4, with 28 attending. The winners were listed on a flyer, which is posted in the department for all to see. On non-tournament nights, Guitar Hero and Dance Dance Revolution games are alternated. These events always attract teens that want to play or just watch and sit with friends.

Tuesdays with Kathleen Fordyce: Teens had fun playing board games such as Blokus, Scrabble and Monopoly for Game Nights on February 5 and February 19. On February 12, teens made beaded bracelets and necklaces using pony beads and beading lace. Teens used construction paper in various shapes to make Underground Railroad “quilt squares” to celebrate Black History Month.

Wednesdays with Sylvia Pachecano: Ms. Pachecano conducted a book talk on January 30. Two students listened as Ms. Pachecano discussed the books *Wide Awake*, *Goose Chase*, *Just Ella*, *Pretties*, *Uglies*, and *To Kill a Mockingbird*. The purpose of the discussion was to promote The Big Read 2008. The students took *Pretties*, *Uglies* and *Just Ella* to check out. On February 6, four teens created dragon charms good luck bracelets for the Chinese New Year. Five teens created an “Anti-Valentine” craft on February 13.

On February 2, Ms. Pachecano hosted the monthly Anime/Manga club meeting at 2:00 p.m. Eight teens revisited titles they had turned in for consideration for purchase. They were excited that they were able to contribute to the library’s collection for new manga books.

Thursdays with Regina Almanza: On January 24, teens used glow-in-the-dark paint to decorate various items such as frames and plastic flowers for their rooms. On January 31, cork board and ribbons were set out for teens to make their own one-of-a-kind bulletin boards. The teens also gave boring and undignified thumbtacks an updated look by gluing buttons and gemstones onto them using a glue gun. On February 7, pony bead lacing and buttons were set out so that teens could make knot bracelets. For Valentine's Day, February 14, teens decorated t-shirts. Using heart doilies as stencils, they filled in the spaces with fabric paint, creating a lacy effect on their t-shirts. Black and purple were the most popular colors for hearts. On February 21, in honor of the Chinese New Year, teens made fortune cookies. Unfortunately, they were not edible, but made out of felt. Teens wrote their own fortunes to fill the cookies to give family and friends.

Tours and Groups

On January 28, February 11 and February 25, art classes from Fox Tech High School used the Youth(wired) computers for class projects. Sylvia Pachecano conducted a tour of the library for 19 seniors from St. Gerard’s High School on February 5. The students also received catalog and database instruction and researched possible future careers. On February 6 and 7, psychology classes from Fox Tech High School used the Youth(wired) computers for research on the “teenage brain.” On February 8, Ms. Pachecano conducted a tour for San Antonio Christian Academy comprised of five architecture students and two adults. The teacher was artist Rex Housmann. In preparation for the tour, Ms. Pachecano extensively researched the architecture of Ricardo Legorreta and the architectural elements of the San Antonio Public Library. Ms. Pachecano also discussed the art found throughout the library, highlighting the Jesse Treviño mural, the Dale Chihuly Fiesta Tower and of course, the Cow on the third floor. On February 14 and February 19 through 22, AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) classes from Fox Tech High School used the Youth(wired) computers to create a Myspace page for their “heroes.”

Branch Libraries

Bazan

The Friends of the Bazan Branch Library decided to reward the staff on Valentine’s Day by providing each employee with a gift. All the men received a box of candy and each of the women received flowers. The Bazan Friends and their new president, Gloria Almaraz, believed that the great public service work provided by the Bazan Branch should be recognized, and this was the token of appreciation they chose. The staff was surprised and very much pleased and excited about this gift. A group picture was taken and was sent to the Friends of the San Antonio Public Library *SAPLings* newsletter, as well as posted on the SAPL Intranet for others to see.

The display created in honor of Martin Luther King, Jr., during the month of January was well received by Bazan Branch customers. The display included photographs of Dr. King with books about his life. Bookmarks were produced featuring a series of quotations by Dr. King. The bookmarks were a hit with branch patrons, with teachers and students coming in almost daily to pick them up.

Brook Hollow

Brook Hollow staff were treated to their annual Staff Appreciation Dinner on January 31. This year the Friends took staff and their guests to a neighborhood favorite, Boccone's Restaurant.

While the branch is waiting for their new Children's Librarian to arrive, Leslie Elsasser from the Central Children's Department and staff from Little Read Wagon have been filling in at storytimes. Many thanks to those wonderful ladies! Brook Hollow is also anticipating the arrival of a new Teen Librarian, a Library Assistant, and new Library Aides. Congratulations are in order for Mary Smith, a current Brook Hollow Library Assistant who has been promoted to Teen Librarian at Brook Hollow.

Librarian I Tapley Trudell, is to be congratulated on her introduction of Book Kits into the library system. Tapley was inspired by the success of this service at libraries around the country, and after approval by the Administrative Team, has worked with librarians throughout the system to get the kits ready for circulation in March. Tapley will be discussing the Book Kits on March's Cover to Cover.

