

**San Antonio Public Library
Director's Report
December 9, 2009**

Administration

Director's Office

Library construction and improvement projects occupied a major portion of Library Director Ramiro Salazar's schedule. He attended a groundbreaking ceremony for the pavilion at the Briscoe Western Art Museum on November 6. On November 9 Ramiro met with District 1 City Council Representative Mary Alice Cisneros' staff to update her on the Central Library weatherization project and new plans for the History Center Portal at the Briscoe Western Art Museum. On November 12 he attended a meeting of Mission Branch Library stakeholders to update them on the status of that project.

He participated in the evaluation of proposals for a construction contract for the Parman Library on November 16. The Evaluation Committee met for three hours and reviewed 25 proposals.

Media events included a news conference on November 9 at Forest Hills Branch Library in connection with the Be One in a Million Library Card Campaign. At that news conference, District 7 City Council Representative Justin Rodríguez and Americus Diamond Community Relations Manager Mary Anderson presented the diamond pendant donated by Americus Diamond to the winner of the drawing held in conjunction with Library Card Sign-up Month.

On November 17, Ramiro hosted a news conference at the Central Library with the National Association of Latino Arts and Culture to announce a new partnership with the association.

In order to keep City Council informed about the Library, on November 10 Ramiro attended the Council Quality of Life Committee meeting, accompanied by Beth Graham, to report on the status of the Be One in a Million Library Card Campaign. The Committee's reception of the report was positive, and complimentary of the Library's performance. Ramiro also attended the November 19 City Council meeting to participate in Council recognition of the schools that won the School Library Card Challenge.

Ramiro attended the annual meeting of the Friends of the San Antonio Public Library at the McCreless Branch Library on November 15. On the agenda for that meeting was a discussion of the Library's request for funding for 2010. He also attended the annual meeting of the San Antonio Public Library Foundation on November 18, at which he was presented with a check representing the annual contribution made by the Library Foundation for 2009.

Ramiro, Assistant Director for Public Service Kendra Trachta, and Interim Assistant Director for Support Services Kathleen Donellan attended the Opportunity Online Summit sponsored by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation on November 18 and 19. Noting that library futurist Steven Abram was scheduled to visit San Antonio to speak at the summit, Ramiro invited him to make presentations to SAPL staff and stakeholders. Mr. Abram spoke to Library staff the morning of November 18, and in the evening to Library members of the Library Board of Trustees, Library Foundation Executive Committee, and members of the Friends of the Library Board.

Mari Aguirre, Rackspace Community Affairs Manager, visited the Central Library on November 30 for a site tour and to visit with key staff to discuss possible partnerships between Rackspace and the Library.

On December 2 and 3, Ramiro accompanied Library Board Chair Jean Brady to the Urban Libraries Council Conference "Partners for Success: Regional Solutions for Local Vitality."

Children's Services System-wide

Promotion of Young Pegasus 2010 has taken center stage in Children's Services for the past several weeks. These promotional efforts, along with improvements to the electronic submission process should yield a significant number of entries to this year's competition. The deadline for submitting poems is December 15.

African American Heritage 2010 will be celebrated in February. The AAH committee has planned three programs around the varied artistic styles of illustrators Brian Pinkney (scratchboard), Ashley Bryan (collage) and Faith Ringgold (textiles). All three have won numerous awards for their work and have a wide range of titles available in the SAPL collections.

Looking further down the road, the 2010 Summer Reading Committee is already hard at work planning to "Catch the Reading Express." The weekly summer program schedule has been established and preliminary plans are in place to host Story Book Theatre presentations at all the branches.

Digital Services

During the last week in October Digital Services Manager Rolf Laun attended the 2009 Internet Librarian Conference in Monterey, California. Sessions this year focused on mobile computing, web site optimization, and library tech trends.

On November 13, Librarian Adam Spana and Forest Hills Branch Manager Elma Nieto-Rodríguez provided an overview of library online services during the monthly staff meeting of the Community Family Resource and Learning Division of the City's Department of Community Initiatives.

The Digital Services team developed and launched a new portal for staff questions and answers. This application allows staff to submit questions anonymously or with signed entries. All answers will be posted to the intranet so that information can be reviewed by staff.

Public Relations

Late October and early November were occupied with coordinating the visit of consultants from ETC Institute to conduct focus groups and interviews as preparation for developing the survey instrument. Ten public focus groups, two library staff focus groups, and two stakeholder focus groups were conducted during the week of November 2. Additionally, fourteen interviews were conducted with community decision makers including City Manager Sheryl Sculley, City Budget Director/Interim Assistant City Manager Peter Zaroni, District 3 City Council Representative Jennifer Ramos, and officials representing local utilities, the health-care industry, banking, and education. On November 30, an additional eight telephone interviews were conducted, including calls to Mayor Julián Castro, Assistant City Manager Sharon de la Garza, and representatives from the Friends of the Library and the Library Foundation. Next steps in the community needs assessment process are to develop and review a draft survey.

Public Relations Manager Beth Graham and Graphic Designers Ana Farr and Tiffanie Wilson spent much of November developing and producing collateral materials to inform the public about the upcoming two-week closure of the Central Library to complete a phase of the weatherization project. Signs have been posted throughout the Central Library, bookmarks have been printed for distribution at check-out, and banners are being produced for display on the construction fence, all informing patrons of the library closure. A news release was distributed on December 4.

Beth coordinated two events with City Council. On November 9, the winner of the diamond pendant given as part of Library Card Sign-up Month received her award from District 7 Council Representative Justin Rodríguez and Americus Diamond Community Relations Manager Mary Anderson. Board Chair Jean Brady and Library Director Ramiro Salazar also attended. On November 19, the winners of the School Library Card Challenge were recognized at City Council. Representatives from all the winning schools attended the ceremony, as did the Library Board Chair and Library Director.

Beth accompanied members of the Outreach Department to the City Parks and Recreation Department "Come Out and Play Day" on November 7. On November 10, she and Senior Management Analyst

Jessica Ramos accompanied Library Director Ramiro Salazar to a meeting of the City Council Quality of Life Committee to deliver a report on the Be One in a Million Library Card Campaign. Beth also served as a volunteer during the National League of Cities national conference. Finally, she worked with representatives from the National Association of Latino Arts and Culture to coordinate a news conference on November 9 announcing a new partnership between the organization and the Library.

¡Tamalada!, held on November 21, was a success, with approximately 180 attending one of the two tamal-cooking classes and the presentation of *Las Nuevas Tamaleras*.

The Library has received 16 media mentions since the last meeting of the Library Board.

Teen Services System-wide

Librarian Kathleen Fordyce gave a presentation on library services and resources for teens at the Education on Demand rally organized by District 2 Councilwoman Ivy Taylor on October 19. More 1,200 students attended the event, and Kathleen spoke to 350 high school students.

Sam Houston High School hosted a Career Day on October 29 and Librarian Violeta Garza spoke to two classrooms about library services and library careers. On November 3, she attended the Teen Pregnancy Prevention Taskforce meeting hosted by Project W.O.R.T.H., where she learned of the latest developments at Tafolla Middle School to help prevent unplanned teen pregnancy. That same day, she attended the Open House at Higgs Carter King Academy, where she spoke to parents and students about the services that the library provides.

On October 31, the Teen Services Department hosted a Halloween party, and teens took advantage of the opportunity play games and eat candy. The first was a Halloween Jeopardy game, which allowed participants to show off their “pop culture” knowledge of this holiday. The second was a chocolate guessing game to see who could guess the name of the chocolate simply by sight.

National Gaming Day, an ALA-sponsored celebration of games at the Library, took place on November 14. Teen Services offered two video gaming stations, plus access to board games and card games. Game Truck also visited the Central Library to showcase their services. The high-tech mobile gaming room gave teens a chance to play games that the Library does not currently own.

