

**Library Director's Report**  
to Multnomah County Library Advisory Board

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**Multnomah County Library joins City Club discussion on digital inclusion**

In January, I was invited to speak at Portland City Club on the topic of digital inclusion and what it means for the library and our community's future. I joined Intel's Vice President of Human Resources Patricia McDonald, Innovate Oregon's Social Alchemist Dwayne Johnson and Elemental Technologies' CEO Sam Blackman to discuss how and why it's so important for us to bridge the digital divide.

This discussion was a great opportunity to demonstrate the library's critical role in digital inclusion and to make the link between library services and a richer, more diverse employee pipeline and the resulting effects of economic development and civic participation.

Patron Kathleen Nelson joined the conversation to demonstrate the real impact access and training can make. "I'm here to profess my profuse thanks to the library for their one-on-one computer tutoring resource," said Kathleen, who, after a long-term professional-level career, was out of the workforce for 15 years.

When she returned to the workforce in an entry-level position, Kathleen went looking for low-cost computer resources and found few options. "After working once a week with Carlos [Galeana, bilingual Spanish regional technology coordinator], I received a significant promotion at work and I am also now a very enthusiastic volunteer for the library," Kathleen said.

Thank you to City Club for creating space for this discussion, which is only just beginning. You can [watch a video](#) of my remarks and the robust conversation online, and I encourage you to continue this dialogue with your community.

**Compassionate, personal service helps patron in need at Gresham Library**

Recently, Karen Eichler, library assistant at Gresham Library, demonstrated the difference our staff members make for patrons every day. When a patron approached the Info Desk a bit hesitantly and asked for information on recovery resources, Karen was ready to help. She did a great job of gently asking questions and building his trust so he felt comfortable talking to her. Karen and Branch Manager Martha Flotten ended up having a great conversation with the patron, providing information and resources to meet his service need.

"As I drove home after work, I kept coming back to that one interaction," said Martha. "To be able to come into our building and find such compassion makes me endlessly proud."

Karen's behavior exemplifies what libraries are all about. This kind of interaction requires adaptability, empathy and a personal commitment to finding the right information for each patron's specific needs. "Karen's customer service is always top notch," said Martha, "but her kindness really shone last night."

### **Teen volunteer finds joy and purpose at Multnomah County Library**

Savita Avasthi loves volunteering at Fairview-Columbia Library. "When I first moved to Portland, I remember how lost and alone I felt," she said. "[Then] I found Multnomah County Library."

After writing a resume and interviewing for the first time, Savita accepted a position as volunteer search assistant. "The moment I entered that library, I felt right at home," she said. "It was small, but it was warm and full of books. I couldn't stop smiling as I slipped the nametag over my head."

Savita has been volunteering for five months and has also joined the teen council. "Every morning, when we would go over the schedule for the day, I felt like I was a part of something bigger," she said. "I would feel a wave of joy at the faith they were putting in me. Knowing that I was helping even one person get the book they wanted, and knowing that I was making even just one person's job in that library easier made my heart fill."

Volunteering has made Savita realize she wants to dedicate her life to helping others. "Being there was called community service by my school and friends," she said, "but to me it was called a pleasure ... to be a part of this great team and this amazing community has been one of my greatest joys for these five months. I cannot wait to make it six months!"

### **World War II survivor shares emotional story, connects through library service**

A simple request for help with the copy machine at Gresham Library last month turned into so much more for the patron and staff. Access Services Assistant Sandi Morgan can read German, so when a patron showed her what he wanted to get copied, she could see it was a birth certificate.

The patron told Sandi that during World War II his father, a German chef working in Italy, was recruited for the German army. When his father resisted, Nazis took his three children away as punishment for not joining, and the children were put into foster homes.

Later, the siblings came to the United States, but it wasn't until recently they found the birth certificate and learned where their mother was born. "He was so excited to be able to send copies of the birth certificate to his siblings," said Sandi. "The three were able to gain a piece of their identity at long last."

This patron was able to find a deeper connection to his past and share it with his family through the simple service of using the copier. And now, he's also taking free citizenship classes through the library. Multnomah County Library offers free citizenship and English classes on an ongoing basis across our locations.

### **New Chinese regional librarian brings new outreach ideas to East County**

Library Outreach Specialist Ana Ruiz Morillo had a great meeting with new Chinese Regional Librarian Toan Lam-Sullivan, who recently transitioned from his role as Vietnamese Youth Librarian at Gregory Heights Library. Toan brings fresh enthusiasm to his new role and is ready to share ideas on how to support East Multnomah County with outreach and programming.

Ana is excited to have Toan on the team and has invited him to attend the next Programs for Diverse Audiences meeting to discuss Multnomah County Library's We Speak Your Language program.

### **Teen Librarian Amy Miller wins scholarship to American Library Association conference**

Congratulations to Amy Miller, Gresham Library teen librarian, who has won a \$1,000 ALA/YALSA Baker & Taylor scholarship to attend the American Library Association annual conference. This acknowledgment is a testament to Amy's talents and commitment to her profession. The scholarship will help her attend the conference this coming June in Orlando.

Previous winners of scholarships to ALA include our librarians Alicia Tate and Juliet Morefield. Congratulations to all our scholarship winners and thank you for your continued dedication to librarianship.