Library Assistant Anne Schuette rearranged the Children's section of the library. It is now more inviting and utilizes space more efficiently. Families love the 'living room' style change.

Carver

Carver Branch Library kicked off its February Black History Month celebration with Bobby McMorris' play *A Way Out*, set in the 1970s and about a family striving to escape poverty. Carver would like to thank Mr. McMorris for presenting his play at the Carver Library and four other branches of the San Antonio Public Library in celebration of Black History Month, Carver's "Gray Gardener" Vernon Mullens presented "Amazing Grains of West Africa" on February 6. Mr. Mullens explained how some African grains arrived in the United States to become staples in our diets of today.

Hornsby Entertainment presented "Music, Poetry and Dance: A Celebration of Black History" on February 9. Participants of all ages performed various dance and poetry recitals.

The music beat continued on February 10 as Tbow Gonzales and the Mwendo Rhythmic Spirit took listeners on a historical African musical drumbeat journey.

An exhibition of *capoeira*, an African-inspired Brazilian art form that combines elements of martial arts, dance, music and acrobatics, took place on February 16.

The San Antonio Chapter of the Tuskegee Airmen met at Carver Library on February 16 and presented an oral history program about their role in WW II in support of the United States and their allies.

The Guardian Angels Dance Troup presented "Dancing Through the Journey" on February 23. The dance travels from 19th-century Africa to the modern-day United States. Carver Library would like to thank Jacquelyn Darby and the youth that make up the Guardian Angels for performing at Carver for the last three years.

Carver's last Black History Month event was presented by Marlon Fields, a hip-hop gospel artist who performs under the name of Souljah. He also discussed the positive influences the art form has had on his life.

The Carver Branch Library staff would like to thank the Friends of Carver Library for sponsoring most of the Black History Month programming events. Thanks also to Bobby McMorris for presenting *A Way Out*.

Cody

Tax assistance was much in demand, with crowds of 25 to 30 waiting at the front doors each day for a chance to consult the VITA volunteers. Early voting also kept Cody's meeting room well occupied.

Outreach services were extended to the residents of the Merrill Gardens Assisted Living Center on February 7, in the form of a review of L. R. Hoffman's *The Bachelor's Cat*. The film club, the book clubs and the mystery club held their monthly meetings; selections for February included *City Lights* (film club), *Under the Banner of Heaven* (Thursday Club), an assortment of F. Scott Fitzgerald (Saturday Club), and *Noble Radiancance* (Mystery Club).

On February 2 the Chinese New Year was ushered in with a showing of the award-winning Korean film *Jibeuro*, thanks to a partnership with Hana Church of San Antonio. On February 9, Black History Month was celebrated with a performance by the Cecil Carter Duet. On February 16, Valentine's Day and the Academy Awards were celebrated with a talk by *Express-News* film critic Larry Ratliff, "Casablanca: The Greatest Movie Ever Made."

Cody is seeing strong attendance for storytime programs. A special storytime to celebrate the Chinese New Year was presented on February 7. In honor of African American Heritage Month, preschoolers were presented with a special "Trickster Tales" storytime. Trina Smith also provided a special storytime to the La Promesa Christian School Daycare Center.

Cody has revamped its Anime Club. It now meets every second Monday of the month after school. Attendance has started out strong and staff hope to see it grow.

Upcoming Special Events:

Through April 15	VITA tax assistance
Through February 29	Early Voting for Primaries
March 10	Anime Club
March 18	Spring Break Guitar Hero competition
March 19	KLRN Reading Readiness program

Collins Garden

As a result of the Staffing Study, Collins Garden's staffing level was increased by the addition of two new employees. Collins Garden Branch staff are pleased to welcome Library Assistant Carlos Loera and Circulation Attendant David Alvarez, who was promoted from the Library Aide position at Guerra.

Also welcome was the arrival of Children's Librarian Leigh Bedford, who recently transferred from Brook Hollow. She has approached her new assignment with her usual humor and enthusiasm. Attendance at story times is already showing an increase, and she is looking forward to networking with local schools and community organizations.

Collins Garden Branch Library was chosen to be a VITA Tax Assistance site this year. A steady stream of taxpayers has been making use of this free service.

Twelve customers happily participated in the Valentine's Day Craft Program, making origami heart boxes filled with chocolate kisses.

Cortez

The Cortez staff welcomed new full-time Library Assistant Amanda A. Hernández on January 25. Amanda jumped into her new role as the Young Adult Liaison with a Valentine Program on February 13. Nine teens attended the program. Amanda is planning Young Adult programs for March and April.

The staff had a going away party for Library Aide Yvonne Zamora on February 15. Everyone wished her the best of luck with her new position as a Circulation Attendant at McCreless.