Kathleen Fordyce and Library Assistant Regina Almanza taped a segment for the December edition of “Cover to Cover.” In addition to promoting teen services at the library, they provided booktalks on the newest and most popular teen books, and holiday gift ideas for teens.

Central Library

Alamo Area Library Systems

The Alamo Area Library System held three very important meetings in Quemado, Universal City and Devine during November. Discussions and presentations centered around e-rate funding and broadband telecommunications issues. The AALS libraries have made a concerted effort to improve their broadband capacity for patrons, in order to make available to them the wide range of Internet options that are available.

AALS staff are working with libraries on their statistical profiles of services that have been recorded for the past nine years in the annual report. Each member library will receive a customized brochure that details statistical increases or decreases in eight areas and a continuum of models for library services.

Central Children's Services

Outreach has been the watchword in the Central Children's Services Department this fall. Staff members presented 59 community programs in October and November. Programs spanned a wide variety of population groups, from preschool children in child-care centers to pre-service teachers at the fall meeting of UTSA's International Reading Association, making a total of 938 children and adults who heard the library message at these meetings.

Central's annual Halloween Party was held on October 31 with festivities beginning in the Story Room and then moving out to the East Terrace. Librarians Carrie Vance, Jane Miller and Viki Ash had fun developing and presenting a series of stories, songs and puppet skits for attendees. Volunteers from Incarnate Word High School helped staff the activity tables on the terrace. This year's Halloween crafts included a bat hat, a pumpkin puppet and a spooky mask.

For Thanksgiving the department hosted three Come and Go craft sessions, Monday through Wednesday of the holiday week. Under the guidance of Carrie Vance, children brought their creative skills into play while making turkey hats, fall suncatchers and Thanksgiving placemats. Come and Go craft projects are popular with staff and customers alike as they provide opportunities for one-on-one-conversation in a busy but relaxed atmosphere with no worries about arriving late and missing part of the program.

Outreach Services

The fall has proven to be event-filled for Outreach. The staff brought the Bookmobile to two "COWs" (Careers on Wheels programs). At Oak Meadows Elementary School, 175 students and teachers came aboard; at Kate Schenck Elementary School, 282 children and teachers visited the Bookmobile.

At Oak Meadows, in addition to the usual questions about "how do you get the books onto the Bookmobile?" and "why don't the books fall off the shelves?", some of the students expressed an interest in becoming librarians. Among the Bookmobile's visitors was a class of youngsters with hearing impairments. Speaking to them through an ASL interpreter, Library Assistant Barbara Celitans and Librarian Ronee Anderson urged them to consider a career in librarianship. The students reacted with surprise: they had assumed librarianship would not be open to them. Barbara explained that librarians need a wide variety of skills, and they are already a step ahead of the competition because they can speak American Sign Language.

The Bookmobile also made special appearances at the Johnston Branch on October 31 and at the Parks Department's "Playful City" event at San Pedro Park on November 7, where 110 individuals dropped in; many of them left with armloads of borrowed books.

Barbara staffed a table at Market Square's Treat Street, where she registered 60 cardholders, and assisted the Maverick Branch at the District 7 Fall Fair. Bookmobile Manager Ramona Lucius and Semmes Branch Library Circulation Attendant Melissa Bustos ran an information table at the District 3 Fall Fair, where 49 library cards were issued. Melissa also played Libro the Library Lion at both the Fall Fair and the Play City event.

Barbara visited Sanchez Charter High School on November 20 to register library cardholders. Ronee staffed a table to issue library cards at the Tamalada event at Central Library on November 21. The Bookmobile made a special visit to Paschall Elementary School on December 4. On December 19, Outreach and staffers from various branches offered library card registration and storytimes to the diners at the H-E-B Feast of Sharing.

At the November Branch Managers meeting, Ramona and Kathy Claspill gave a presentation about "Bookmobiles: Past, Present and Future." Ramona also spoke to the managers about reporting procedures for outreach activities and presented the Outreach Office's system-wide plan for 2010-2011. Included in the plan is the formation of an ad hoc outreach committee to plan and evaluate outreach activities conducted by the branch libraries. For 2010, outreach efforts across the system will target five groups: nonprofit organizations, businesses, seniors, rural residents, and people with disabilities. The new Outreach Committee will be tasked with discovering ways that SAPL can better serve these groups.

Librarian Ronee Anderson deserves special acknowledgement for stepping in for Bookmobile driver David Casares, out for two months on medical leave. Ronee surrendered her days off so that she could drive the Bookmobile to all the aforementioned events. She also drove through some rough thunderstorms in order to get the Bookmobile to its scheduled stops.

Little Read Wagon

This month Little Read Wagon began using a new tool to promote programs scheduled at area schools: vertical banners. These retractable banners designed by Ana Far and Tiffanie Wilson stand 81" tall and feature brilliant colors to draw the attention of harried parents who are dropping off or picking up their young children from school. With only four banners and up to 40 programs scheduled each month, it is necessary to be selective in determining which locations will have the additional advertising. However, participants at locations that had the banners commented on how nice they look and said that they were a good reminder in addition to the traditional flyers or bookmarks that are sent home with the children. Delivering the banners one week ahead of each program also gave Little Read Wagon staff an opportunity to make additional contact with school staff and plan parking and other logistics in advance of the event.

Play and Learn programs are currently being offered at the Carver and Forest Hills Branch Libraries. At both locations staff have been pleased to see some families that had attended programs in the past, as well as some new faces. The November 14 workshop held at Central Library was very well attended, with 56 child-care providers participating.

During the Thanksgiving break Corinne Sánchez presented storytime at Seton Home, a facility providing housing and additional support for teen mothers and their children. Generally Seton Home already has a full schedule of activities and programs for the residents. However, during school breaks these events are limited and are a wonderful opportunity to provide early literacy support for the young mothers. Corinne will return to Seton Home to offer storytime during the winter and spring breaks.

Reference/Government Documents Department

Late October and November have been a busy time for the Reference/Government Documents Department. Staff hosted four programs (World Travel 101, 10 Things You Need To Know Before You Go to College, and two disabilities-related programs) and provided two tours.

What has kept the department the busiest is the shifting of the book collections. Since the beginning of October approximately a third of the entire adult circulating, reference and periodicals collections have been moved to their new locations. The work has been greatly expedited by assistance from the Shelving Unit and volunteers.

Technical Services Department

On November 3, Martha Knott, Margo Guzmán, Katie Enright, and Charlotte Balusek met with Roberto Rodriguez from Baker and Taylor to discuss the book leasing program. It was decided to lease up to 100 books per month for titles that have more than 100 holds.

After much deliberation, the Library's small collection of audiobooks known as Playaways were removed from the collection and given to the Book Cellar. This new audiobook format had low circulation statistics, was easily stolen from the container, and received complaints of bad sound quality and problems with batteries.

On November 5, Margo Guzmán and Kellie Hight attended the community needs assessment staff focus group meeting at Central Library.

Teen Services Department

Weekly Programs

Mondays with Violeta Garza: On November 2, Librarian Violeta Garza taught teens how to make yakisoba, easy Japanese noodles. Afterwards, gamers played the Wii video game Super Smash Brothers Brawl. On November 9, teens again played Brawl on November 9 and were surveyed for ideas about the types of programs they want to participate in at the library. November 16 was devoted to Jenga and video game Soulcalibur Legends. On November 23, teens played Brawl and Rock Band. November 30 was a day for Wii free play.

Wednesdays with Sylvia Pachecano: On November 4, teens participated in the "Ms. Sylvia League," a Teen Services fantasy football league hosted by Library Assistant Sylvia Pachecano. The teens met and compared the statistics from the Week 9 results and made predictions for Weeks 10 and 11. On November 18, Sylvia invited Alamo City Paranormal for the Teen Fang Club meeting. Teens listened to Pete Gonzales discuss downtown ghost stories about the Alamo, Emily Morgan Hotel, Menger Hotel and the Post Office. As the participants of the Teen Fantasy Football League visited the Teen Services Department the week of the 16th, they made their selections for Week 12 of the NFL. During the students' Thanksgiving break, again Ms. Pachecano made sure the Teen Fantasy Football League made their predictions for Week 13.