### **Multnomah County Library staff serve on the Notable Children's Books Committee**

When a national committee appoints one of our staff members, it's always an honor, for the individual and the library. To have three of our talented staff serving concurrently on the Association for Library Service to Children's Notable Children's Books Committee is truly commendable. "It's nearly unheard of for a national committee to choose more than one staff person from the same region, much less the same system," said Multnomah County Library Youth Services Director Katie O'Dell.

The Notable Children's Books list is highly impactful, with hundreds, if not thousands, of schools and libraries using it as an ordering list each year. "Librarians Danielle Jones, Jackie Partch, and Kirby McCurtis will do us proud in reviewing, discussing and selecting the top books for children in 2016," said Katie, "all in front of a live audience of publishers, PR mavens, editors, librarians and teachers."

"I'm proud and grateful to our staff for getting involved, applying for awards and committees, and taking on the challenge — and many rewards — of contributing to our national organization and division," Katie said.

Congratulations to Danielle, Jackie and Kirby for their appointments to the Notable Children's Books Committee.

### **Librarian Alicia Tate joins discussion on diversity in young adult literature**

On Jan. 28, Librarian Alicia Tate took part in the Diversity and Inclusion in Young Adult and Children's Literature panel discussion, hosted by Portland State University's Ooligan Press. Alicia joined author S. Renee Mitchell and literary agent DongWon Song to discuss the changing landscape of the publishing industry and the intersection of diversity and inclusion with young adult and children's literature.

### **Patron comments**

"I swear, I want to be a library cheerleader. Multnomah County Library, YOU GET ME EVERY TIME. Library staff, thank you for all of your work and dedication." — Keith Rosson, Jan. 20

"We love the **Woodstock** branch! The space is inviting and the staff is always helpful. We also love that they have a Mandarin-speaking [library assistant] on staff. [**Amber Houston and Sally Li** have] been amazingly helpful with our children who are learning Mandarin." — Jorie Weinberg, Jan. 5

### **In the news**

[Our Homeless Crisis: For women, few services and plenty of danger](#) (*Oregonian*, Jan. 24)  
[Librarians in the Digital Age](#) (*American Libraries Magazine*, Jan. 19)  
[Portland's startup event calendar is already packed for 2016](#) (*Portland Business Journal*, Jan. 13)  
[Access e-magazines, indie movies, e-comics](#) (*Mid-County Memo*, Libraries section, Jan. 7)  
[Three candidates line up for Bailey's seat](#) (*Portland Tribune*, Jan. 7)

### **Upcoming events**

#### [Stories of INvisibility](#)

Various dates and libraries

#### [Black Girl In Suburbia Film Screening](#)

Feb. 9

Northwest Library

#### [Becoming Your Own Publisher](#)

Feb. 9

Sellwood-Moreland Library

["In addition to everything else, she was expected to learn English": Communication Challenges in \*The Book of Unknown Americans\*](#)

Feb. 9

Central Library

[Guns and America: Exploring the Second Amendment](#)

Feb. 10

Hillsdale Library

[Portland Brew Stories: Chocolate for Valentine's Day with Porter](#)  
Various dates and libraries

[Unknown Americans in Multnomah County: A Discussion of Health Equity](#)  
Feb. 13  
Gresham Library

[Waqtiga Qoyska / Somali Family Time](#)  
Feb. 13  
Capitol Hill Library

[Understanding Disability](#)  
Various dates and libraries

[Children's Folk Songs from the Rural South](#)  
Various dates and libraries

[Make a Folk Instrument](#)  
Feb. 20  
Fairview-Columbia Library

[From Africa to America](#)  
Feb. 20  
Capitol Hill Library

[Drumming in the Stacks: Taiko Workshop](#)  
Feb. 20  
Gresham Library

[Todos Leen 2016: El libro de los americanos desconocidos](#)  
Feb. 20  
Kenton Library

[Suspenseful Stories of African-American Folklore](#)  
Feb. 23  
North Portland Library

[Latino Fiction & Nonfiction: \*The Book of Unknown Americans\*](#)  
Feb. 23  
Central Library

[Strategies for a Sustainable Income in Retirement](#)  
Feb. 23  
Woodstock Library

[I Am a Poet](#)  
Feb. 24  
Hollywood Library

[A Little Taste of Latin](#)  
Feb. 24  
Central Library

[African Song and Dance](#)  
Various dates and libraries

[Principles of a Healthy Home](#)  
Feb. 25  
Hillsdale Library

[Music & Movement](#)  
Various dates and libraries

[Get Started with African American Genealogy](#)  
Feb. 27  
North Portland Library

[Portland Brew Stories: Overview of Beer Styles](#)  
Feb. 27  
Hollywood Library

[Language, Literature, Community: A Literary Roundtable](#)  
Feb. 28  
Central Library

[What Goes Up!](#)  
Feb. 29  
Hollywood Library

[Portland Brew Stories: Home Brewing from A to Z](#)  
Various dates and libraries

[Book History](#)  
March 1  
Sellwood-Moreland Library

[Celebrate 100 Years of Beverly Cleary: Ramona Book Party](#)  
March 4  
Fairview-Columbia Library

[Al Mutanabbi Street Starts Here!](#)

Exhibition and various events  
Central Library

[Portland Brew Stories: Growing 101](#)

Various dates and locations

[Seed to Supper: Beginning Gardening on a Small Budget](#)

Sessions begin March 6  
Midland Library

[Everybody Reads 2016: Cristina Henríquez](#)

March 8  
Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall