

San Antonio Public Library

Director's Report

January 27, 2010

Administration

Director's Office

Construction issues have occupied much of Library Director Ramiro Salazar's schedule recently. On December 10, City Council awarded a contract for the construction of the Parman Branch Library and authorized an amendment to the professional services agreement for services at the Mission Drive-in Site.

On January 12, an extremely successful groundbreaking was held for the Parman Branch Library. District 9 Council Representative Elisa Chan participated, as did Dan Parman and his family. The event was covered by the *Express-News*, the *North Central News*, and KABB-TV.

On January 13, Ramiro met with District 3 Council Representative Jennifer Ramos to discuss the upcoming groundbreaking ceremony for the Mission Branch Library. On January 21, City Council awarded a contract for the construction of the Mission Branch Library to O'Haver Contractors.

Ramiro presented an overview of the Library at the January 7 orientation for new members of the Library Foundation Board. Additionally, he has been working with Foundation and Library staff to coordinate SAPL's participation in the May 2010 Library Summit to be held in San Antonio. On January 8, he hosted a conference call with representatives from the Urban Library Council, the Library Foundation, and Library staff to discuss the ULC's participation in the summit. The ULC has agreed to host a webinar for their member libraries.

On January 11, Ramiro participated in the orientation session for new District 10 Library Board member David Carpenter.

January 15 through 17 Ramiro attended ALA Midwinter in Boston, where he spent much of his time engaged in duties associated with his role as co-chair of the planning committee for the 2011 REFORMA National Conference, to be held in Denver, Colorado. He has also been invited to serve on the host committee for the National Council of La Raza Conference scheduled for July 2010 in San Antonio.

Children's Services System-wide

Plans for the children's 2010 African American Heritage celebrations were completed in December. Liz Thurston [*Tobin*], Susan Frances-Maldonado [*Central*], Trina Smith [*Memorial*] and Viki Ash [*Central*] served on the planning committee for this year's events. Information about the programs is provided in three formats:

- ♦ a colorful printed flyer, available at all library locations
- ♦ a searchable calendar, available on the library webpage through the "Events" link
- ♦ an electronic copy of the printed flyer, available through the library's main webpage and also via the saplkids webpage.

In an effort to make the African American Heritage programs celebratory, the committee working on this year's sessions planned them around the artistic media of three award-winning African American illustrators.

- ♦ Ashley Bryan: colorful collages
- ♦ Brian Pinkney: scratchboard illustrations
- ♦ Faith Ringgold: story quilts, made with paper rather than fabric.

Planning for Summer Reading 2010 is underway with Betsy Dalton [*San Pedro*], Joan Dyer-Westacott [*Bannwolf*], Karen Sebesta [*Johnston*] and Rachael Pensiero [*Central*] on the program committee. This committee is responsible for devising BACK (Books and Crafts for Kids) Pack programs for school-age children. The theme for 2010, established by the Texas State Library, is *Catch the Reading Express*. The SR Program Committee is taking off on the theme with geographic programs such as Catch the Reading Express to India and Catch the Reading Express to Antarctica. Library staff are very excited that Mayor Julián Castro has agreed to adopt the program and call it the Mayor's Summer Reading Program.

Digital Services

The Digital Services Team has been working with Mike Howdyshell and the City's Purchasing Department to develop the specifications for a web calendar that supports library events. The finalized RFP document will be published so that companies with a qualifying product can submit their bids. Following the bid process and purchase, the team will work with the vendor to learn and configure the product, create training plans, and develop integrations for the internet and associated third party products.

As part of an ongoing effort, the Digital Services Team is looking for new ways to improve the public internet website. They have been researching and testing the integration of third-party application programming interfaces and web services with the .NET framework.

In December, Librarian I Adam Spana attended training webinars in advance of the library's move from the Webfeat federated search engine to 360 Search from Serials Solutions. The new search engine improves upon Webfeat and will enhance patrons' ability to cross-search the library's collections of electronic full-text periodicals. Adam and Department Systems Specialist Glenn Parker have been collaborating on a Google Analytics project that will help the library gain a better understanding of how its patrons use the mysapl.org website. The findings of this project will help Digital Services evaluate existing website content, create new content that users are looking for but not finding and improve the findability of desired content (with an expected reduction in the volume of emails and phone calls asking for content that could have been found on the website).

Congratulations to Tricia Masterson, who has been appointed as the Digital Services Teen Liaison. This partnership is going to improve communications between the two departments and provide a direct link for Teen Services to receive training and support from the Digital Services Department. Tricia has been working diligently to identify patron e-mail accounts that need to be validated to ensure that courtesy notices and hold pickup notifications are being successfully delivered.

Thanks to Juanita López and Ana Farr for creating website graphics to promote African American Heritage programs for both adults and children. Juanita has also worked to publish staff web content and provide training to staff for Flickr and Libguides. Tricia and Juanita have been working to post answers on the staff questions-and-answers page, where staff can submit questions about Library policies and operations to be reviewed and answered by the Library Administration.

Public Relations

The Public Relations Office spent much of late November and early December preparing for the December 14-27 closure of the Central Library. Graphic Designers Ana Farr and Tiffanie Wilson created signage and posters announcing the closing, as well as signage to support ongoing activities such as holds pick-up at Central. Public Relations Manager Beth Graham coordinated the public information activities such as news releases, posts on www.mysapl.org, notices on TVSA, and messages on the City Audix system.

Work on the groundbreaking ceremonies for the Parman and Mission Branch Libraries was also a priority for the Public Relations Office. Ana and Tiffanie created invitations and programs for both events, while Public Relations Manager Beth Graham coordinated media relations. The Parman Branch Library groundbreaking, held on January 12, was an outstanding success, with attendance of approximately 100, and coverage by the *Express-News*, the *North Central News*, and KABB-TV.

On December 14, Beth represented the Library at the Alamo Plaza news conference announcing H-E-B's annual Feast of Sharing. She recorded a message from the Library to be shown during the Feast.

Work proceeds on the Community Needs Assessment. A first draft of the survey was submitted by consultant ETC Institute and reviewed by the Library Management Team and the Board PR Committee. Edits and revisions resulting from those sessions were reported to the consultant, who will incorporate them into a second draft of the survey.

The Library Public Relations Office was requested to assist the City Planning Department in publicizing the upcoming 2010 Census. Ana Farr designed a bus wrap encouraging participation in the Census which will be used not only by the City but also by Bexar County.

Since the previous Board meeting, the Library has received 42 media mentions.

Teen Services System-wide

On December 9, Teen Services Librarian Kathleen Fordyce participated in the Region 20 Leadership Academy for migrant students. During four classroom sessions throughout the day, Kathleen talked to the teens about the services, resources and programs available to them at the Library. Her presentation included information about how to use Library databases and training on Live Homework Help.

Kudos to staff - Customer comments

"Dear McCreless Library Staff, Just a small thank-you for all your kindness and help since I moved back in this area. The Library means a great deal to me as so much of my leisure time is spent reading. Thanks to all of you and may your holiday season be happy with your families and lots of hope 2010 will be prosperous for us all. With much love and thanks." - **Jo Anne Boeer**, December 18, 2009

"I would just like to let the Library Director know how wonderful we think the Children's Services Librarian at the Thousand Oaks Branch is. We have been attending Ms. Leslie's [*Leslie Elsasser*] storytime at the Thousand Oaks Branch for the past year and a half, and my two children (ages 3 and 2) adore her. She is exceptionally creative and engaging. She knows all of the children's names and comes up with age-appropriate activities and books every week. She even recommends new books just for my daughter. She is just an exceptional librarian. Thank you so much for the excellent service at the Thousand Oaks Branch." - **Elizabeth Berenguer**, December 22, 2009

Central Library

Alamo Area Library Systems

AALS staff have been on the road December through January and visited 44 out of 45 member libraries. Staff participated in several specialized consulting projects, which included weeding the reference collection in Converse, e-rate/broadband sessions in Uvalde, and orientation sessions for seven new directors. Currently, AALS staff are working on the Texas State Library and Archives Commission's long-range plan for Fiscal Years 2012 and 2013. The AALS plan focuses on the need for broadband solutions in member libraries so that libraries can deliver more effective electronic services to patrons.