Thursdays with Regina Almanza: Celebrating Halloween, on October 29 teens carved pumpkins to make jack-o-lanterns. The teens had the option to take their pumpkins home or leave them at Teen Services as decorations for the Halloween party. On November 5, teens recycled old floppy disks to make some creative objects. Afterwards, teens enjoyed playing a rousing game of Super Smash Bros. Brawl on the Wii. In what has become a very popular night for Teen Services, teens made caramel apples on November 12. The quick and easy method was necessary as teens could not wait long to enjoy their tasty treats. Chopped peanuts, melted chocolate and some sugar sprinkles were set out as well. For the anticipated release of *The Twilight Saga: New Moon*, teens made "Team Edward" and "Team Jacob" buttons on November 19. Teens could also use the blank templates to create their own buttons, and there were buttons ranging from cute characters to Japanese names to interesting statements. Pictures of some of these craft nights are posted on the Teen Services Flickr page www.flickr.com/210teenlibrary.

On Saturday, November 7, the Baka Onigiri Con Ost (Stupid Rice Ball with Cheese) International Anime/Manga Club met and viewed the Animation anime *Heroic Age*.

Outreach, Tours and Groups

On October 29, Library Assistant Sylvia Pachecano provided catalog and database instruction and a tour of the library for students from the Healy Murphy Learning Center. On November 2, Kathleen Fordyce and Viki Ash provided book talks to sixth-grade students from Keystone School. Two history classes from Fox Tech High School received catalog and database instruction from Sylvia and Librarian Violeta Garza on November 12. On November 16, 18 and 20, Fox Tech students visited Teen Services to work on history fair projects. On November 17, Library Assistant Regina Almanza provided a tour of the library to students from Lanier High School.

Texana/Genealogy Department

On November 3, a group of eight home-school students received an orientation on National History Day 2010 and Texana/Genealogy. The 2010 National History Day topic is "Innovation in History." Discussion centered on how to choose a topic and what history fair judges look for in a presentation.

Texana/Genealogy Manager Frank Faulkner attended a meeting of SACCESS (the San Antonio Council for the Cooperation of Engineering & Scientific Societies) on the evening of November 4 to discuss local history and Texana/Genealogy.

On November 6 and 7, Frank attended the Texas State Genealogical Society annual meeting held in San Antonio. On November 6, he led a round-table discussion about conducting research in

Texana/Genealogy. Texana/Genealogy also had a display table at the meeting with its pathfinders and other information available to approximately 200 attendees.

A class of 43 students from a gifted and talented English class at MacArthur High School received an overview of the department and spent the morning of November 13 investigating local history topics, primarily using clipping files, but also books and microfilm. They will return on their own to research their topics at greater length.

The Friends of Texana/Genealogy met in the department on November 14.

Librarian Debbie Countess presented a class on "WorldCat and Library Catalogues."

Current displays include German Texan Heritage, Family History, Thanksgiving, Native Americans, and Texas Natural Wonders.

Librarian Matt DeWaelsche has updated the San Antonio Public Library archives and King William Association archives.

The department has been helping Nick Kotz with research for a new book he is writing for Trinity University Press. He presented the department with a \$500 check in recognition of its work, which "is vital to saving and studying our San Antonio and Texas History." Mr. Kotz is the author of several books, including *Judgment Days: Lyndon Baines Johnson, Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Laws that Changed America*.

Texana/Genealogy was also acknowledged as "an excellent place to work" and having "provided a wealth of information" by Rueben M. Pérez in his new book entitled *Lest We Forget: a Tribute to Those Who Forged the Way*, a history of his family and other Tejanos who helped settle San Antonio.

Finally, shifting the genealogy collection out on to the sixth floor has begun. This will allow for future growth of the collection. Many Texana books currently in the vault will be brought out into the area currently occupied by the genealogy stacks, area allowing easier use by our patrons.

Branch Libraries

Bazan

Brook Hollow

The Brook Hollow Branch Library hosted early voting as well as one of the Library Community Needs Assessment focus groups. Both of these opportunities had large audiences. Brook Hollow had a record number of babies and caregivers at their Tuesday morning Baby Times in November.

Several displays were popular at Brook Hollow, including a Day of the Dead display created by Library Assistant Jessica Fuentes, and two book displays, one by Library Assistant DiAnne Schuette that featured books for Native American History month and another by Children's Services Librarian Ruth Chiego featuring cookbooks under the theme of "Feast of Books" for the holidays. Library Assistant Barbara Lujan also showed her paintings at Brook Hollow for several weeks.

Carver

Carver Library has established a friendship with neighbor George Gervin Academy, where some thirty international students are attending classes. Cards were issued for nearly each student when they arrived for a tour led by Adult Services Librarian D.L. Grant. Academy faculty were impressed with the hospitality of branch staff, who made certain the students were aware of all of the resources available to them. Teachers have promised to return with their students for instruction in the use of the library's databases.

Sam Houston High School hosted a career day and invited D.L. to speak to students about careers in librarianship. The question-and-answer session following each class visit was interesting. At first students

were shy about asking questions, but after a bit of encouragement they didn't hold back. One of the most memorable queries was by a female student who asked D.L., "How much money do you make?" Afterward, speakers were treated to lunch prepared and served by students in the school's culinary arts department.

On November 3 a library community needs assessment focus group was held at Carver. The meeting was well attended by numerous regular users of the library.

Carver Library was one of a number of branches that celebrated Native American Heritage Month with a special presentation by the Institute of Texan Cultures. The presenter's program included a display of various artifacts used by the early Texans. The event drew a sizeable Saturday afternoon audience that appeared to appreciate learning about the Native American presence in Texas and the San Antonio area.

The Carver Literary Arts Society held two meetings in November, gaining new members at each gathering. Writers of all kind were represented.

November was an exciting month for Children's Services Librarian Amy Thorne, who made room on her calendar for community outreach. She visited W. W. White Elementary School, where she spoke with several classes about the Young Pegasus poetry competition. Many students were eager to get started on poems to submit. Older students were not overlooked. The Lunch Book Club at Wheatley Middle School finished their first selection and will begin reading their second book after returning from the Thanksgiving holidays. Amy took her Thanksgiving/Fall storytime to an outreach site and reports that the mothers present were deeply moved by *The Little Yellow Leaf* and *The Ugly Pumpkin*. In addition to the regularly offered storytimes, Carver has been hosting the Little Read Wagon for their weekly Play and Learn sessions.

The teen Anime Club continues to go strong with its group of regulars. Due to the holiday on its regular night, those reading the book club selection will be discussing it during the first December meeting. The Say Si! teen art program held its last function on November 21 and displayed some works created by participants throughout the program's time. A Young Adult book display of fairy themed works began to be depleted before Amy could even finish putting the books up.

Cody

On October 29, eerie music, cobwebs and skulls helped set the tone for Cody's annual *Scary Stories to Share in the Dark* contest held for school-aged children. Those in attendance had a scary good time. Teen Services Librarian Connie Hejl and Children's Services Librarian Sheila Acosta dressed up for the occasion and entertained patrons with scary stories and urban legends.

On October 30, first-grade students from Eleanor Kolitz Academy received their first library orientation from Ms. Sheila. After listening to a couple of stories, the students were divided into two groups to tour the library and learn about the online catalog and self-checkout operations. Library Assistant Luanne Bloom assisted with one of the groups. Most students received library cards on their visit and checked items out. On November 3 Sheila traveled to Eleanor Kolitz Academy to read stories about Election Day and voting.

Other groups visiting Cody for library orientation and tours included Grades 1 through 4 at the Montessori School House on November 5, and a homeschool group on November 17, representing 25 students in grades 1 through 9. Sheila read stories to each group, conducted a library orientation, and demonstrated how to use the online catalog and self-checkouts. Luanne assisted with the homeschool upper grades.