Children's Librarian Carol Collins continues weekly Tuesday morning storytime for the community and she started presenting storytime for Palo Alto Elementary Pre-K classes every Tuesday afternoon. She also reads to children at the nearby health clinic once a week. Carol is in the process of gathering contact information for all daycares and Pre-K classes in our service area.

A tree has sprung up in our children's area! Library Assistant Stephanie Vásquez added a splash of color by constructing a large paper tree on one wall. Staff and patrons have commented on the new, beautiful decoration.

Adult Librarian Jerry Madrigal created a display for Martin Luther King, Jr., Day and Black History Month. Stephanie Vásquez created a new read-alike display this month, building on the success of the previous display.

Library Assistant Caroline Snider is maintaining a list of new books in the system for patrons who do not use computers to look up new titles and may not be aware of new releases.

Branch Manager Rebecca Gonzales Johnson introduced herself to two neighborhood associations. She is gathering a list of neighborhood organizations and contacts and is planning to do more outreach. Rebecca has been working with staff on making the library arrangement more intuitive for the patrons. A few sections have been rearranged to provide easier access to materials.

The self-checkout machines were introduced to the public on February 12 with the help of Russell Hendrix in Automation.

Cortez hosted early voting from February 20 through February 29.

Forest Hills

Forest Hills welcomes a new Circulation Attendant, Veronica Franco, who joined the staff on February 4.

The branch has consolidated and shifted most of the adult collection to improve customer service by placing similar formats together, creating a more logical floor layout.

The Forest Hills Branch constructed an imaginary Underground Railroad in the meeting room with Black History month posters all around the walls.

Keetowah, a group promoting education and knowledge of indigenous cultures, had seventeen members present at its February 4 meeting to discuss participation in upcoming events.

The Woodlawn Hills Neighborhood Association meeting on February 6 was attended by more than 30 interested citizens and by the City Council District 7 Representative Justin Rodriguez. The association held a second meeting at the branch on February 23 to consider and adopt by-laws.

February 9 – Charles Rodriguez was the discussion leader when six members of the Contrarian Viewpoint Book Club met on February 9 to discuss Bill O'Reilly's book *Culture Warrior*.

The Thunderbird Hills Neighborhood Association Board of Directors met at Forest Hills on February 12.

February 14 – The History of San Antonio Book Club met on February 14 to continue their discussion of the Siege of Bexar and the book, *Texans in Revolt: The Battle for San Antonio, 1835* by Alwyn Barr.

A Family Fun program was offered on February 16; a Black History Month program on February 19, and an Underground Railroad craft for teens on February 16.

Great Northwest

The staff at Great Northwest has been continuing to tag materials for RFID. Alma Rodríguez from Landa Branch has processed over 20,000 items! Her efforts are appreciated. Cari Raley, Danny Durán, Jennifer Wright, Priscilla Barba-Escobedo, Rachel Varela, Theresa Brader, LuAnne Bloom and Maricela Martínez have been trained to do the tagging as well. Once the media room has been finished, the project will be complete. Circulation staff has been using the 3M workstation to check tagged materials in and out, and are excited by how quick and efficient the process is.

Cari Raley was a presenter for a training class offered by a neighborhood preschool provider on February 16. She shared creative ways to include literacy and stories in all areas of their classrooms.

Children's staff hosted Raba Elementary preschoolers and their parents who visited the ABC Club and signed up for library cards.

Cari Raley and LuAnne Bloom represented the branch at Fernández Elementary to share and model motivational reading ideas for parents' night.

New Great Northwest Librarian I Patricia King hit the ground running. Patricia collected materials from within SAPL to highlight African-Americans from Texas. Local history buffs gave the display a positive reaction.

Patricia is also scheduling teen programming. Planned events include a board game night and a series of YA events to take place during Spring Break in March.

The Northside Independent School District has started a new semester of GED, ESOL, and Spanish-language parenting classes at the Branch. The partnership has worked well for both the school district and the library.

Two newly established clubs are meeting on a regular basis at Great Northwest: the San Antonio Radio Club and the Great Northwest Chess Club. The Chess Club meets every week and averages 10 members of all ages.

The quilting classes presented by the Greater San Antonio Quilt Guild have been so popular that the instructors had to close the class to any more new students! The last few classes will concentrate on having the students complete a wall hanging.

The bilingual story times continue on Sunday afternoons, led by a group of 6 volunteers. All the volunteers are very enthusiastic about their involvement and are interested in seeing the story times continue.

In the last week of February, the branch will hang paintings by the artist Anna-Marie López. Great Northwest is one of seven branch libraries that, together with the Central Library, will be displaying art by female artists for Women's History Month in March.

The Great Northwest Library Friends held a scheduled meeting. They authorized additional expenditures and tentatively set a date for their spring book sale.

The branch welcomed new part time Library Assistant Christina Reedy. Priscilla Barba-Escobedo accepted a promotion to Library Circulation Attendant.