Children's Services Department

During the Central Library closure, Children's staff shifted the juvenile non-fiction collection to better utilize the shelving space available. The juvenile nonfiction in Spanish was particularly crowded, with no space to expand. In order to solve this problem, all the children's nonfiction had to be moved. It was a monumental job, but the staff worked steadily over the course of six days to even out the shelves. Considerable weeding was done in anticipation of the shift, resulting in a much neater, cleaner and timely collection of materials for our customers.

Circulation Department

On December 1, 2009, Central Circulation and the Library Fiscal Office submitted approximately 1,100 overdue patron accounts to Unique Management Services to begin collection of fines and unreturned materials. Circulation and Fiscal Office staff have been working with patrons to assist them to resolve their accounts. Contracts Coordinator Michael Howdysshell, Central Circulation Supervisor Laura Villanueva, and Central Circulation Attendant Andrea Silva conducted five sessions at branches to train staff on how best to assist patrons with their accounts in a manner that would still allow access to library materials.

Although the Central Library was closed December 14 through 27, Central Circulation was still in business, assisting patrons who had designated Central as the location for their holds pick-up. Thanks especially to Lupe Salinas, Dianna Gamez, April Garza, Gracie Rendón, and Leticia Guerra, who provided holds pick-up service to those patrons. In addition, Circulation staff also completed a much-needed weeding project and reorganization of the Central media section, including updated signage, shifting an overflowing CD collection, and improving shelf spacing based on customer feedback.

Projects currently underway in Circulation include redesigning the Library card application, updating circulation procedures, and conducting monthly circulation training sessions.

Outreach Services

New Library cards were provided to 105 patrons at H-E-B's Feast of Sharing on December 19. While parents were filling out application forms, youngsters enjoyed stories read by Outreach staff, Mariya Rodríguez of the Pruitt Branch, and Michelle Vinarskai of Great Northwest. By the end of the day, a group of twelve had gathered around Mariya and were pleading for more stories, even though the Feast of Sharing had come to an end.

With the new year came new Bookmobile stops, bringing a sampling of SAPL's collection to populations for whom a visit to a branch library is a challenge, if not an impossibility. On January 4, the Bookmobile made its first visit to the Audie Murphy Veterans Memorial Hospital, which provides both short- and long-term care to 300,000 veterans. This new route will not only add a connection between SAPL and San Antonio's largest industry, but will also place the Bookmobile in reach of other Medical Center patients, clients of the Warm Springs Rehabilitation Center, and patrons of the Bob Ross Senior Center.

Hopkins Elementary has proven to be such a successful location with Kirby's young families that the Bookmobile has often become overcrowded. To ease the congestion and to reach Kirby's older population, a one-hour stop at the Kirby Senior Center was added, beginning January 7. The visit to the senior center takes place immediately following the center's noon meal; the visit to Hopkins takes place immediately following school dismissal.

On January 13, a visit to the Ferrari Learning Center was added to the Valley View route. While the Valley View patrons are, for the most part, seniors, the new stop is intended to reach out to new immigrants attending the Ferrari Center's citizenship, ESL and computer classes. The learning

center also shares space with the Family Service Association Head Start program, and two schools – Ridgeview Elementary and the North East Alternative Center – are less than a block away. The Bookmobile’s visit to the Ferrari Center takes place right after school dismissal, so staff are expecting patronage from both students and parents.

The Bookmobile also made a special appearance at the groundbreaking for the new Parman Branch Library. On January 13, Outreach offered library cards to attendees of the ROAR (Reach Out and Read) Job Fair. On January 19, Outreach presented programs to the children at the Helotes Hills United Methodist Church Daycare and to visitors at the Casa Helotes Senior Center. On January 20, cards were made for attendees of Ballet Folklórico. On January 31, Outreach staff will join Children’s Services Librarians in presenting a day of storytimes at the Gonzalez Convention Center, an event organized by Broadway Bank. The audience will consist of children whose parents are receiving income tax assistance from VITA.

Kudos are due once again to Librarian I Veronica Anderson for filling in for bookmobile driver David Casares all month.

Little Read Wagon

Little Read Wagon has moved! During the December closure at Central, Little Read Wagon staff moved from the sixth floor to the second floor, joining the rest of the Outreach Department in the previous Government Documents work area. Transferring everything from one office to the other was exhausting. However, the new space works well for storing and preparing program materials, as well as allowing the entire Outreach team to office together.

Reference Department

On January 16, in conjunction with San Antonio-based non-profit agency Empowerment 21, Reference Librarian Pannaga Prasad presented a program entitled “Getting Your FAFSA Done and Finishing the Rest of the Year Strong.” There were more than 170 in attendance.

The Reference staff who remained at Central during the December closure were very busy shifting collections, a project which continued even after the library reopened to the public. All adult non-fiction, the Reference and Government Documents collections, the Latino Collection, large print books, and audio books have been moved to their new locations.

Technical Services Department

With the goal of reducing patron waits for popular items, Collection Development has begun using Baker & Taylor’s Popular Title Leasing plan to increase the number of copies for titles with more than 100 holds. Some of the titles received were *Last Song* by Nicholas Sparks, *Have a Little Faith* by Mitch Albom, and *Going Rogue* by Sarah Palin. These copies are marked with B&T spine labels to distinguish them from SAPL copies, and can be returned to Baker & Taylor if the demand lessens.

To prepare for the floating collection project, Martha Knott, Katie Enright, and Rolf Laun initiated a special project with Innovative Interfaces, Inc., staff to change Central’s location code to a 2-letter code, ce, to match the 2-letter codes used for branches. Innovative staff will make the changes the last week of January.

Teen Services Department

Tuesdays with Librarian Kathleen Fordyce: On January 5, teens asked to play *Zombies*. They had lots of fun with this recently acquired board game. On January 12, teens played their favorite video game, *Super Smash Bros: Brawl*.

Wednesdays with Library Assistant Sylvia Pachecano: On December 2 and December 9, Sylvia provided teens participating in the “Mz. Sylvia League” teen fantasy football league with their

standings and statistics in the league for weeks 12 and 13 of the NFL season. On January 6, the final standings were announced, since it was the final week of the NFL season.

Thursdays with Library Assistant Regina Almanza: On December 3, teens made holiday decorations for the Teen Services area. Festive candy was enjoyed by all on December 10. Teens dipped marshmallows in melted chocolate, then used tiny cinnamon candies and pretzels to fashion them into reindeer. After the food craft, some teens played a rousing game of *Super Smash Bros: Brawl*. For the last craft of the year, teens used Perler beads to create some video game characters. On January 7, teens participated in a crayon art craft. No self-respecting library teen department can escape one of the craft world's handy items: duct tape. Teens needed only duct tape on January 14 to create some interesting and useful items. Various colors were set out and teens made wallets, purses, and hats. Pictures from some of these craft nights can be seen at flickr.com/210teenlibrary.

On Saturday, December 5, the Baka Onigiri Con Ost (Stupid Riceball with Cheese) International Anime & Manga Club met. Special guest presenters were artists and staff from First Storm Manga. First Storm Manga helps budding new artists and writers launch their own manga. Fifteen teens developed their drawing skills at four "drawing stations." First Storm Manga will present three more "art clinics" in the coming year. On January 2, the Anime & Manga Club met again. Teens were notified of upcoming events in Teen Services and given a bag of goodies and books left over from past events. Ten teens watched *Full Metal Alchemist*, an anime from Operation Anime/Funanimation.

Outreach, Tours and Groups

On December 1, two history classes from Fox Tech High School reserved Teen Services to do research for their history projects. On December 3, Violeta provided 60 seventh-graders from St. Luke's Catholic School a tour of the library, while Kathleen Fordyce showed the students how to use the Library's catalog and databases. On December 10, 60 eighth-graders from the same school received a tour of the library from Violeta, while Sylvia Pachecano showed the students how to use the Library's catalog and databases. On December 11, Regina Almanza provided 45 eighth-graders from Jackson Middle School a tour of the library, while Kathleen showed them how to use the catalog and databases.

Texana/Genealogy Department

On December 7, 2009, Frank Faulkner attended the monthly meeting of the Bexar County Historical Commission held at the Bexar County Records Facility.

Matt DeWaelsche taught a "Beginning Genealogy" computer class to a group of nine on January 5.

On January 7, Frank spoke to the monthly meeting of the Alamo City Guards Camp of the Sons of Confederate Veterans about SAPL resources dealing with the Civil War. Several of the eighteen people in attendance have already visited Texana/Genealogy for further research.