On November 5, Sheila conducted a poetry workshop at Huebner Elementary School for third- and fourth-graders in the "Hearts after School" program. The workshop was in conjunction with the promotion of SAPL's Young Pegasus contest.

On November 7 the Institute for Texan Cultures presented a special Native American program to parents and children. Participants were able to touch many authentic artifacts while learning about different Native

American groups. Cody families were also invited to attend a showing of *Brother Bear* on November 10, and children participated in “make and take” Native American Heritage arts and crafts on November 12.

In recognition of National Puzzle Week, on November 19 Sheila hosted Cody’s first “Floor Puzzle Mania” contest. The puzzles varied in complexity and the contest was open to all children, regardless of age.

For Thanksgiving, it was turkeys on cards, turkeys on the hands, and turkeys on the walls. Children participated in a “make and take” Thanksgiving craft all day on November 24, making pilgrim hats, Turkey cards and napkin holders. Parents commented that they were most appreciative of such activities for the children.

Teen Services Librarian Connie Hejl reported that the Mad Moonday movies for teens were very popular. *Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen* and the recent *Star Trek* movies drew large crowds. Many of the teens also enjoyed playing Guitar Hero and Super Smash Brothers Brawl after school on Mondays. While crowds have not always been large for the Cody Anime Club, it has started to attract some regular participants. At its last meeting the members watched *Shikabane Hime: Aka*, a series about zombies. The club plans to watch more of this series and other popular shows.

Film and book clubs enjoyed a successful November by discussing such titles as *Amazing Grace*; *Thistle and Twigg* by Mary Saums; *Dreams from My Father* by Barack Obama; and *The Faith Club* by Ranya Idliby.

Collins Garden

The City Forester held a well-attended class on planting trees on Saturday, October 17. Afterwards attendees helped to plant two Natchez crape myrtles and four other white crape myrtles, which replaced trees that had been planted more than twenty years ago.

The new sidewalk installed on the north side of Collins Garden Branch Library created access and water pooling problems, a situation that was remedied by the installation of a transition zone from the brick pavers to sidewalk and the addition of drainage channel from the brick pavers to the street in section of new sidewalk.

Collins Garden was selected as an early voting and Election Day site for the November election. There was a light turnout.

A new apartment complex opened just south of the old stockyards, and staff members have noticed an increase in new card applications, as well as seeing many new faces.

Collins Garden hosted a Halloween Spooktacular Party, attracting an audience of 30 children and teens. Librarian Heidi Novotny presented five programs, including weekly video gaming a, a National Gaming Day event, and two fantasy films, to a total of 93 teens.

The holidays are bringing their special magic to Collins Garden Branch Library through the efforts of Children's Services Librarian Leigh Bedford, who has been busy creating new holiday crafts, including a snowflake craft, two penguin crafts and two turkey crafts. In addition to promoting Young Pegasus through signage and talking individually with juvenile visitors, she has also been contacting and visiting schools to encourage the students to submit their poetry to the Young Pegasus competition.

Collins Garden has just completed its bi-annual computer instruction classes using one of SAPL's mobile labs. The classes well attended, and much appreciated by those in attendance.

Cortez

In honor of Native-American Heritage Month Gary Perez, caretaker of the Native American Church Trust, gave a presentation on Indigenous Culture and Customs at the Cortez Branch Library on November 1.

On November 4 Adult Services Librarian Jerry Madrigal gave a Spanish language tour of the library for parents of Athens Elementary School students. The tour was organized by Athens teachers to familiarize the families with the resources available at the San Antonio Public Library. After the tour all fifteen parents received new library cards.

Library Assistant Stephanie Vásquez hosted a very popular book discussion on Mario Acevedo's *Jailbait Zombie* on November 5.

Teen Gaming on Thursday afternoons continues to draw a large crowd. During November 49 teens enjoyed Wii Sports and Guitar Hero.

Students from 8 to 13 years of age are participating in a poetry workshop series conducted by Children's Services Librarian Carol Collins, implementing ideas from a workshop recently conducted at the Central Library by Naomi Shihab Nye.

Children from Texas Migrant Council classes have been visiting Cortez regularly, and their lead teacher recently commented on how much more the children appreciate books since they've been attending storytime at the branch. The teacher reports that the children now turn a book's pages attentively and pretend to read and previously they had little interest in the available books.

Great Northwest

Children's Services Librarian Elspeth Blakeman retired on October 31, after 28 years with the city. She will be missed. A public reception was held in her honor and was attended by several members of the Management Team.

On November 5, Great Northwest hosted one of the Community Needs Assessment focus groups, where patrons gave input on what matters most to them at the library.

Library Assistant Christina Reedy solicited similar input from Great Northwest patrons by having them complete the statement, "I am thankful for libraries because..." on colored slips of paper. These slips have formed a gratitude chain that is hung around the library. The chain will continue through the holidays with holiday colors. Librarian Tracey Knouse formed a partnership with the Northside Independent School District GED department to provide math tutoring for students on selected evenings through the month of January. Library Aides Patricia Martínez, Jennifer Wright, Justine Causey and Rosalinda Montelongo assisted with shifting the entire Spanish collection of books, and other collection moves throughout the branch.

Great Northwest Library has beautifully cleaned carpets this month. Sitting down for storytimes has become a more pleasant experience. Several moms have commented on the change.

Several volunteers have joined the ranks this last month. Children's programming has especially enjoyed the extra help with puppeteering and the puppet crafts. It is amazing to see the difference when there is more than one voice running all the puppets. The library is still accepting volunteer applications, especially for puppeteering on a Friday.

Children's Programming has had a very satisfying month. Hands-on Science participants had a blast with bubble experiments. The ABC Club just completed their studies of the letter K by making a kangaroo puppet, playing in a kitchen, kicking balloons, matching kittens and learning about Miss Bindergarten and her kindergarten.

Guerra

Branch Manager Dexter Katzman attended the regular COLS meeting on October 29. He joined two other branch managers at a useful training session on shared carts presented by Margo Guzmán on November 5. That evening, he attended a regular meeting of the Cable-Westwood Neighborhood Association, where he provided information about the new branch schedule and answered several questions about library programs and services. About 40 community members attended.. He took his Spanish proficiency

examination on November 17. On November 18, he joined many of his colleagues for a presentation by Stephen Abram titled Library 2.0. Mr. Abram provided useful observations about how public librarians can maximize their services in a rapidly changing technological environment.

Children's Services Librarian Yanira C. Vegevano planned and presented three storytimes at the library for children through age five during the reporting period: to 83 participants on November 4, 78 participants on November 18, and 42 participants on November 25. She conducted three outreach programs, visiting Westwood Terrace Elementary School on November 2 for an ESOL Even Start program (25 participants) and Passmore Elementary School on November 3 for an ESOL program (20 participants) and November 30 for a GED program (22 participants). She participated in and helped with the National League of Cities Congress of Cities Exposition on November 12.

Adult Services Librarian Dorothy Blow visited the Sterling Seniors Center, the Family Life Senior Center, and the Virginia Gill Senior Center during the reporting period. She spent her time reading stories and singing with various groups of seniors. At the Family Life Senior Center, she facilitated the circulation of twelve books and eight CDs. She helped answer questions from participants at the Virginia Gill Center and provided some basic reference assistance and computer orientation. She and Virginia Gill Senior Center staff are discussing weekly two-hour visits for computer training. She developed two Halloween displays for the seniors to decorate. The seniors worked together on each Halloween display, one at the Family Life Senior Center and another at the Sterling Senior Center. The attendance for the Family Life Senior Center was 55 and for the Sterling Senior Center was 68.

Adult Services Librarian Stephen Jackson created a month-long display about Native Americans Congressional Medal of Honor recipients, recognizing both Native American month and Veterans Day. Also in recognition of Native American month, he created a display about Cherokee and Cree syllabaries (writing systems) and offered to write people's names using one of the systems.