Guerra

Staff

Kudos are in order for the Guerra staff for their cheerful willingness to work in whatever capacity necessary to cover vacancies and insure quality service. Everyone is benefiting by the cross-training required, as well as improving their skills and experience in many aspects of library operations.

Training

Librarian II and Holdings Editor Cristiane Yamada-Lokensgard attended the Millennium Create Lists class. Library Assistant Tim Johnson, and Holdings Editor, and Department Systems Aide Erich Backhus, both Holdings Editors, are scheduled to attend on February 21. Three additional staff members have also been scheduled to attend the class at a later time. Create Lists is welcomed as a very useful tool for statistics and collection development. The possibilities are exciting.

On January 29 Children's Librarian Yanira Cruz and Branch Manager Joyce Anne Stevens attended the all day ROSA (Reaching Our Spanish-Speaking Audience) workshop sponsored by the Texas State Library and WebJunction's Spanish Language Outreach Program. WebJunction is an online Spanish language interactive outreach site. An excellent "Spanish Language Outreach Program Workshop Resource Packet" was distributed to each attendee. The packet included steps for identifying community leaders and conducting interviews, "Suggested Outreach Activities," an "Annotated List of Web Resources for Working with Computers and Spanish Speakers," extensive statistics on the Hispanic population in Texas, and "Spanish Language Library Collection Development: Selected Resources." Attendees reported that the workshop was well-organized and thought-provoking.

Yanira and Joyce Anne established excellent contacts with the Edgewood Family Network, a group of *promotoras* (community members trained to take the lead in promoting a good life for low-income Hispanics). They now provide extensive services with a focus on health and education. Guerra is the nearest library to the Edgewood Family Network. A planned meeting with EFN's Project Coordinator will serve to create a partnership with EFN and assist Guerra in improving knowledge of the population in the library's service area and in discovering who the neighborhood's *promotoras* might be.

On February 6 Tim Johnson attended the PubMed training at Central Library. The San Antonio Public Library is collaborating with the UT Health Science Center Libraries and the Edgewood Family Network in a grant-funded project to target at-risk groups in the Hispanic community. The Guerra Library service area is included as part of this target audience. SAPL staff will be trained with the ultimate goal of providing public classes to increase knowledge and use of quality health information. Joyce Anne Stevens attended Medline training on February 27.

Librarian I Steve Jackson and Tim Johnson attended coaching sessions for their respective M.L.S. scholarship programs sponsored by the Library Foundation. Erich Backhus attended a Department Systems Aide meeting intended to update the Department System Aides on the progress of network upgrades, CMS deployment, RFID, and Millennium Offline Circulation. Information on the purchase of new computers for the library system was presented and future projects discussed. Guerra is slated to receive all-new public computers as replacements for out-of-date computers installed when the branch opened.

Outreach and School Visits

Yanira Cruz delivered Little Read Wagon books to the WIC Clinic at Marbach and W. Military Drive. On February 7 she hosted 150 fourth-grade students from Cody Elementary School. Yanira gave a tour of the library and issued library cards to the students. Steve Johnson guided a ninth-grade class from Sunnybrook Christian Academy through the processes involved in creating a research paper on biographies of English authors. He showed them how to search OPAC, pointed out online databases and paper sources, gave a tour of the library, and instructed the students in locating materials on the shelves.

David Alvarado of the Northside Independent School District Police has invited Guerra Branch to participate in creating a "Gang Resistance Education and Training" (G.R.E.A.T.) program with Anson Jones Middle School. The foundation of the program is instruction in life skills to help direct students away from delinquency, violence, and gang membership. Prevention is the primary objective. Details of the collaboration will be worked out at a planned meeting.

Displays

Guerra Branch Manager Joyce Anne Stevens and Library Assistant Ernestina García filled Guerra's large display case with a variety of vintage and antique items. Many patrons showed interest in this "Antiques and Collectibles" display. In Guerra's smaller case, Joyce Anne displayed her collection of Pez containers along with a vintage Pez calendar cover and a Pez collector's guide. The kids loved the Pez and were disappointed that they were not for sale.

Guerra Branch created a biography display entitled "Meet Someone New in 2008...Read a Biography." Biographies located in an accessible location are always a hot item. A display for both Dr. Martin Luther King's birthday and another for African American Heritage Month included adult and juvenile books and artwork. Valentine's Day displays for both children and adults were popular.

Programs

Guerra continues to present its regular programs, including Guerra Game Night (board games), Toddler Tuesday, Baby Bounce, Preschool Storytime, Game-Ra, Radical Dreamers Teen Club (Movie Nights and Crafts), Wednesday Reader's Book Club, Club de Lectura, and ESOL.

In preparation for Yanira's maternity leave, Tim Johnson has been presenting storytimes, offering four (two for toddlers and two for infants) so far. Steve Jackson will share the responsibility of covering Yanira's storytimes and programs during her absence.