On January 9, Matt Smith, an Eagle Scout prospect, presented his final Eagle Scout project to Maria Pfeiffer, Tim Draves, and Frank Faulkner for approval prior to going before the Eagle Board. Matt and his volunteers surveyed the Knights of Pythias Cemetery, photographed all the gravestones, and combined that information with the business records of the Knights of Pythias to create a more complete inventory of this cemetery than has been available before.

The Friends of Texana/Genealogy met on January 16 at the City Records Facility, with eighteen people in attendance. Records Manager Tina Flores gave the group a tour and discussed their projects. Afterward there was a business meeting.

Much staff time during this period has been devoted to rearranging the Texana/Genealogy Department. The genealogy collection is now outside the closed area on the sixth floor. Staff is still selecting and moving Texana books to the open stacks where the genealogy collection was before. This will give patrons easier access to many Texana books that were in the vault only because there was not enough space in the outer room.

New displays were put up by Debbie Countess and Sylvia Reyna. One celebrates the 70th anniversary of the San Antonio Symphony. The second features, for the first time in several years, the paintings of Herman Lungkwitz: Alameda, Mission San José, Mission San Juan de Capistrano, and Mission Concepción.

Branch Libraries

Bazan

The Bazan Library celebrated Elvis' birthday a few days early on Wednesday January 6 by presenting a special karaoke program featuring two Elvis impersonators. This fun-filled evening program saw the talents of John Boyle and LePaul. Both were very well received by the nearly 35 guests who attended. The credit for this program goes to Rhonda Davila who arranged for these two talented individuals to come to Bazan to perform. Refreshments were served during the celebration.

The Bazan staff wishes to thank the Bazan Friends for the Christmas luncheon they prepared. The delicious ham and other home-made dishes added just the right touch before the Christmas holidays.

On January 13, the 2010 VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) program began at Bazan. For the past several years, this branch has been the leader in the number of returns processed at a single location.

On February 1, Bazan will see the return of the *Academia América* program, which offers bilingual instruction to individuals wishing to apply for U.S. citizenship.

The Bazan Library reference staff will once again participate in the job training program at the downtown Goodwill Industries Store. Every two weeks a staff member will address individuals who are seeking information on how to get a job. The Library's efforts will concentrate primarily on Library resources and how to access them. We will also be providing information on how they can get a library card and where in the City they can go for computer use and additional information. Bazan's involvement begins again on January 19 and will continue through the end of the year.

Thanks to the Friends of the Bazan Branch Library, who are donating a new multimedia projector to enhance library programming.

Brook Hollow

The Brook Hollow Friends brightened the holidays by donating poinsettias to decorate the branch, adding a festive feel as well as some splashes of color. Circulation Attendant Ofelia Vallejo also decorated the branch with colorful cutouts bearing the names of branch employees and other sparkly enhancements, including all the fantastic cards from patrons, co-workers, and other branches that were received over the holidays.

The New Year brought in news of a staff member graduating from library school. Library Assistant DiAnne Schuette graduated from her program at Texas Women's University.

Brook Hollow has seen large numbers in attendance for both Library programs and community-led programs. Census testing has taken place at the branch multiple times over the past months and the

Census facilitator reports she has had the largest groups at Brook Hollow. The San Antonio Restaurant Association also had a very well-attended meeting which lasted several hours and brought over 80 people to the branch.

Back by popular demand, Brook Hollow patron Nancy Iragorri has begun offering free Spanish classes for four- and five-year-olds. Children's programming is back in full swing with after-school and Family Fun crafts, baby times, and storytimes being offered multiple times a week. In particular, Tuesday mornings have become very popular storytime and baby time days at the branch. In fact, all the baby time sessions have had large audiences so far this year, with many play groups opting to join in on the fun together.

Brook Hollow's staff was very busy this month with continuing education opportunities, their committee appointments and program planning endeavors. Library Assistant Kathryn Ryan attended the Readers' Advisory Suspense Genre class as well as the presentation on Floating Collections.

Carver

A Kwanzaa workshop kicked off the holiday season at the Carver Branch Library. Kwanzaa, which celebrates African heritage and culture, is marked by a week of activities, including the lighting of the kinara candle. The workshop, an annual event at the branch, was presented by the Organization for Black Unity, who also dressed up the branch's display case with a colorful Kwanzaa motif.

The Friends of Carver Library delivered an annual gift of poinsettias to the delight of the staff and customers. But the gifts didn't stop there. Friends member Shirley Coleman and her husband, prominent artist John Coleman, contributed decorative panels depicting holiday scenes, which they hung throughout the branch.

On Saturday, December 5, the branch teamed up with the Cherice Cochran Foundation to present Cookies with Santa, a holiday party for children and their families, which has become a tradition at the branch. The event attracted 40 children.

The Carver staff jumped at the opportunity to perform community outreach when the Claude W. Black Community Center sought a representative to attend its annual holiday celebration and Christmas gift drawing for children. Organizers expected corporate donations to be down from the previous year's celebration, so staff dug in their pockets to contribute refreshments for the event. More than a hundred children and their families turned out for the festivities. A staff member who manned a display table promoting San Antonio Public Library and its services said it was a joy to watch happy children leaving the center with a shiny new bike or other gift.

The staff also participated in a donation effort by the City Volunteer Corps, who held their 15th Annual 1000 Toys for Boys and Girls Christmas Celebration.

On December 8, the Bexar Library Association held its winter meeting at the Carver Branch. It was believed to be the first-ever gathering at Carver by this organization, whose practice is to hold a quarterly meeting at an area library.

The Carver Literary Arts Society held their first meeting of the new year on January 5 and discussed plans for the upcoming months, which include a special celebration to mark National Poetry Month in April and the first anniversary of the group's existence.

Fighting Against Domestic Violence was the theme of a presentation by Cynthia Hinojosa, a candidate for Mrs. Texas 2010. Hinojosa, a survivor of domestic abuse wanted women to know they have alternatives to enduring a cruel relationship.

On Saturday, January 16, author and professor Frederick Williams delivered Carver Library's Third Annual Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial lecture. Professor Williams' lectured centered on similarities between President Barack Obama and the slain civil rights advocate. Professor Williams was also a guest on "Cover to Cover" in connection with the Library's observance of the Martin Luther King, Jr., holiday, and celebration of African American History Month.

In addition to the regular Wednesday morning storytime, Children's Services Librarian Amy Thorne visited the children at the Tynan Head Start campus to read a few stories and drop off books for their use for the month. She returned a week later during the parents' night meeting to talk about the importance of reading with their children. Amy is looking forward to more children's outreach in the new year, now that everyone is back from the holidays.

Carver's teen Anime Club continues to meet every Thursday evening. On December 10, the teens had their holiday party (refreshments were generously donated by a regular patron of the branch), during which they decorated ornaments and other objects in the steampunk style.

Cody

Children's Services Librarian Sheila Acosta was busy with outreach in December, promoting the Young Pegasus Poetry contest and children's winter events at the branch.

On December 1, Sheila visited the first-grade class at the Eleanor Kolitz Academy and read several poems. She also discussed titles of fun poetry books to check out at the library as well as how to enter the Young Pegasus Poetry contest. On December 4, she met with each of the grades at Colonies North Elementary School, and, in addition to reading some poems from previous Pegasus anthologies, demonstrated how to submit poems online at the mysapl.org web site for the Young Pegasus Contest. On December 7, Locke Hill Elementary School invited Sheila to attend their annual neighborhood literacy event at the Stonehouse Apartments. New card applications were issued and flyers were distributed to promote the Young Pegasus competition and children's winter events at Cody. On December 8 and 9, all students at Mead Elementary School heard Sheila read some winning poems from previous Young Pegasus anthologies and explored the online site where they could submit entries for the 2010 contest.

On December 8, Rhodes Elementary School invited Sheila to attend their Kinder-Second Grade Literacy Night. Besides talking to parents and children about the poetry contest, Sheila assisted both adults and children to for library cards online. Parents were very appreciative of the assistance and ease with which they could procure temporary library cards.

Visiting the library on December 3 were first- and second-graders from the Montessori School House. After listening to Sheila read three Christmas stories, the students checked books out for their studies. All of the students now have library cards, as do the parents who accompanied them.

Young patrons at Cody Library were introduced to a new activity: baby yoga! On December 11, certified children's yoga instructor Laura Anata conducted a class that was open to all toddlers and babies. It was such a hit that parents and children are asking about more classes for the spring.