The Tuesday Evening Book Club met on November 10 and ten participants discussed *My Life in Dog Years* by Gary Paulsen. On November 13 Stephen represented the branch and SAPL at the Cable Elementary School Career Day, where he conducted the program using a storytime format. He read from books in English and Spanish about the library profession and interspersed his readings with active participation songs and a puppet show. On November 19, his Spanish-language *Club de lectura* discussed *El juego del angel (The Angel's Game)* by Carlos Ruíz Zafón. The twelve participants enjoyed discussing the plot and sharing a meal.

Library Assistant and Teen Services Coordinator Tim Johnson coordinated two Say Sí art workshops, one on October 31 for three participants and another on November 7 for eight participants. He worked with the San Antonio Ghost Hunters who presented a special Halloween program for 23 participants. The Game-Ra video game club had 42 teens at the November 10 program. The monthly Yu-Gi-Oh/board game night had 28 participants. There were three Wii Play Saturdays, November 7 for 21 teens, November 14 for 26 teens, and November 21 for 38 teens. Tim attended a Computer Class Liaisons Training on November 18.

Igo

Igo Branch Library celebrated its second anniversary with a party sponsored by the Friends of Igo on December 6. Clowns entertained children at the branch, and approximately 100 patrons enjoyed cookies, cake and punch.

Johnston

The Johnston Children's Department has a new group of friends – the students and teachers of Shekinah Radiance Academy located just around the corner on Old Pearsall Road. On October 29, 19 of Shekinah's fourth- and fifth-graders, their teachers and bus driver, came for a tour of the Johnston Branch Library. Johnston staff were pleased to see that a number of the children had brought their library cards and wanted to check out books. Shekinah's first-, second-, and third-graders paid a visit on November 19. Children's Services Librarian Karen Sebesta entertained them with three stories and some songs, followed by a tour of the library.

On October 31 the Bookmobile paid a visit to Johnston. Outreach Librarian Ronee Anderson was at the helm and checked out materials to patrons who peeked in for a look inside the big purple library card.

October 31 was also the date for the Second Annual Johnston Pumpkin Painting. Twenty-two children and adults gathered around tables in the middle of the library to create artistic renditions of funny, scary, and silly faces on pumpkins. Many thanks to the Friends of the Johnston Library, particularly Marshall and Jeanne Mundorff, for making this event possible.

Several of the children and parents of the Johnston Branch community attended the Young Pegasus Poetry Workshops held on Monday and Tuesday afternoons in late November. Using construction paper and, the children created journals to jot down their thoughts and write their poems, using the large selection of colored pencils provided for them. Before beginning to write, they heard the poetry of recent contest winners along with the works of famous poets from selected poetry volumes in the Johnston collection. After Karen shared a few ideas and suggestions from Naomi Nye's workshop held at the Central Library, participants began working on their own journal entries and poems. Those attending were always anxious to get started on their own creations. Johnston Branch Library is very proud of its own Young Pegasus winner, Library Aide Vida Leal Salas, who read her winning poems to the group.

Because of Johnston's proximity to Lackland Air Force Base and the presence of many retirees from the Air Force Village retirement centers and those who live in the surrounding neighborhood, branch staff are very conscious of the importance of national holidays in our community. On November 9 Karen and Library Assistant Robert Ayala presented a concert of patriotic music for Veteran's Day. Robert played guitar and Karen played keyboard, and they were joined by several children who sang along, as well as Guerra Adult Services Librarian Stephen Jackson, who was visiting the Johnston Branch with his family.

The branch is getting into the holiday spirit with Adult Services Librarian Rich Field's latest book and media display. The kiosk has materials dealing with Thanksgiving and Christmas crafts, and has seen heavy circulation. On November 18, branch staff were treated to a Thanksgiving lunch, a collaboration between the Library Friends, who provided the turkey, and staff members who brought the trimmings.

Landa

Life at Landa is settling into a routine with staff starting to get used to the new hours, and parents are adjusting to the new storytime schedule. November 24 was Accidental Grandparents day, with four grandparents attending baby time and five attending storytime. The grandparents were visiting San Antonio for the Thanksgiving holiday.

Landa Teen Services Liaison Beatrice Canales hosted National Gaming Day activities at the branch. Three young participants enjoyed Wii games and board games donated by Hasbro.

On November 28, Gary Perez, caretaker of the Native American Church Trust, spoke about the history of Native Americans and about stewardship of the land to a group of about 30 attendees. He works with the Mission descendants and serves on the Headwaters Commission. This program was in honor of Native American Heritage Month.

Las Palmas

Early voting and Election Day were quiet for this election; as always, thanks to staff who reported early, stayed late, and moved recurring programs to the library.

In addition to her monthly day care center outreach (Madonna, Avance, and Good Samaritan), Children's Services Librarian Gina Brudi spent time visiting with children and parents in the community. She visited Kelly USA in partnership with staff from the Central Library and the Collins Garden and Bazan Branch Libraries; staffed information tables at the Las Palmas Elementary School Fall Festival (50 people) and at the Edgewood Independent School District Literacy Night, where she was assisted by Library Assistant Patricia Pérez (39); and visited Gardendale Elementary Schools (47).

Thanks to Imelda García, who prepared a community *altar* for Las Palmas to commemorate *Día de los muertos*. It tied in quite nicely with the program that Gina presented in partnership with the Benavides Center to highlight World Literacy Day.

Nine adults attended the community needs assessment focus group at Las Palmas, and staff member Patricia Pérez attended one of the staff focus groups.

The live dramatic readings from *Her Eyes Were Blue* were very well received by an audience of 32. *Her Eyes Were Blue* is the story of Cynthia Ann Parker, who was captured by the Comanche and gave birth to Chief Quanah Parker. One customer commented that it was the first play she had ever seen. This was a very professional presentation, well acted with elaborated sets, costumes, and music. The drawings for the free tickets to San Pedro Playhouse were a huge hit and no one left early. This was presented as part of the *Bringing Books to Life* series sponsored by the San Pedro Playhouse and the Library Foundation.

Although only two teens attended the National Gaming Day event on November 14, they played strong games of tennis and bowling on the Wii.

While the Book Club selection *The Guernsey Literary And Potato Peel Pie Society* received mixed reviews, Adult Services Librarian Karen Michaelson's group of six did enjoy the game that she devised to lessen confusion about the story line and get the discussion going – they said that it was fun and helped them understand the book.

Classes and presentations attended by staff included Reader's Advisory: Science Fiction and Fantasy Library 2.0: Where We've Been and Where We're Going, book repair; and Adjusting or Correcting Fines and Fees.

Las Palmas book displays included Texas Recycles, India and the Festival of Lights, *Día de los Muertos*, Texas History, Teen Read Week, Breast Cancer Awareness, Young Pegasus and "The Nutcracker."

Maverick

Maverick Branch Library had a busy November. The branch was an early voting site and Election Day site. Special thanks to the staff who came and opened up the library early and those who stayed late.

The Department of Community Initiatives came and taught computer classes from November 9 through November 19. As always, these classes were very popular and the demand for more than a quarterly schedule was high.

On November 6 staff from Maverick Library and throughout the library system celebrated the retirement of Librarian Alice DeCristoforo.

The November 12 Native American History program organized by the Adult Programming Committee, a screening of *A Thousand Roads*, was attended by 12 people.

Children's programs continue to be popular. On November 7, Children's Services Librarian Amy Roberts went to the District 7 Fall Festival and passed out library literature with Barbara Celitans. On November 20, she did a storytime and tour for 20 children and parents from Grace Christian School.

Memorial

Día de los muertos was observed at the Memorial Branch with the making of a traditional Day of the Dead altar. The altar, which was on display for two weeks, showcased the work of local artist Imelda Zapata García. Children also helped decorate the altar by adding their own art work created during a Family Fun Night craft. This is the third year that Ms. García and her family have kindly shared their altar display at Memorial.