In celebration of Black History Month, Bobby McMorris presented his drama *A Way Out*. The play depicts the story of a family trying to escape poverty in the 1970s. Children's programs at the branch also honored Black History Month: a presentation of Christopher Myers books and a craft program for children to create a collage based on the art form Myers uses for the illustration of his books; a celebration of Everyday Heroes in the African-American community; and trickster tales followed by a craft.

Guerra is hosting the VITA free tax service from January 23 through April 15.

Guerra is an Early Voting site as well as an Election Day site. Early voting runs from February 19 through February 29 six days per week.

For the two weeks of Early Voting and also for Election Day, Guerra is moving VITA services out of into the small meeting room from the larger meeting room. ESOL classes are moving out of the small meeting room into the main library area. Storytimes are moving into the children's alcove. Thanks go to the Guerra staff for pitching in and making this happen. The cooperation between all the agencies has been great, and Guerra does indeed feel like a community center!

Igo

Statistics sometimes reveal a relatively accurate picture of what is happening, and this month's figures for Igo show that the branch is being noticed by increasing numbers of the San Antonio community. All recorded areas of usage are up, and in some fields the advancement has been more than 200% (circulation, 211% and computer usage, 213%). Probably most exciting is the fact that over 4,500 more visits were made to the branch! New patrons have commented that the recently installed roadway directional signs have made them aware that a library was indeed just around the corner.

Programming for all ages is in full swing, with a Guitar Hero Tourney for teens (and a whopping 35 wanna-be musicians showed up to play their hearts out and compete against one another); and Black History Month with four programs for adults and two for children. The library was full of the sounds of gospel, jazz, soul, hip hop and more! Three full weeks of computer classes were offered in conjunction with the City's Department of Community Initiatives, in addition to the several sessions conducted by librarians showcasing the numerous benefits available to the public at the San Antonio Public Library, such as various forms of downloadable media, Live Homework Help, and databases.

Staff have been busy attending training sessions to offer better service for our customers. Additional numbers of cash handlers, holdings editors, and list creators have been taught the respective duties associated with those tasks. In addition, all Igo staff participated in an in-house workshop designed to foster teamwork and customer service, and expand on the branch's philosophy of providing the most meaningful and effective interactions with each and every patron. Future group sessions will include an exploration of the FISH! conviction that work can be energizing and fun.

Several staff members have shared meaningful engagements with patrons, and a most noteworthy one occurred several days ago. An obviously distressed woman asked to speak to a staff member in private, and within a few moments began to share her need. She wasn't sure what the library could do for her, but throughout her whole life "she has always been helped by libraries and didn't know where else to turn." She needed information on how to save her house and family from a threatened foreclosure and was hopeful that the library would be able to offer her some guidance. The staff member made some phone calls to various contacts within the community and provided the woman with additional resources for her to continue to investigate on her own. This interaction brought home the fact that libraries serve critical and significant needs for our communities, and that we are so much more than repositories for books and other materials. Staff at Igo have been truly inspired to seek to make a difference in the lives of its customers in a variety of different ways and on a myriad of levels.

The first organizational meeting of the branch's Friends group was held, and staff were thrilled to meet the dedicated members of this important support network.

Johnston

February 14 was St. Valentine's Day, a time for hearts, flowers, chocolates – and gangland violence (but not in real life.) On that date, Librarian Rich Fields presented a book talk at Air Force Village, a

retirement community near the Johnston branch, about Al Capone and his role in the unpleasantness that occurred in a North Side Chicago garage on St. Valentine's Day, 1929. There were 24 attendees, among them a woman from Chicago who shared her first-hand recollections of the Capone era and another woman from Detroit who told tales of bootlegging in that city.

Landa

The Landa Community Garden is moving forward. The group has had several work days, and the preparation of the planting beds and walkway between the beds are almost finished. At the February meeting the group discussed what types of plants would be appropriate. The theme for the community garden will be to plant according to what would have been found in a Medieval Garden; which ties in with the existing flower beds, which were used and designed by the Landas.

Las Palmas

Children's Librarian Gina Brudi met with the director of the Las Palmas Early Head Start/AVANCE Center, to add their three classrooms to her outreach rotation. Currently, Gina visits the area Parent Child, Inc., center once a month to present story hours and deliver classroom collections.

Librarian Karen Michaelson created a book display to honor Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday. His quotes and thoughts on the dignity of man recalled the impact Dr. King continues to have on all Americans. Teen Services Librarian Heidi Novotny invited teen readers to "Explore African-American Voices in History: Celebrate Black History Month with a Biography." In partnership with the Southwest School of Art and Crafts, Karen and Heidi presented a batik art program for adults and teens on February 17. Gina Brudi celebrated Black History Month with African folk tales, then guided her audience of six in crafting wings.

Ms. Novotny presented two teen programs: Game Night drew an audience of two, while the Valentine's Day craft drew an audience of ten.

Staff continue to prepare for RFID implementation, weeding and reviewing the collections. To date, the 000's-400's, Spanish Non-Fiction, Easy, Reference, and Large Print collections have been weeded.