Cody's annual Polar Express Pajama Party on December 15 was a great success on many levels. First, the staff all participated in the promotion of the program by wearing lounging pajamas for the event. Next, Librarian Connie Hejl added the *Polar Express* movie the same afternoon of the pajama party, and finally, children were surprised by a visitor from the North Pole at the conclusion of the readings: Santa was in the house to hear children's requests and, of course, to have both little patrons and big patrons pose with him for pictures. Elf Pauline was on hand again this year to serve refreshments – delicious Christmas cookies and berry punch. The children had a choice of three crafts to make and take home at the end of the program. Sheila read *The Polar Express* as well as

presenting a story board of the *Night Before Christmas*, and Connie followed with the *Pirate's Night Before Christmas*. Everyone sang *Jingle Bells* and *Feliz Navidad* to round out the evening.

Children learned how to create winter and Christmas origami designs on December 16. When the origami instructor called in sick, Branch Manager Hayley Latshaw and Teen Services Librarian Connie Hejl both volunteered to teach the origami Santa and wreath designs, and Sheila demonstrated origami snowflakes. This event was well attended and the children chose to create all three.

A winter "Make-and-Take" event was held in the children's area on December 17. Materials were provided so that children could make Christmas trees, cards, stockings and ornaments. Parents expressed a great appreciation for children's activities such as this make and take.

On December 19, patrons, both young and old were entertained by Luis Berrios and his classical guitar. Mr. Berrios played in front of the children's area and his beautiful music was enjoyed by all in attendance.

On January 5, Sheila visited with the first-graders at the Eleanor Kolitz Academy and read some folktales and fables to enrich the unit they had just completed.

The Montessori School House visited Cody on January 7 for their monthly library visit. The children enjoyed stories read by Ms. Sheila and enjoyed looking for books to check out.

Superheroes stormed into the Cody Library on January 12 for Superheroes Night. Several Spiderman heroes, Wonder Girl, Candy Girl, Ninja warriors, and a couple of Batman characters were in attendance at Cody's first Superheroes event. After Sheila and Connie each read a story, the little superheroes played "Pass the Kryptonite!" and "Lift the Boulder!" Spiderman door hangers, Iron Man hats, Superman logos, and Incredible Hulk figures were the crafts of the night, and everyone enjoyed a slice of superheroes cake and punch before they went home.

In keeping with the Alice in Wonderland theme, Teen Services at Cody kicked off Mad Hatter Mondays with video games on January 4. Connie has planned a fun filled Winter and Spring with several feature films and a special "mad hat" contest in later winter months. Connie was also selected to fill the shoes of Violeta Garza as the library's liaison to San Japan, the City's annual anime convention.

Film and Book clubs took December off but were ready to go for another great year in January. Selected titles were the film *Capote*; *The Geography of Bliss* by Eric Weinter; and *The Vault* by Peter Lovesey.

In celebration of Martin Luther King, Jr., Day, the library held a "Tribute to African American Filmmakers" on January 16 by showing the film *Waiting to Exhale*, which was directed by Forest Whitaker.

Cody's meeting room has also been heavily used by Census 2010 for test taking, and, for another tax season, the VITA service. Both of these community services are used heavily at Cody.

Collins Garden

Teen Tuesdays, a weekly video gaming event for teens, continues to attract a strong following. Teen Services Liaison/Librarian Heidi Novotny hosted six teen programs, including a Christmas party, resulting in a total attendance for all events of 106 participants.

On December 5, 21 library patrons of all ages enjoyed making Christmas ornaments during a holiday craft program.

Eight people attended a talk by Matthew Driffill from the San Antonio River Authority on the Mission Reach Ecosystem Restoration and Recreation Project; and the book display to publicize this event was so successful that staff had to keep restocking the display.

Juvenile outreach events continue to increase. Several daycares and local schools have received multiple visits from Children's Services Librarian Leigh Bedford. Additionally, Collins Garden has offered several new displays of children's books, which have focused on new books, holiday themes, and books honoring Martin Luther King, Jr.

The Early Learning Computer continues to be popular with local families. The art programs and Dr. Seuss stories are the most popular of the AWE computer activities.

VITA tax assistance service at Collins Garden kicked off in January.

Cortez

Library Assistant Stephanie Vásquez moderated the Cortez Book Club selection *Dirty Girls Social Club* by Alisa Valdes-Rodríguez on January 7. Freezing temperatures did not affect book club attendance. During the month of January the Cortez meeting room once again became home for patrons learning English as a second language. The popular free language classes from Project Learn to Read of San Antonio are offered every Saturday in the meeting room. The UT Health Science Center presented a well-attended educational program on living wills on January 9. Several patrons stayed after the program to ask the guest speakers questions. Construction on the remodeling of the entrance to the library continues. Cortez staff is receiving very favorable feedback from patrons about the design of the entrance.

Children's Services Librarian Carol Collins has started monthly visits to a new Head Start center. After the first visit several of the center's staff expressed their excitement at getting books to read. Forty people attended the first session of a "*Para los Niños*" series at Cortez, and 60 attended the second. Fliers at nearby elementary schools and articles in the *Southside Reporter* promoted the series of fun learning events for adults with children seven years and younger.

Teen Wednesdays are gaining popularity. Twenty or more teens per week play Wii Sports and Guitar Hero and create crafts. Teen volunteer Bridgett Zaimon assisted Branch Manager Rebecca Johnson this month with crafts such as bubble magnets, bottle cap art, and button making.

The new Library Aide position added to the Cortez Branch has made possible increased use of the 3M Digital Library Assistant. This has resulted in important improvements to the Cortez Branch collection, such as locating missing books and identifying books with conflicts between spine labels and Millennium records.

Forest Hills

The end of the year was busy at Forest Hills. The Contrarian Viewpoint Book Club met for a lively discussion. Computer classes were held during the latter part of December. Most patrons attending the classes quickly became loyal followers and chose to sit in on the entire series of courses. City department meetings, a feral cat program, a neighborhood association, and a floating collections training session also met at Forest Hills.

VITA has begun to offer its tax assistance service. Large numbers of visitors are expected as the month progresses.

Since there was a break in storytimes, Children's Services Librarian Cindy Moreno focused on preparing book lists and crafts for upcoming Winter storytimes and the new Family Fun programs being offered at Forest Hills. On January 12, Cindy presented storytime to a group of 13. The storytime consisted of books and a craft, but, to the children's delight, each was presented with a poster of the new movie *The Tooth Fairy*, donated by Regal Cinemas.

Cindy started a new adult book group called The Mommy's Day Out Book Group, which discusses books on motherhood. The group met on January 13 and discussed the book *It Sucked and Then I Cried: How I Had a Baby, a Breakdown and a Much Needed Margarita* by Heather B. Armstrong. Those who attended enjoyed discussing the book and motherhood and were enthusiastic about their next meeting.

The Forest Hills teens enjoyed playing Wii Mario Party during their Christmas break from school, and were equally entertained with some traditional games such as UNO and Scrabble the first week of January. Some of the younger regular participants have started inviting their older brothers and sisters to join in on the fun, which has increased attendance numbers. The Teen Book Chat group met on December 12 to discuss *The Forest of Hands and Teeth* by Carrie Ryan and will be reading Corey Doctorow's *Little Brother* for the month of January.

The partnership with UTHSC has finally become a reality with the first event in the Teen Health Services Series planned for January 20.

Great Northwest

Branch Manager Roberto Zapata attended the ALA Midwinter Conference in Boston on January 15 through 18. He was a member of the Pura Belpré Book Award selection committee.

Library Assistant Veronica Franco joined the Great Northwest staff in December, transferring from the Cody Branch.

The branch welcomed four Central Library staff members during the month of December. Their help allowed Great Northwest staff to weed the fiction, biography and large print sections of the collection. In addition, the large print section was shifted to allow customers to better access the books.

December's Family Fun time proved to be a festive event with a performance by the Youth Encore Choir. Afterwards, over 65 people enjoyed decorating homemade cookies with help from two professional cookie decorators.

Library Assistant Christina Reedy held a Bead Swap, with participants exchanging bracelets they each had made while enjoying a luncheon. Great Northwest's recent displays included Christmas and holiday items, Books For Dummies, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Haiti.