Circulation Attendant Adam Capelo shared his origami-making talents with patrons at the November 10 Family Fun program. Almost twenty children and adults were given an introduction to paper folding and were instructed on how to create such origami classics as the jumping frog and the crane.

National Gaming day was celebrated on November 14 with friendly board and video game competition.

The November 17 Family Fun Night celebrated Native American Heritage Month. Families listened to a story and were able to make a craft.

Author Patricia Greathouse visited the Memorial Branch on November 21 to sign and read from her new book *Mariachi*. The reading was preceded by a performance from the Edgewood Fine Arts Academy Mariachis, who graciously volunteered their time to provide musical entertainment.

More than 20 patrons enjoyed watching the recently released animated movie *Up* on November 23. This, and a number of make-and-take crafts, was offered as part of Thanksgiving break programming for children and families.

Children's Services Librarian Trina Smith contacted area schools to invite them to display their students' art in the library. The first display was by Madison Elementary School fourth-graders, who showed their interpretations of *molas* of Panama. The students were so excited about the opportunity to share their work that they asked to visit the library and have their pictures taken with their display.

Adult Service Librarian Sandra Griffin coordinated the distribution of vouchers for patrons to purchase discounted tickets to view the Nutcracker Ballet. The discounted tickets were made available to select libraries through ArtsSA, a local non-profit that promotes the arts in San Antonio.

Teens continued to meet on Tuesday afternoons for Wii and Play Station gaming. An average of 15 teens filled the meeting room to match skills on Guitar Hero and Mario Kart games.

Outreach

Adult Services Librarian Sandra Griffin and Library Assistant Carlos Lora participated in the St. Mary's Learning Center Family Literacy Day on November 4 by sharing information about library services to attendees.

Children's Services Librarian Trina Smith provided library information for 200 attendees at the Coronado/Escobar Elementary School Family Literacy Night, and was very active with other outreach activities:

- Bilingual storytime for Family Services Association at the Neighborhood Place
- Pajama Day at Stafford Early Childhood Center
- Outreach at Cardenas Early Childhood Center
- Career Day at Roosevelt Elementary School

Reagan High School/Bannwolf Library

The Bannwolf Library had an exciting November. The library was bustling with students from the community doing research on various school projects. Customers from elementary school through college took advantage of the school and public databases and print materials.

Adults had several program choices available during the month of November. Classes in Chinese dance were offered on Wednesday evenings. Local members of the community taught the class that was open to all adults. Everyone had fun learning new steps or brushing up on the steps they already knew. For adults interested in learning a few Chinese phrases or even for those fluent in Chinese, weekly programs were offered. The third adult program offered this month was an art and drawing class taught by Graham Toms, a former employee of the Disney Academy. Participants learned how to draw portraits.

Teens were treated to several programs. The ComiX Relief Club continued to meet each Tuesday. Teens had a costume contest for Halloween, and a Thanksgiving party. Another activity offered for teens was a

showing of *Batman* on the big screen in the library. Other teen programs included Wii gaming and graphic novel discussions. The teens in the Reagan High School Art Club set up a display in the library for *Día de los muertos* (Day of the Dead or All Souls' Day.) All patrons visiting the library enjoyed viewing the display and reading about this tradition.

Children attending B.A.C.K. Pack events participated in a variety of wonderful craft programs on Tuesday afternoons. Participants during the month of November made yarn pictures, yarn baskets, turkeys, and door hangers. Each Tuesday more and more children attend the event and thoroughly enjoy the challenging crafts. The Kindergarten Book Club meets twice a month. Attendance is fairly low, but attendees have a good time hearing books read about kindergarten and first grade children.

Storytime on Saturday mornings continues to have high attendance numbers. The library student interns presented a storytime about Thanksgiving, followed by a thankful tree craft. The Reagan High School Latin Club presented storytime and prepared crafts for kids and their families. The group presented a Greek play for the young customers followed by a craft. Parents and children enjoyed the activities.

The Bannwolf Library had a special family event on November 17. Library customers of all ages joined in this fun hands-on science evening with High Tech High Touch Science Made Fun. Each participant made his own column and tested to see how much weight it could hold. The suspense was unbearable as sand was added to The Crusher. Participants discovered whether their creation made it or broke it. Everyone had tons of science fun.

Roosevelt High School/Pruitt Library

This month, thanks to assistance from Library Department Systems Manager Ray Fraga and the SAPL IT team, a printer was installed for the SAPL computers. This temporary fix, as well as the addition of cabling at the circulation desk, has increased service to patrons and made everyone smile. Customers no longer have to leave the library because of an inability to print, or wait in line for slower-than-optimal checkout stations.

The morning of October 28, the Pruitt staff met Carol Spiegel of Project Learn to Read in order to investigate offering Adult Literacy and ESL classes at Pruitt. She left excited about the prospect of bringing these classes to the community in this part of the city.

On October 29 the Windcrest Optimist Club asked the staff of the Molly Pruitt Library to speak at their dinner meeting. There were 15 members present. Adult and Teen Services Librarian Troy Lawrence presented a program on what the library has to offer the citizens of Windcrest. When asked what they would like for adult programming, the audience responded with "computer classes." Mr. Lawrence explained that computer classes would be offered at Pruitt beginning November 1.

On October 29, Branch Manager Mariya Rodríguez participated in a joint outreach venture with North East Independent School District high-school librarians at College Night. They handed out information about how libraries can help students prepare for college and how libraries can help parents find sources to pay for college. Mariya and Bannwolf/Reagan Branch Manager Kathy Shaw also talked specifically about public library resources such as tutor.com's Live Homework Help and digital downloads. The evening was attended by more than 1000 NEISD students and their parents

On October 30 Troy read to 100 kindergartners and fifth-graders from Montgomery Elementary School during their Read Around the School activity. The students enjoyed listening to Dav Pilkey's *The Halloween weiner* and David A. Carter's *Halloween Bugs*. Following the program, they were invited to storytime and special Halloween events at Pruitt Library.

Troy presented a special Spider Storytime on October 31. The ten children and three adults in attendance discussed spiders, listened to the book *Be Nice to Spiders*, sang "The Eensy Weensy Spider" and other spider songs, and learned hand movements. Participants made chenille stem spiders. Everyone was caught up in the fun. Afterward the group were treated to spooky popcorn hands and watched *It's the Great Pumpkin, Charlie Brown*.. A total of seven children wearing costumes came to the library to collect

their free “Boo-ook or Treat” book. There were chickens, Transformers, princesses, bees, and other frightfully fun creatures. But, definitely, customers left talking about the costumes of staff – especially Troy’s Laura Bush costume.

On November 1 Pruitt Library hosted its first DCI-based computer class, offered by Librarians Troy Lawrence and Mike Green. Five Pruitt patrons learned about the difference between desktop and laptop computers and practiced mouse basics while completing Mouserobics and a jigsaw puzzle from Jigzone.com. They left wanting more, so there is already an audience for the next class.

Librarian Carolyn Bradley presented a B.A.C.K. Pack event on November 3 in honor of Native American Heritage Month. Children and parents enjoyed trying their hands at sand painting. In another part of the library, a darkened room, a large screen, and all the popcorn their stomachs could hold made for a perfect event, according to the teens who enjoyed a showing of the anime favorite *Spirited Away*.

Branch Manager and poet Mariya Rodríguez presented a writing workshop for teens on November 4. The workshop focused on “heart-mapping” and “say back” as techniques for the beginning poet. She also distributed information about how to enter SAPL’s Young Pegasus Poetry Competition online.

Pruitt parents and children were up to their elbows in tempera paint after a fall-inspired storytime with Mariya on November 7. After dancing and singing about autumn activities, the group created beautiful paintings of colorful trees using only their fingertips for brushes.