Maverick

Black History is currently center stage at Maverick. Staff have been focusing on Black History themes and programs. The Masai Necklace craft was well received with good attendance and some beautiful creations. The Institute of Texan Cultures once again provided an excellent program, this year on African-American Texans.

Maverick's chess groups, Needlework Guild, Fiction Writers Guild, knitting group and neighborhood associations had their regular meetings as did Maverick's book groups. Children's programs continue to be well attended. Amy Roberts and Esperanza Sonnen are working on outreach to daycare groups and tours within the library. Derika Bailey has been busy helping with the Big Read event, including nearly a full day of outreach at Marshall High School promoting the program and giving out copies of the book.

McCreless

The McCreless staff took advantage of training opportunities in March and there was attendance at both EPDP training and CreateLists classes.

Displays for the month of February included "Simplify Your Life" and "Spay/Neuter Awareness".

An average of 23 children and their caregivers attended weekly storytimes at McCreless.

On January 30 St. Margaret Mary's School brought three classes with a total of 59 children for a special storytime.

On February 12 Branch Manager Cammie Gunter led 14 people of all ages in making lollipop valentines for the holiday.

McCreless was the host site for the February Children's Librarians meeting.

Children's Librarian Beverly Bixler offered a special program of trickster tales on Sunday, February 17, to diversify attendance beyond the Tuesday morning pre-school storytime. On February 21 Beverly visited Highland Hills PCI with books and stories.

Memorial

Staff

Long-time Circulation Attendant Maria Gamboa retired after many years of service to the San Antonio Public Library. Her contributions were many and the loss is felt by both patrons and staff.

Outreach and Programming

Children's Librarian Sheila Acosta visited Madison Elementary School's bilingual kinder classes and the José Cárdenas Head Start Center to present storytimes. Sheila continues to work with local day care centers as well.

Teen Time programming included a chess challenge, a Healthy Heart program hosted by the San Antonio Food Bank, and programs with Black History and Valentine themes. Children's programming followed the same subjects.

Special events included "A Favorite Book and Movie" featuring *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. The book was written by Roald Dahl and is a favorite of many.

Back by popular demand are scrapbooking and a series of basic guitar classes conducted by Moisés Hernández. The guitar classes are sponsored by the Memorial Amigos and funded by JPMorganChase.

Community

The meeting room continues to be booked by community organizations including the Memorial Heights and Loma Vista Neighborhood Associations. Other City departments using the meeting room included the Westside Development Corporation and City Council.

The Memorial Amigos donated funds for a new LCD projector and procured a grant for the purchase of several new computers and computer furniture. Both will have a definite and positive effect on Memorial's service to the community.

Pan American

Every Monday afternoon is Family Fun Time and all ages enjoy the activities. On January 28, ten people made glitter snowflakes and listened to a story about Snowflake Bentley. Masai tales and crafts were enjoyed by five on February 4. Zomo the rabbit visited with 17 attendees on February 11, while they had rabbit crafts. February 25, "If People Could Fly" was the theme, along with a "hero wings" craft.

Every Monday evening instructor Mary Martha McNeil presents T'ai Chih for adults. Average attendance is sixteen. Any adult can participate and the classes are appropriate for all skill levels.

On January 29 Little Red Wagon began the seven-week *Para los Niños* workshop series with 45 in attendance. The turnout on February 5 was 38 children and 22 adults. Originally the workshops were scheduled for an hour, but another hour was added to each day to accommodate all those interested.

Wednesdays are another busy day for programs. During the morning the ABC Club has stories and crafts. On January 30, thirty children participated in learning about the letter "R" with rabbits, rockets, and robots. February 6 featured the letter "S" with the Itsy-Bitsy Spider and paper plate star hats for 29. An ABC Club Valentine's Day party was held on February 13, with 42 in attendance. They had hot dogs, chips, sodas, punch, cake, candy, stories, and lots of fun. February 20, Letter T day, was Tee-pees and Tomahawks day.

Also on Wednesdays, early evening is teen time. On January 30, seven teens made beautiful snowflakes and played games. On February 6, games were available and eight teens participated. In honor of Valentine's Day, on February 13, candy-filled hearts were made by four. Games were again the activity for February 29.

On February 1, Children's Librarian Raissa Marking delivered two boxes of books to the WIC clinic on Zarzamora. These books are given to children to take home when they visit the clinic. On February 23, Raissa participated in a community information event at South Park Mall. Books were given away, library card applications were taken, and there were some simple crafts at the library table.

The major event for Pan American's Black History Month celebration was held on February 16, with a presentation of Bobby McMorris' drama *A Way Out*. There were displays of library materials in several areas to support Black History Month.

During February, eight computer classes were held at Pan American.

Special thanks go to Branch Coordinator Barbara O'Hara for visiting the branch on February 7, to help the staff reorganize the staff work area. She recycled, trashed, boxed, swept and cleaned along with everyone else. She also offered helpful suggestions for changes in the staff work area, office, and break area.