The initial meeting of Great Northwest's Recognition Committee took place in December with a brainstorming session on different ways to recognize staff. Members Rose Bishop, Theresa Brader and Michelle Vinarskai started a "Meet the GNW Staff" bulletin board. Staff training included holdings editor, computer liaison, and floating collections.

Adult Services Librarian Tracey Knouse met with the Activities Director at Silver Creek Manor, a nearby nursing home. Library items were delivered in January for Silver Creek's residents to check out through the home's director's office for reading, viewing and listening.

Computer classes were well attended during the month of January. Library Assistant Michelle Vinarskai stepped in and taught a Windows Desktop Class for 20 students, when the DCI instructor was unable to attend.

Librarian Tracey Knouse completed a demographic study of Great Northwest Branch Library's service area. A review of over 125 event surveys from the last quarter of 2009 was compiled for programming ideas and future e-mail distribution.

The Friends of Great Northwest Library became an official group on January 17. They became part of the larger FOSAPL group and are already working on raising funds. Great Northwest would like to thank Denise Barlow for the time and energy she has spent on making the Friends group a reality.

Guerra

Branch Manager Dexter Katzman met with Mike Peters on December 7 to provide a tour of the facility and to discuss deployment of security cameras at the branch. On December 17, he provided a branch tour to incoming Fiscal Officer Gene Gentry, accompanied by Assistant Director/Support Services Kathy Donellan, Contract Coordinator Mike Howdysshell, and Accountant Letty Alonzo. After conducting the tour, Dexter provided coverage at the public services desks so that other branch staff could meet with these four staff members for a question-and-answer session. On January 12, the branch hosted a genre workshop on suspense fiction presented by Digital Services Supervisor Rolf Laun. In April, Dexter will assume the office of Texas Library Association District 10 Treasurer, and on January 12 he met with Westfall Adult Services Librarian Monica Bustillo, whose term will be expiring. On January 13, he met with Armando Cortez who is involved in planning activities associated with the new Mission Branch Library. Mr. Cortez and Mr. Katzman had a useful and productive exchange covering a wide range of library facilities planning issues. Derek and Johnston Branch Manager Diane Backhus are collaborating on a presentation dealing with privacy issues of library patrons who are minors, to be offered at a branch managers' meeting.

Children's Services Librarian Yanira Cruz planned and presented Baby Time programs on December 2, 9 and 16, and January 6 and 13; total attendance total for these programs was 73. On the same dates, Toddler Time programs were presented to 177 patrons, and the regular storytimes had a total of 159 participants. In addition to these on-site presentations, she planned and conducted seven outreach programs to Even Start students: December 1, 17 GED students at Westwood Terrace Elementary School; December 7, 20 Westwood Elementary School English for Speakers of Other Languages students; December 8, 20 Passmore Elementary School ESOL students; December 9, 24 Leon Valley Elementary School ESOL students; and on December 14, she attended an Even Start Celebration at the North Side Activity Center. On January 8, she made five presentations to a total of 88 participants at Westwood Elementary School, and finished up with a program on January 11 for 28 participants, also at Westwood Elementary School.

Adult Services Librarian Dorothy Blow visited several senior centers in the Guerra service area. During December, she focused on holiday story and song. She arranged for two Christmas carol programs in the library. Both musical programs were very well-received and added a special note to the holiday season.

Adult Services Librarian Stephen Jackson held his Tuesday Evening Book Club on December 15, 2009. The featured title was *After You've Gone* by Jeffrey Lent. Participants discussed the plot and compared themes in the book with their own encounters with death and recovery. On December 19, Mr. Jackson arranged for a musical presentation by Boy Scout Troop 517. Patrons and staff very much enjoyed the holiday music. On January 12, the group discussed *The Last Lincolns*, a history of what happened to the descendants of Abraham Lincoln, by Charles Lachmore. His Spanish-language *Club de lectura* met on January 14 to discuss *Morir dos veces* by Edna Buchanan. Book club participants enjoyed the suspense in the popular novel and discussed how they were able to piece together various clues to solve the mystery.

Library Assistant and Teen Services Liaison Tim Johnson attended a refresher e-Vanced calendar training session on December 9. Having been selected as Guerra's Computer Class Liaison, he attended a planning meeting on January 8. Tim also attended a planning meeting of the Big Read Committee, and he and other committee members met on January 6 to work on plans for activities and events in connection with SAPL's celebration of *Bless Me, Ultima* by Rudolfo Anaya. He planned and hosted eleven teen events during the reporting period, with a total attendance of 321.

Igo

On December 5, 2009, the Friends of the Igo Branch Library provided cookies, punch and cake, in honor of the branch's second anniversary. The cake was donated by Irene Scharf whose daughter baked and decorated the cake in the shape of a big book. The spine of the book read "John Igo," and the cover read "History of the John Igo Library, second edition." Ms. Sharf's daughter decorated the cake using the trademark windmill which is associated with the John Igo Branch Library. Entertainment for the event was provided by clowns from the Jolly Joeys Clown Alley, who delighted children with balloon characters and face painting. About 100 children and adults attended and every one had a good time.

Also during the month of December, Igo Branch Library participated in the annual Santa Paws charity drive. Two big boxes of donations such as toys, blankets and animal treats were collected and delivered to Animal Care Services on December 23.

Children's storytimes continue to be very popular avenue for small children *and* their parents. In January, Igo Branch Library added a baby time story hour to expand programming to include mothers with babies and divide storytime attendance into smaller groups; however, storytime is so popular that the mothers attending baby time storytime ended up staying for all three storytimes, which says staff are doing something right.

Igo Branch Library also was selected as a testing site for the Census Bureau in December, and will continue to work with the Census Bureau through the months of January and February by providing meeting room space as available.

Johnston

The Children's Department at Johnston Branch celebrated December storytimes with stories and crafts appropriate for the holiday season. Sessions included elf and gingerbread themes, drawing from Johnston's excellent selection of holiday titles for children.

Children's Services Librarian Karen Sebesta continued the cold weather theme into January with stories and crafts centering on snowmen and penguins. With the recent frigid temperatures, the children and parents could all relate quite well.

Although storytime was on break during the holiday season, staff kept coloring sheets and crayons available for children who visited the library during that time. Johnston Library Aides Rose Nazir and Vida Leal Salas displayed many holiday and story books about winter in the children's area. They have taken this on as a regular part of their duties and the children's area looks terrific. Rose also displayed many African American History Month stories for young people and their families to share.

Several of Johnston's children also took part in the Young Pegasus Poetry Workshop which was held on Tuesdays immediately following B.A.C.K.Pack storytime for children in grades K-5. They used craft materials to make journals and write down their thoughts and create poetry. Hopefully, some of the results will be winners in the Young Pegasus Contest.

The Johnston Library staff was treated to a holiday lunch by the branch Friends group. The staff and their guests enjoyed a feast from Bill Miller Bar-B-Q, with side dishes and desserts prepared by the staff.

Boy Scout Troop 401 visited the branch during December. The boys and their sponsors were treated to a storytime followed by a craft, and a tour of the library so that they could see everything that Johnston has to offer.

The Scholastic Reading Caravan visited Johnston on January 9 and had a very successful day despite the extremely cold weather. The program provides a storytime with crafts inside a big learning center on wheels, and was very popular with both children and parents.

The Teen Program has become quite active under the leadership of Library Assistant Robert Ayala. The kids flock to him every Monday evening for an hour of gaming, using the Wii. Several of the teens also joined the teen Young Pegasus Poetry Workshops held on Mondays, creating journals and writing poems for possible submission to the contest.

Robert also teamed up with Karen to present a holiday song program just before the Christmas holidays. With Robert on guitar and Karen on keyboard, they led anyone who wanted to join in (including Guerra's Stephen Jackson and his family as well as Robert's family) for a sing-along. Karen and Robert are planning more musical programs in the future with participation by children and teens.

The branch has been selected as a Census Testing site throughout January and February, as space is available. Staff is busy putting out the 2009 income tax forms. The table in the foyer is restocked several times a week, and soon will probably need to be restocked several times a day.

Adult Services Librarian Rich Fields created an eye-catching January book/media display on Las Vegas that includes a wide range of materials on casino gaming, the "Rat Pack," and related items. And remember – what happens in Johnston, stays in Johnston.

Landa

The Landa Branch Library has been busier in the past month. Landa offered baby, toddler and family storytimes throughout the month of December. During the December 22 Family Fun Time the children made free-form holiday ornaments from pipe cleaners and beads.