November 7 was also the first meeting of *La Tertulia*, Pruitt’s adult Spanish-language book club. The group met and decided upon their first two readings: the Miguel de Cervantes classic *Don Quixote* and Julia Alvarez’s *De cómo las muchachas García perdieron el acento (How the García Girls Lost Their Accents)*. This book club is being hosted by Roosevelt High School Spanish teacher Miryeam Lamprea, who has also led the original *La Tertulia* at the Brook Hollow Branch Library for the past five years.

On November 8 Mariya and Children’s Services Librarian Carolyn Bradley led the second computer class, Windows Desktop. Students learned how to create a document, save a document, and open a new document, and left with activities to practice these skills at home. Staff found that many of the participants were challenged by the skills necessary to complete the entire Desktop lesson.

Carolyn offered a program emphasizing the themes of celebrating the beauty of the planet and emulating the reverence for the land exhibited by the Native Americans. Using Thomas Locker’s *The Land of Gray Wolf* and his autobiography *The Man Who Paints Nature*, B.A.C.K. Pack participants created landscapes using tempera paint.

Carolyn also made contact with ten local child-care centers, offering field trips to the Pruitt Public Library or staff to conduct in-house “field trips” at their locations.

On November 10 Carolyn and Troy visited the Windcrest United Methodist Church Daycare and read Michael DeMunn’s *The Earth is Good* to two classes. A class of eleven two-year-olds (and two adults) listened to the story, sang songs, and created a necklace with shapes and colors to represent the earth’s elements in the story. Later, twelve three-year-olds recreated the elements in the story with body movements and made necklaces. Flyers were distributed, offering suggestions of topics for parents to discuss with their children and Pruitt’s storytime and B.A.C.K. Pack schedules. A down to earth time was had by all.

Pruitt staff are diligently working to provide many kinds of programming. Recurring events planned for December include “made by hand” sessions to teach a variety of crafts such as basic beading, cross stitch and quilting. The staff looks forward to offering these free sessions to patrons who can use the skills taught and the materials provided to make special gifts for the holiday season. Attendance continues to grow for the Tuesday B.A.C.K. Pack sessions for school-aged children and teen offerings on Wednesdays. Always popular, of course, are the “Wild Wii Wednesdays,” with ten to twenty teens

attending on a consistent basis. Special thanks to the Central Teen Services Department, who lent Wii Mario Kart – one of the most popular games played so far – to Pruitt.

On November 11, “America: Land of the Free because of the Brave,” an exhibit created by Branch Manager Mariya Rodriguez to honor veterans in the Pruitt community, went on display. Many school and community members participated by lending their pictures and memorabilia for the event. A book and media display accompanied the exhibit. More than 200 people visited the exhibit during the four days it was open for viewing. Visitors to the exhibit were encouraged to sign one of two “thank you” banners, which will be mailed to units deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan over the holiday season as a reminder that their friends, family, and the San Antonio community are grateful for the service of our military men and women.

On November 14 Troy celebrated a “Turkey Time” storytime. Five children and four adults participated in reading *1,2,3 Thanksgiving*, and created a Styrofoam turkey toy that bounces on an elastic band. These turkeys will be safe from Thanksgiving feasts!

November 14 was also National Gaming Day: Customers of the Pruitt Library were invited to participate in events ranging from PS2 RockBand to Wii Snowboarding. Participants also evaluated the day’s activities. Some of the responses received were, “Nice library”, “Snowboarding with the Wii was awesome”, “Had lots of fun.” There were a total of 41 participants playing games such as chess, checkers, Trouble, Chutes and Ladders, and Uno Attack. There was even a group of teens that held their own impromptu Yu-Gi-Oh! tournament. Staff would like to continue this gaming event on a regular basis to give families a chance to play games and spend quality time together. Families have welcomed the free activities that give them a chance to have fun and interact with each other.

The Pruitt Public Library is starting to attract regular customers, among them a young family with a newborn who bringing other children from their neighborhood to give them a chance to get out of the house and spend time doing fun things at the library. Several patrons come regularly to use the library’s computers. A couple of ladies have come to use the computers because their home computers were out of operation. The three quiet rooms are constantly occupied by older patrons, mostly single mothers who are completing online courses. They bring their children to programming events and to check out books and give themselves an opportunity for quiet study.

On November 16, 80 second-graders from the David M. Copeland School of Excellence toured the Pruitt Library with Mariya and visited with “Dr. Lawrence, the book doctor” (Librarian Troy Lawrence.) “Doctor” Lawrence read *L is for Library* and held a lively discussion about book care. Children’s Services Librarian Carolyn Bradley read *The Library Lion* and reflected on the difference between public and private spaces and the appropriate way to behave in each. Upon leaving, students were given a library card application and a letter for their parents, encouraging them to talk to their children, read together every night, and visit the library.

On November 17, Mariya presented a B.A.C.K. Pack session called Haiku to You for 20 participants of all ages, who wrote haiku and illustrated them with blown-ink art on rice paper. They then folded these and created a traditional binding using an ancient Japanese method of decorated sticks – in this case, paint sticks graciously donated by the Home Depot on Windsor Hill. Mariya also handed out information about the Young Pegasus Poetry Competition and showed examples of children’s poetry collected in the anthologies of previous years. Several participants said that they were interested in entering their poetry and were excited to hear that submissions could be done online.

On November 18, Pruitt Librarians Mariya Rodríguez, Troy Lawrence, and Carolyn Bradley attended the inspirational and enlightening presentation by Stephen Abram regarding the future of libraries and library service. To ensure that the branch library is truly meeting the community’s needs, Pruitt staff have begun to discuss how library programming and procedures match the reasons that customers come to the library.

November 18 was also the launch of Pruitt's "I'm with the Banned" teen book club, led by Mariya Rodríguez. This book club is dedicated to the reading of books and authors whose works are challenged, censored, or banned. In honor of Native American Heritage Month, the club read Sherman Alexie's *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian*, one of ALA's ten most challenged books of 2008. Eight teens attended this first meeting and are excited about the December selection, *Deadline* by Chris Crutcher.

The Roosevelt retired teachers luncheon group visited the Pruitt Library on November 19 and were treated to a tour by Mariya. This group of 43 former employees continues to stay connected to this community and were thrilled to see the new library and hear about the partnership with SAPL.

On November 19, the Pruitt Library hosted a showing of *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*, the story of the plunder of the Native American as seen through the eyes of a Lakota doctor, a Sioux chief, and a Senator during the late 1800s. Both the film and the free popcorn were well-received.

Storytime on November 21 revolved around everything turkey. Children's Services Librarian Carolyn Bradley read *I am a Turkey* and led the participants in a rousing dance and song called "The Turkey Tango" while their turkey hand puppets were drying. Several of these families also stayed for the showing of Disney's *Brother Bear*, a film about a Native American boy who is magically turned into a bear while stalking the mother bear who killed his older brother. Many of these families returned with friends for the November 22 showing of *A Charlie Brown Thanksgiving*. As the economic downturn has been particular hard in this neighborhood, the families have expressed gratitude for offerings of fun, family-friendly films and other events that are free at the library. Staff also provided schedules of our December events.

Mariya offered a B.A.C.K. Pack session on November 24 called "Totems and Trinkets." She shared Will Hobbs' picture book for older readers, *Bear Dream*, about a Ute boy who wakes up Grandfather Bear so that spring can return. Participants learned about Native Americans' connections to animals and nature and designed special bear totems that they strung with beads to create necklaces.

On November 28, Librarian Cynthia Saenz began a series of featured presentations called "Celebrations of Light". Throughout the holiday season, programs at the Pruitt Library will focus on celebrations of light, including celebrations from Mexico, India, France, and Germany, as well as Hanukkah and Kwanzaa. Mrs. Saenz presented a storytime about the legend of the poinsettia.

On November 29, Mariya offered a special session called "Time for Teachers: SAPL Resources at Your Fingertips and Earbuds." She highlighted several online information database resources and the Libguides available on the mysapl.org site, and showcased offerings from Tutor.com.