Reagan High School/Bannwolf Library

The Bannwolf Library at Reagan High School had many special programs during the last month. Pre-school children enjoyed several weeks of books and crafts during Black History Month. Teens and adults had the opportunity to learn sign language from members of the Reagan High School American Sign Language Club. The presentation was so successful that the ASL Club will present a program every month in the library. Adults were offered the opportunity to learn tips to make traveling easier during the "Traveling 101" program offered in late January by a local travel agency.

An actual reference desk has been added at the Bannwolf Library. With additional staff, a librarian is now always available to provide service at the desk. The desk is located across from the circulation desk and next to the computers, allowing the reference librarian to be available to help with teaching about SAPL databases as well as helping customers with print resources.

The staff at the library has experienced few problems with Millennium now that the program is on its own DSL line.

San Pedro

On February 4 the library welcomed two new staff members, Sherrin Bossart and Cynthia Cruz, both Full-time Library Assistants. They spent their first two weeks getting settled in and trained. Both

spent a lot of time at the service desk. Cynthia is a SAPL veteran while Sherrin is brand new to the system.

On February 2 the Readers Inc. book discussion group held their monthly meeting at the library.

Four teen programs were offered during this time period. Arts and crafts were created at each program, including making Mardi Gras masks and a paper folding craft which resulted in a Valentine heart-shaped candy holder. The last program in January was also a meeting of the Graphic Novel Book Club. The book chosen for January was *My Cat Loki*, which was universally panned by the teens.

Four storytimes were presented, with the theme for all revolving around farms and farm animals. The children loved singing "Old MacDonald Had a Farm!"

There were also four B.A.C.K. Pack programs offered for elementary school children. Each program begins with a story read out loud together by the librarian and the children, followed by a craft or activity, which also included making Mardi Gras masks and picture frames.

On January 19, a Family Fun activity was held at the library. The program was a birthday party for Martin Luther King, Jr. The kids and families decorated the library with colored paper chains, created peace poetry, fashioned bracelets from multi-colored pony beads, wrote down what their dreams were for themselves, their schools, or their community, and created self-portraits on large paper crayons to place in "San Pedro Library's Box of Crayons." This was a very popular program and while it was originally scheduled to run from 2:00 until 3:30 p.m., the party did not break up until 4:30. There were 42 participants.

On January 29, the Hawthorne Academy Lunch Bunch book club met. The book read by the 17 students was *The Invention of Hugo Cabret*, which was recently announced to have won the Caldecott Award. There was a lively discussion about the unique format of the book. Many of the students had recommended the book to their friends. The children chose *No Talking* as the book for the February meeting.

Children's Librarian Betsy Dalton met on January 31 with Travis Elementary School Librarian Dr. Norma Smith-Tyler about beginning a monthly book club similar to the one at Hawthorne Academy.

On January 31, Dr. Linda Ruhmann brought her Emergent Literacy class from San Antonio College for a tour of the children's area. The Children's Librarian gave a presentation on services offered for children are offered at the San Pedro Branch Library, followed by a discussion of storytime and the rationale for the books chosen for storytime. The students were also interested in children's poetry and rhyme books, which were shown to them, along with the thematic guides, such as *A to Zoo*. Twenty-four students attended.

On February 7 Ms. Dalton traveled to the Kenwood Parent Child, Inc., location to present storytime to three classes, with an total of around 36 students. Ten books were also delivered to each class for their use during the month. The previous month's books were also collected at this time. The PCI administrators, teachers, and students really seem to enjoy the visits.

On February 16 a Chinese New Year celebration was held at San Pedro. The program included crafts such as making a Chinese paper lantern, a red and yellow origami bracelet, a mobile of Chinese zodiac animals, an origami rocking bird, and a decorated dragon for the dragon parade. For the older children, there was a station set up to learn how to write your name using Chinese characters and learning about the Zodiac character which represented their birth years. Everyone also enjoyed fortune cookies donated by the Olmos Drive HEB.

Semmes

Computer classes taught by Durand Waters began on January 22 and concluded on February 7. All of Mr. Durand's classes were full and ran overtime as students stayed to ask questions.

On February 1, OASIS presented an educational class for seniors on the history of the Old Spanish Trail, of which Nacogdoches Road is a surviving section. The Semmes Black History month program was "What is Jazz?" presented by Cecil Coleman. Chinese New Year was appropriately celebrated by staff members Joseph Knight and Debye Nicholl with a program that featured Chinese dragon crafts and an adorable rat (plastic, but life-size). Adult program coordinator Oscar González arranged the first of three showings of *To Kill a Mockingbird* on February 5. Semmes hosted a Girl Scout Golden Award project, a two hour production with costumes, activities and a theatrical presentation, called *A Day in Ancient Rome*, on February 9. Visitors to the branch were treated to an hour of guitar music playing softly in the background on January 27.