In the last couple of weeks of January, the Landa Teen Scene jumped from one teen in attendance to 11! In the teen collection area, Library Assistant/Teen Services Liaison Beatrice Canales had previously added a teen message board to show teens that their voice can be heard. During the teen programs, she offered interactive games and crafts to the teens in attendance and pictures were uploaded to the library's Flickr page. The teens were also interested in sponsoring a community service project for 2010 proposed by Bea to help create team spirit for the group. The first project the group will tackle is Cell Phones for Soldiers. During the teen programs, Bea also introduced the library's website, cardholder process, and Live Homework Help. To foster more communication between staff and the teens, a distribution list of email addresses was developed so that teens and their friends would know what events are happening at Landa.

At the end of December Spanish guitarist Luís Berrios once again came to Landa to perform. His classical tunes drew an interested crowd of about a dozen into the meeting room. As well, the rest of the library could hear his music being played throughout the building.

Before Landa opened on the morning of January 13 Leslie Siegel came to the library to film TV spots for broadcast on KLRN to help promote responsible pet care and the 2012 No-Kill initiative. They are

to work in conjunction with the traveling kiosk that will be moving between the libraries. It is being funded by the San Antonio Area Foundation.

Also, during December and January Landa has had a lot of usage of its meeting room by the U.S. Census. A tester comes several times a week to evaluate potential employees for the upcoming census, and people have been very interested in the positions.

Las Palmas

Many thanks to Reference Librarian Cole Johnson and Library Assistant Carmen Roja, both from Central, who were assigned to Las Palmas during the Central closure. They handled the weeding of the 900s collection, withdrawing more than 600 titles to create a current, attractive collection. Their contribution to the Las Palmas community is appreciated.

Children's Services Librarian Gina Brudi presented four Family Fun events with a holiday theme, to an audience of 28. She also visited Avance, the Good Samaritan Family Services Center, and the Madonna Neighborhood Center - 14 visits, to a total of 173 children.

Adult Services Librarian Karen Michaelson reported the largest turn-out ever (15!) for a book club meeting at Las Palmas. The book chosen was Stephanie Meyers' *Twilight*. Two first-time readers attended. Except for one participant, everyone liked the book, and the discussion began before Karen was on hand to start things off! The new visitors have promised to return for future meetings. In addition to a lively discussion, the group celebrated the holidays with refreshments and camaraderie.

Maverick

Maverick decorated the library for the holidays and received many compliments from patrons.

The Maverick Friends now have a Book Nook located in the library where they place donated books for sale for a dollar each. So far, it is a great success. The Friends also helped Maverick by purchasing end caps with display racks for the shelves.

Maverick is also a Census testing site during the months of January and February. The Census Bureau utilizes the meeting room several times a week.

Winter storytimes are back in full swing after a holiday break. Children's Services Librarians Stacy Bosquez and Amy Roberts have large groups with many new faces!

McCreless

December was a month of many gifts for McCreless staff. Not only was there a wonderful staff party paid for in part by the Friends, but grateful customers also delivered gifts of candy and cards. In addition to paying for the party the Friends gave each staff member a Wal-Mart gift card to.

Displays for the month included a continuation of the popular "staff picks" area as well as a book display of Christmas titles. In the display case the branch exhibited Santas in December and hedgehogs in January.

Children's Services Librarian Beverly Bixler reports that the average storytime attendance was fourteen per week but the branch was a little slower paced than usual during the holidays. Beverly also had a special school visit and tour on January 11 with 81 students from kindergarten through fourth grade visiting the library and getting cards.

Memorial

The Memorial Branch Library kicked off the month of December with a Polar Express Pajama Party held on December 8. Children were treated to snacks, a reading of *The Polar Express* by Children's Services Librarian Trina Smith, and a surprise visit from "Elf Libro" aka Libro the Lion. *Make and Take Crafts* were made available throughout the holiday break and proved to be very popular among families.

Teen Tuesdays participation showed a steady increase through December and into January. A Pokémon Card League was started with successful numbers. Two sessions were held in January with an average of 17 participants. Teen Gaming on Sundays is being considered for teens who can not attend on Tuesday.

Family Movie Time has moved from Sundays to Saturdays with an initial offering of 2 movies per month.

Memorial Library hosted a lively and musical reading of the Christmas Carol by the San Pedro Playhouse Players, December 12. Presentation of the Christmas classic was held on the main floor of the Library giving everyone in the building that day an opportunity to enjoy this special Christmas program.

Memorial Library celebrated its 2 Annual Open House on January 9, 2010. This was primarily a social event, designed to welcome our patrons to a new year of Library services and programming. We did take the opportunity to also present the wide variety of programs offered at Memorial and signed up people for their favorites. Contact information was gathered from patrons to send them program news and Memorial Library Calendars. Everyone got free Sonic Burger coupons when they signed up for a program! HEB donated a large cake. Patrons without e mail accounts were assisted in establishing their own -- Chase employees, who volunteered their time to help with the event, were on hand to help patrons. At the end of the day several new books were raffled off, including dictionaries, almanacs, and Guinness Books of World Records. Finally, the colorful and energetic dancing and drumming of the KaZamba Drum and Dance Group provided entertainment.

Library Assistant Carlos Loera and Adult Services Librarian Sandra Griffin made outreach visits to Memorial High School and JFK High School. Teen resources and programming was discussed with the school librarian of each school. Carlos highlighted tutor.com and the Library databases to the librarians. Also discussed were volunteer opportunities, Wii and Guitar Hero afternoons, and the selection for the Big Read 2010, *Bless Me*, *Ultima*. An offer to return to the High Schools to make another presentation to any teacher interested in the Library databases and tutor.com was made. Carlos also visited Sendero Academy on December 9 and introduced students to the free electronic resources available through the library and the programs offered by the Memorial Branch.

Pan American

In late December and early January the branch hosted computer classes presented by the Department of Community Initiatives. Classes offered included "Meet the Computer," "Windows Desktop," "Web Basics," "e-Mail I and II," and "Word I." Adult Services Librarian Jim La Ferla was the staff liaison and back up for the instructor. He attended a class on proper computer set up on January 7.

A FAFSA Fiesta to help students and parents correctly complete required FAFSA paperwork was held at Pan American on January 9, with twelve participants.

The meeting room has been used on four days by the U.S. Census Bureau for training and testing. They have had a very respectable turnout, even on a very rainy Friday.

The monthly Family Movie Time was held on Saturday, December 20 with *UP* as the movie. Twenty-eight attendees enjoyed the fun. Wednesday, January 13, the movie *Cloudy With a Chance of Meatballs* was shown for 28 attendees. Library Assistant Blanca-Silvia Hernandez has taken on the responsibility for this monthly event. The first Wednesday of each month at 4:00 p.m. will be the new time slot for the movie, with the Teen Night program following at 6:00 p.m.

Adults now can enjoy free Tai Chi classes twice a week at Pan American. The classes are led by Mary-Martha McNeel. This program continues to attract high attendance.

Thanks to Central Children's Services Librarians Susan Francis-Maldonado and Rachael Pensiero, who have been preparing and presenting weekly storytimes in the absence of a children's services Librarian at Pan American.

Library Assistant/Teen Services Liaison Melissa A. Carroll has led the weekly meetings in games, crafts, and lots of fun. In December, by popular request, teens played Wii on several occasions. Guitar Hero and board games were also Wednesday night activities with an average participation of 10 teens and tweens. On December 23, thirteen teens attended the holiday party with five pizzas donated by a very generous parent. The teens made greeting cards and ornaments for their loved ones. On January 13, the teens requested an encore presentation of the new release *Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs*, which had been shown earlier in the day for Family Fun Time.

Reagan High School/Bannwolf Library

The Bannwolf Library had an interesting December and start to a new year. Several special activities were held during the past six weeks.

Adults continued to learn Chinese dancing on Wednesday evenings. Ballroom dancing is now being offered on Saturday afternoons. Adults of all ages enjoy learning some new dances or improving their technique. Activities slowed down during the holidays as customers were involved in seasonal family events.

Teens were treated to a holiday party with plans to resume programs and activities after semester tests. During ComiX Relief programs in December, teens gave suggestions for programs they would be interested in for the upcoming months.

Children attending B.A.C.K. Pack were treated to an assortment of amazing crafts on Tuesday afternoons. Holiday crafts were the focus for most of December and Chinese New Year has been the focus in January. The number of attendees for this program has seen a steady increase during the past month.