"It's a Woman's World," the branch's newest book club for adults, met on November 30 to discuss Lisa See's *Snow Flower and the Secret Fan*. This monthly book club led by librarian Mariya Rodríguez will focus on writings by or about women and women's issues. In January, the group will discuss Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

San Pedro

Children's Services Librarian Betsy Dalton presented four storytimes and 4 B.A.C.K. Pack programs. These programs discussed Thanksgiving and various aspects of hibernation. Betsy also presented storytimes to 120 children at several different child care facilities, including the VIA Child Development Center, Educare Child Care, a preschool class at the Circle School, and the SAC Child Development Center. Fifteen books were also delivered to each child-care class for their use during the month. At the invitation of the Circle School, Ms. Dalton attended the school's Thanksgiving Feast on November 20 with Ms. Barbie's class, to whom she presents a monthly storytime.

On October 31, Betsy, assisted by Library Assistant Cynthia Cruz, hosted a Family Fun Halloween party. Sixty-six patrons attended, making Halloween crafts and decorating treat bags. The children also participated in an interactive storytime: disappearing trick-or-treaters!

On November 7, Betsy and Cynthia represented SAPL at the Parks and Recreation Department "Come Out and Play Day.". Approximately 200 people visited the Library table; 65 children created fall crafts, and 60 new library cards were issued.

At the invitation of Hawthorne Academy librarian Bonnye Cavazos, Betsy attended the City Council meeting on November 19, during which winners of the Be One in a Million School Library Card Campaign were honored. Ms. Dalton and Ms Cavazos worked together to ensure that every child at Hawthorne had a library card. Because of their work, Hawthorne Academy was the school with the most new cards in San Antonio Independent School District.

Reading Rocks!, San Pedro's onsite book club for second- and third-graders, held its monthly meeting on November 21. The kids read and discussed Brian Selznick's *The Houdini Box*, a 2009 Bluebonnet Award nominee. Following the discussion, the children consulted several magic books and learned magic tricks to entertain their families!

The Monte Vista and Kriterion Montessori schools bring classes to the library on a weekly basis. The students range in age from eight to thirteen, grades 2 through 8. When the classes come to the library, the Children's Services Librarian spends approximately thirty minutes with the students, suggesting books and helping them navigate the Dewey Decimal system, place holds, use the catalog and databases, and locate materials. The two schools bring approximately seventy-five students per week to the San Pedro Library.

Teen Services Librarian Monty Holcomb hosted three informal Thursday chess events, all of which had from eight to twelve people participating each night. Monty also held four teen events centered around various Wii sports games, including bowling, baseball, golf and boxing.

During November, Monty also participated in one of the Community Needs Assessment staff focus groups, offering input about library services that he believes are needed by the community.

Monty also reorganized the entire teen collection at San Pedro, providing more space and easier access, in the hope of accommodating changes which may occur as a result of implementing floating collections. In addition, the rest of San Pedro's staff has been busy running lists, weeding, and generally cleaning up the collection.

Semmes

To celebrate Halloween, Semmes staff had a pumpkin carving contest. Four teams competed for the recognition as best pumpkin artists. The entries included a cat, a goblin, a ghost, and a mouse hotel. After two days of voting by Semmes patrons, the cat was declared the winner.

November was filled with lots of teen activities. Yu-Gi-Oh! tournaments were held on November 1 and November 15. A weekly teen game night was offered on Tuesdays. On average, seven to eight teens attended each game night and had fun playing games on the Wii or Playstation 2.

The Friends of Semmes Branch Library held their monthly meeting on November 4. Plans were made for the next book sale, which will take place on February 6, 2010. The Friends also planned to put up the Semmes Christmas decorations on November 21. The Friends group provided Wassail and cookies, and children were invited to decorate an ornament for the Semmes tree. The library now looks very festive!

This month, the branch received two new book trucks donated by the Friends. One of the trucks will be used by the branch's recently hired library aide, while the other truck will be used by volunteers and other staff members for various shelving tasks.

Thousand Oaks

Construction on the Thousand Oaks sign outside the library is complete, and now the library can be identified from the street! In addition to the new sign, lettering with the branch name has also been installed on the building.

Thousand Oaks celebrated Halloween with a party for children on October 31. A total of 169 children and parents made spider hats, ghosts, and bat bookmarks, listened to stories, saw a magician perform tricks, marched in a costume parade, and trick-or-treated in the library.

The Scholastic Literacy Caravan visited Thousand Oaks on November 14, staying for two hours so that children and their families could explore everything it has to offer.

Computer classes started on November 9, and they were very popular with patrons. Two of the classes were taught by Adult Services Librarian Jorge Chavez.

The Friends of Thousand Oaks Branch Library held their fall book sale on November 7 and raised about \$800! A variety of donated books and movies was available to browse and buy. The staff at Thousand Oaks is very thankful for the Friends group and all the hard work the members did to make the sale a success.

Jorge Chavez facilitated his monthly book club on November 2. The group read *Suite Française* by Irene Nemirovsky. Every Wednesday, Jorge also offers sessions to help patrons with their résumés and job searches.

Greatjubilée Dance Company offered free dance classes for children two evenings a week for three weeks. The classes were open to all children, and at the end of the three-week session the children put on a recital for their parents.

Children's and teens' continue to be popular. To celebrate Thanksgiving, the children who attended storytime listened to Thanksgiving-themed stories and made turkey hats for a craft. At the Wednesday evening teen programs, Barbara Kwiatkowski offers crafts along with other activities; they also have Guitar Hero and Rock Band tournaments.

The Tobin Library at Oakwell

The Friends of the Tobin Library at Oakwell held their annual meeting on November 14. Local author Florence Byham Weinberg joined the Friends to speak about her books and the years of research, travel, and passion that led her to write them. Her books feature real-life Jesuit monk Franz Pfeffercorn, fictionalized into an amateur sleuth solving mysteries from local history.

SAPL celebrated Native American Awareness Month in November. The Tobin Library participated by providing a display of colorful and interesting books covering a wide range of topics. Patrons expressed their appreciation for the opportunity to learn about Native American culture. The Tobin Library also held a family movie event, a screening of *Brother Bear* enjoyed by all in attendance.

To celebrate the release of the newest teen vampire book-turned-movie more than a dozen teens enjoyed getting vampire makeovers (with edible white candy corn teeth and white powder makeup), highlighting the popularity of the youth vampire book series. Teen programs in the past month have averaged attendance of a dozen or more.

Also in November, the Tobin Library saw the return of two books that were more than twenty years overdue, one with an anonymous apologetic note that it had been found in an attic box. Overdue fines were not assessed.

Westfall

When staff tabulated visits to the Branch during the month of October, their suspicions were confirmed: it was an exceptionally busy month; the total number of visitors was nearly 8,000 more than past years! Circulation also saw an increase of more than 3,000 items.

More than 75 people attended Westfall's annual pumpkin carving program, generously supported by the branch Friends. Many in attendance noted that they make this a traditional part of their holiday festivities, with some attending for four years or more! Other programs of note included a celebration for National Gaming Day (for which the Branch received several games free of charge through ALA), a special Thanksgiving storytime, and an evening of astronomy attended by almost 80 people.

Westfall hosted one of the public community needs assessment focus groups and was an Election Day site.

The Friends of Westfall Branch Library held a book sale which raised more than \$1,000 for the Branch.

Staff members continue to increase their professional skills by attending training sessions and workshops. Library Assistant and Teen Services Liaison Marisa Sparks attended her first Teen Services meeting as the representative from Westfall, Library Assistant Theresa Ybarra voiced her opinions and offered feedback at one of the community needs assessment staff focus groups, and Librarians Lucy Green, Imelda Merino and Cheryl Sheehan all attended training on the new fee management system. Branch Manager Cheryl Sheehan also completed her round of supervisory training by attending a workshop on best practices for documentation of staff deficiencies; she also attended the inspiring talk by Stephen Abram.

The Westfall staff were glad to welcome Librarian Monica Bustillo, who returned to duty following maternity leave.