Semmes staff will be enjoying pizza for lunch on Valentine's Day – a treat provided by their Friends, who are the best!

Thousand Oaks

VITA free tax assistance began on January 23 with a full house of customers and hasn't slowed. VITA is at Thousand Oaks Branch six days a week and on many days within thirty minutes of opening they have reached capacity for the day. On most of the days the line for this popular service starts forming an hour ahead of time, except for Saturdays when the citizens start arriving an hour and half early. Around fifty citizens a day can be helped by VITA volunteers.

Thousand Oaks Branch is bright and shiny these days. The City Asset Management Department completed a two-week project of installing new ballasts and new light bulbs. The effect has been quite dramatic and has brightened the branch by 20%. It is making it much easier to read the book call numbers on aisles that were previously very dark and shadowy.

Library Assistant Barbara Kwiatkowski has started a new program called "Chatterbooks," a book club for school-age children, all about having fun with books. Ms. Kwiatkowski reads passages from the books and they discuss ideas based on the readings. Several weeks are spent on each title and so far they have discussed the novels *Firegirl* by Tony Abbott and *Roxie and the Hooligans* by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor. They also play games and do crossword puzzles. Chatterbooks meets every Tuesday at 5:00 p.m.

To take advantage of the excitement surrounding the opening of the new *Spiderwick* movie, Thousand Oaks held a Spiderwick Party on Tuesday, February 12. Barbara Kwiatkowski planned and organized the party that included mask making, trivia games and crossword puzzles based on the characters and activities in Tony DiTerlizze's *Spiderwick* book series. The children attending were treated to special faerie food and received prizes for their art work. Library Assistant Guillermo García worked the craft table and helped keep order among the thirty very excited participants. And best of all, all the *Spiderwick* books got checked out!

In celebration of Black History Month Thousand Oaks has put up book displays and an informative display in the entrance showcases. The play *A Way Out* by Bobby McMorris was presented on Tuesday February 12 to an audience of seventeen. The play had six actors portraying a family struggling through hard times. The audience seemed to enjoy the play and several commented about the spiritual song performed by the two leading characters.

The Tobin Library at Oakwell

Since the departure of Children's Librarian Debbie Martin, the branch has been lucky to have Library Assistant Ginny Hurt ready to step into her shoes. Ginny has drawn on her previous experience in children's services to present weekly storytimes, including stories, music and crafts, as well as a recent Kindermusik program. Ginny has also initiated a monthly Saturday afternoon program designed for the whole family. With reading as a base, each program spins off a story with a combination of crafts, games, songs, flannelboard, and puppets. The first two programs were built around the themes of Black History Month and Valentine's Day.

Tobin at Oakwell tweens continue to gather every Wednesday for after-school activities. In addition to monthly *Dance Dance Revolution* practice, their recent craft creations have included personalized stationery, snowflakes, and origami heart-shaped candy holders for Valentine's Day.

One of the branch's super Friends, Pat DePasquale, has been volunteering several mornings each week tagging the collection for RFID. She has single-handedly completed almost the entire Juvenile nonfiction section – all of this on top of her energetic stewardship of the branch's extremely profitable quarterly book sales.

Westfall

On February 4 Westfall patrons were invited to "Come Meet the Stars" with the San Antonio Astronomical Association. Members of the SAAA presented a slide show with clips from the NASA Hubble telescope as well as other objects found in space. After the slide show, the members set up a telescope outside on the lawn. Library users were invited to look at Mars through the telescope. About 65 people saw the slide show or looked through the telescope.

Library patrons interested in "Finding \$\$\$ for College" came to hear a presentation on February 6. Janice Kaples from the Alamo Federal Credit Union presented information on the different types of financial aid available to students, as well as how to apply for aid and how to avoid being scammed. Twenty people (mostly parents) attended this event.

Several special children's programs were also presented during the month of February. To celebrate Valentine's Day, children and teens were given the opportunity to make valentines. On February 26, Children's Librarian Imelda Merino presented "Trickster Tales" in honor of Black History Month. Another African-American heritage activity was presented on February 19, when children were invited to make their own Masai necklaces.

February 2008 marked the return of a favorite program for Westfall Library patrons. Basic computer classes are being given in the branch. Westfall's customers have been asking for the classes for several months; there are always people interested in learning more computer skills.

Staff members Monica Garza, Andrea Silva, Imelda Merino and Theresa Ybarra have been busy creating new displays for library patrons to enjoy. Recent displays have spotlighted Urban Fiction, President's Day, Valentine's Day, the rodeo, financial aid and Chinese New Year. Library users really seem to enjoy all of the various displays.

Westfall staff members are thankful for the new lighting fixtures along the east wall of the library. The City's Asset Management Department came and changed out some of the fixtures to give the library brighter light. This is especially noticeable in the evening, when shelves that once seemed to disappear into the shadows are clearly visible.