Storytime attendees on December 12 had a special visitor. Santa Claus arrived to read a story, give out treats, and have his picture taken with excited children. While the children were waiting for the pictures to be developed, they designed cards for the photos. Children could choose from several options. Everyone attending had a great time with Santa and the craft.

The Bannwolf Library hosted a couple of special family events. On December 8, the Reagan High School Sensations, a show choir, entertained 83 patrons with holiday songs and dancing. The library staff received many positive comments about this amazing group. On December 15 families had the opportunity to create holiday cards with Stampin' Up. All materials were provided and customers enjoyed creating handmade cards.

Roosevelt High School/Pruitt Library

The Pruitt Public Library staff would like to thank all those who scheduled training sessions during non-public hours so that staff can be available the 4:00 p.m. weekday public opening time. Laura

Villanueva and Andrea Silva visited Pruitt on December 10 to provide Librarians Troy Lawrence and Carolyn Bradley additional Millennium training. Additionally, Troy Lawrence, Carolyn, and Branch Manager Mariya Rodriguez spent the morning at Central with Barbara Lujan and Katie Enright completing Holdings Editor training. Afterwards, the Pruitt staff learned all about Serials Editor functions from Charlotte Balusek. As they were leaving, they had the opportunity to visit with Assistant Library Director Kendra Trachta and expressed their appreciation for all the SAPL employees who have helped them learn about the SAPL organization so that they can better serve their community.

During December children's events focused on the theme "Celebrations of Light," exploring the role light plays in various cultural celebrations around the world. Library Assistant Sunita Shambarhakar and Librarian Carolyn Bradley kicked off the month with a B.A.C.K. Pack event about the Indian holiday of Diwali. Those in attendance made rangoli drawings and sampled authentic Indian treats. The celebrations of Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, and Joyeux Noel were also highlighted. Of special note, however, is the partnership formed with the Roosevelt World Languages Department whose members and students helped with *Navidad* (Christmas in Mexico) and *Tannenbaum* (Christmas in Germany.)

Storytimes and B.A.C.K. Pack during January explored aspects of the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King. Carolyn, Troy and Mariya selected titles and crafts that emphasized everything from dreams to harmony.

"Wild Wii Wednesday" has continued to live up to its name with droves of teens joining in. One night, 42 virtual rockers played RockBand well into the evening.

Additionally, teens turned out *en masse* for a showing of Tim Burton's *The Nightmare Before Christmas*. Fifty-three people enjoyed the free popcorn during this gothic, animated Christmas movie.

Another very popular teen event during January was a screening of *A Raisin in the Sun* starring P. Diddy. During the showing a number of patrons asked if the video was available for checkout. Since this title is not available in the SAPL catalog, it was a learning opportunity to demonstrate to customers how to use the "Suggest a Purchase" feature on the www.mysapl.org site.

During December small groups of customers took advantage of Web Basics, Searching the Web, Meet the Computer, and the Windows Desktop classes, each of which were offered two times during the month. January's classes of Word I and II have also been attended by technology class "regulars," who are excited to be learning and growing in their technology abilities. Customers have also been utilizing technology reference appointments to get more one-on-one assistance with specialized and personalized technology needs such as how to import pictures from a camera and how to set up a virus scan schedule. The community has expressed great appreciation for these technology learning opportunities that are making them more connected to their friends and family and more confident in their job searching.

Other events that attracted families during December and January were family board game nights. These "Out of the Box" events gave families a chance to have fun playing together or against other families. Staff have noticed that the attendance of these events continues to rise as they have moved the board games out into the main library space and set the board games up. There's just something about seeing a game of checkers ready to play that entices people to stay a little longer. Additions to the board game collection include games for young children and games in Spanish.

In December, the branch kicked off what will eventually become a regular feature: Made-by-Hand Mondays. These free craft workshops offered throughout the month of December allowed library

patrons learn how to make beaded earrings, counted cross-stitch ornaments, chocolate-dipped treats, and many other things. Designed to give patrons a way to make their own gifts for the holiday season, these workshops were very popular with everyone. The entire Roosevelt football offensive line who attended the chocolate workshop were definitely interested in learning more. Staff suspect, however, they just wanted to eat more chocolate. Nonetheless, they'll be excited to hear that another chocolate class is scheduled for February.

During December, students from a Roosevelt High School Spanish I class helped provide a bilingual Saturday Storytime. The parents and children had a great time singing "*Feliz Navidad*" and made *huichol*-inspired yarn ornaments. The German Club followed up with a B.A.C.K. Pack event about *Tannenbaum*.

In January, Made-by-Hand Monday events have given patrons an opportunity to make cross-stitch bookmarks and beaded wrap bracelets. A patron has also offered to teach a beginning crochet class.

Other patrons have also expressed interest in teaching classes, running book clubs, and offering bilingual storytimes. The Pruitt Library hope that the library really does become that community center where people come together to share their gifts and talents with others, and believe that these classes are just the beginning.

December and January outreach efforts were varied as to both audience and location. Carolyn and Mariya visited with the second-graders from the David Copeland School of Excellence to talk about the history of Kwanzaa. Every second-grader got to make a book with a *kinara* (Kwanzaa candle holder) on the cover and all the principles of Kwanzaa listed inside. These books were to be completed with their families as they talked together about how their families exemplify the various principles of this African-American celebration.

December offered a number of unusual outreach opportunities. Mariya set up a digital display outside the gymnasium during a girls' basketball game between Roosevelt and Churchill. Lots of parents and students from both schools were attracted by the sign "Free Music and Movie Downloads". When people stopped by, Mariya demonstrated all the digital material available for download, talked with parents and students about Tutor.com, and handed out library card applications.

Additionally, Troy, Carolyn, and Mariya were invited to teach a beginning cross-stitch session to one of Roosevelt's German classes. The German teacher encourages all of her students to participate in various German contests throughout the year, but she regretted that she never had student entries in the "Needlework and Handicrafts" category. The Pruitt public librarians talked about the German connection to various kinds of needlework crafts and taught each student how to cross-stitch a miniature *tannenbaum* (Christmas tree.) Afterwards, several students said that they really enjoyed the craft and would consider entering something in the needlework contest.

Mariya was also fortunate enough to participate with SAPL employees in a wonderful opportunity coordinated by Ramona Lucius of the Outreach Department: the H-E-B Feast of Sharing at the Henry B. González Convention Center. It was great to partner with librarians from around the city to read stories and issue library cards to families who attended this fantastic event. Thanks to Ramona for organizing such an amazing outreach event. Pruitt staff will definitely be volunteering for future events.

Troy visited with thirty members of SALA (San Antonio Librarians' Association) on December 9 to talk about the various resources available to teachers, librarians, and families through the San

Antonio Public Library. He answered questions about everything from how to get a library card to how to download eBooks.

Additionally, the Pruitt librarians gave in-house tours of the Pruitt Library to the 82 Copeland second graders (on December 14) and 68 Copeland kindergarteners (on December 15). Special thanks go to Roosevelt High School Principal Rick Canales, who has been so supportive of the school-SAPL partnership, for allowing these tours to take place during non-public hours.

Finally, January was the kick-off of a new partnership with Live Oak Head Start, organized by Carolyn, who has been so instrumental in creating partnerships with daycares in the Pruitt service area to offer preschool children access to public library service. On January 12, Troy, Carolyn and Mariya visited with the Head Start 3-year-old classes and shared the book *The Box of Crayons that Talked*. The children and librarians had a great time singing songs, creating a beautiful hand-wreath, and reinforcing the concepts of colors and the importance of cooperation. They are looking forward to our monthly visits with these three-year-olds and to regular visits with the four-year-olds of Live Oak Head Start as well.

San Pedro

During the Central Library closure in December, San Pedro staff enjoyed a much higher than normal door count while hosting a number of Central's regular patrons. The staff also had the pleasure of working with several Central staff. Thanks go to Nikki Bilman [*Circulation*], Gina Peachy [*Circulation*], Ana Sandoval [*Shelving*], and Carolyn Clement [*Shelving*].

Children's Services Librarian Betsy Dalton presented 5 Storytimes and 5 B.A.C.K. Pack programs. The December programs featured winter holidays celebrated by various religious and ethnic groups, and the January programs, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Betsy also presented storytimes to children at several different child care facilities, including the VIA Child Development Center (three classes) and Educare Child Care Center (two classes) and to three classes at the Ferrari Learning Center, a Head Start facility. Circulation Attendant Mary Elizabeth Fernández presented storytime to three classes at the SAC Child Development Center. Fifteen books were also delivered to each child care class for their use during the month.

During this period, Betsy met with the Hawthorne Academy book clubs two times. There are fifteen members in each club, which meets during the students' respective lunch periods. The chosen books are discussed and Betsy then briefly discusses the books chosen for the next meeting.

On December 10 a "Make and Take" holiday decoration program was held in which fifteen children participated.

At the invitation of Councilwoman Mary Alice Cisneros, on December 21 Betsy, Children's Services Coordinator Viki Ash, and other Children's Services Librarians attended a brain-storming session on potential family literacy programs.

Two schools, Monte Vista Montessori and Kriterion Montessori, bring classes to the library on a weekly basis. These students range in age from eight to thirteen, second through eighth grades. When the classes come to the library, Betsy 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.

On December 30, six members of the Hawthorne sixth-grade gifted and talented class met at San Pedro Library with Hawthorne librarian Bonnye Cavazos to work on their science fair projects. Betsy

demonstrated database and catalog searches and aided the children in locating materials for their projects.

Librarian/Teen Services Liaison Monty Holcomb hosted five informal Thursday chess events, all of which had from five to eight people participating each night despite the fact that SAC was closed most of the time, and despite the holidays. Monty also held six teen events featuring various Wii sports games, including bowling, baseball, golf and boxing, and one teen event that featured board games. Each session had five to nine participants.

During December Monty put up a Christmas-themed board display and a Christmas-themed book display in the teen area. On December 26, he hosted Luis Berrios, a classical guitarist who played for an audience of ten people.

Semmes

Semmes' staff underwent some changes during December. Margaret Timm began working as a library aide at the branch. Staff is excited to have Ms. Timm working at the branch. In other staffing news, Adult Services Oscar Gonzalez transferred from Semmes to the Igo Branch. He will be missed at Semmes, but staff were excited to have Children's Services Librarian Carrie Vance transfer to Semmes from Central.

Because of the new library aide and the slower work load in December, almost all of Semmes' books are now shelved! This has made weeding in the Fiction collection a lot easier.

Thanks to the Semmes' Friends group, the library was beautifully decorated for the holiday season.

On December 15 Adult Services Librarian Debye Nicholl held the final Jane Austen Book Club meeting of the year. The group celebrated with a well-attended Jane Austen party.

Staff had a potluck party to celebrate the holidays. The event was beautifully decorated, thanks to the library aides. Members of the Friends, several volunteers, and some former staff members were on hand to join in the fun. Staff members were appreciated the very generous Wal-Mart gift cards provided by the Friends.

A new Baby Time and extra preschool storytime, presented by Carrie, were added to the schedule in January. Both of the new sessions are all ready well attended.

Thousand Oaks

The VITA program began January 14. It is just as popular as last year; people are calling to inquire about the times, and the lines form long before the service starts. People who use the service seem to appreciate it very much.

The floating collection committee offered a training session at Thousand Oaks on January 6. A number of people from SAPL and Thousand Oaks attended to see how the floating collection will work. It seems like it will be very positive for both Library customers and staff.

Thousand Oaks received new spinner racks for the CD collection, allowing reorganization of the items. The new arrangement is helping the patrons and staff members find the music they want.

Jorge Chavez resumed the Résumé and Job Hunting Help workshop in January, which takes place every Wednesday at 12:30. Participants are able to work on their résumés and fill out applications on laptops in the meeting room, with assistance from Jorge.

Thousand Oaks staff members celebrated the holidays by having a potluck feast. Members of the Friends and the library's volunteers were invited. Kate Gray also attended. The Friends group gave each staff member an HEB gift card, for which they were very thankful.

Leslie Elsasser started a monthly outreach to a local daycare in January. She presented a storytime to seven classes of preschoolers and brought 20 books to each class. Most of the books pertained to the lessons in order to supplement what the daycare already owns.

The book club met in December and January. Jorge Chávez chose Garth Stein's *The Art of Racing in the Rain* for December and *Born Standing Up* by Steve Martin for January.

From December through mid-January, the Thousand Oaks Library presented eight teen programs with a combined total of 101 teens in attendance. These programs ran through the holidays and included seasonal crafts, video and board games, the showing of the latest *Harry Potter* movie and the annual Guitar Hero championship. This event drew back to the library many of the older players who had ceased attending. This gave them the opportunity to recapture old glory while inspiring the next generation. This month also saw the development of a new teen books display in a more visible location, which has improved circulation of new books. The writers' group completed several book and music reviews for their peers in hopes of seeing them posted at 210teenlibrary.wordpress.com.

The Tobin Library at Oakwell

In the early weeks of December the Tobin Library hosted computer classes presented by the Department of Community Initiatives. The classes averaged about ten students and the instructor received several compliments from the participants. The Tobin Library has also been hosting the Census Bureau twice a week or more for employment testing.

Also in the early weeks of December, Sherrie Langston Hardin coordinated a large-scale clean-up and weeding of the adult non-fiction section. Tobin was able to share many of its books with the budding collections of Mission and Parman, giving those items a second life. While the Central Library was closed, the Shelving Department shared three of its hard-working aides with Tobin to help shift the entire adult non-fiction collection.

As a result of the major weeding and reorganization, Tobin's teen collection was given a new, larger location. When they returned from Christmas holidays, the young adults thought their new area was very "cool." Teen Services Liaison Caroline Rush's Wednesday programs are kicking back into gear after the Christmas school break, and already the numbers are over a dozen teens for each session.

In mid-December, children's and adult services librarians partnered to present a family origami Christmas ornament class hosted by origami artist Carol Johnson and long-time Tobin volunteer Angus Lo, who showed the class how to make the famous flying crane. Teens had their own Christmas ornament class, and 24 participants used craft paint and clear ornaments to create personalized ornaments for themselves and for the library. The teens' ornaments decorated the Tobin tree all season long.

Children's Services Librarian Liz Thurston used the Christmas break to begin cleaning up the juvenile nonfiction collection. Liz's storytimes have started back up for the spring semester, and her attendance numbers continue to grow every week. Meanwhile, she has begun a partnership with local community schools such as the George Gervin Academy, to bring their students in for special group tours and times. She has also been conducting outreach at this and other local schools, reaching 60-80 students each time.

In mid-January, Jernell Williams hosted an "Organizing Your Life" program presented by professional organizer Cynthia Cunningham. This adult program was attended by sixteen participants, who learned how to see their lives as layers of an onion, to be tackled one at a time.

Westfall

Festivities for patrons and staff alike abounded this past month! Families were treated to a holiday open house, where the 75 attendees made crafts and ate goodies in a festively decorated meeting room. Thanks are due to the Friends of Westfall Branch Library, who sponsored the party. This generous group also hosted an appreciation luncheon for the employees, who were treated by a special serenade by some of the talented "Friends chorale." Westfall also had a community holiday tree in the entrance to the building, beautifully decorated entirely by donations from patrons.

Programming at the branch was slightly slower due to the time of year, but regular sessions remained: storytimes, book discussions, movie showings, etc. The teen programming at the branch continues to grow with a core group of regulars coming for "Teen Time" with enthusiastic Library Assistant/Teen Services Liaison Marisa Sparks. The U.S. Census Bureau has made extensive use of the library as site for both training and testing.

Several staff members took part in training classes, and participated in committee work: Branch Manager Cheryl Sheehan finished up the series of Human Resources Danger Zones courses and participated in a webinar on formulating patron conduct policies. Adult Services Librarian Monica Bustillo attended the adult programming committee meeting. Outreach efforts included a presentation by Children's Services Librarian Imelda Merino to a PTA meeting on the importance of reading. Cheryl supplied reference materials and information to a support group held at the local Adult & Senior Center. At the invitation of District 1 Council Representative Mary Alice Cisneros, Cheryl and Imelda attended a brain-storming session on potential family literacy programs.

Cheryl was interviewed for an article on the impact of the recession on libraries. Her story appears in the current issue of *Library Journal*.

Westfall was happy to host some of the staff from Central during their two-week closure. Their help was very much appreciated. The branch also welcomed a new Library Aide, former maintenance worker Lorraine Boyett.