Adult literacy tutoring returns to Midland Library

After a successful six-month pilot, Midland Library is resuming its adult literacy drop-in tutoring program. Beginning in September, adults looking for one-on-one tutoring assistance to improve their English or math skills, study for the GED, or get help with various other educational and professional exams will once again have the opportunity to work with library staff and volunteers.

The program has proved invaluable for the nearly 20 adults who drop in for tutoring each session. Participants surveyed said they had fun, learned new things and felt more connected to the community by participating. A majority of participants attended because they want to get a job or get into college.

Even with its established success, Adult Literacy Coordinator Lisa Regimbal plans to continue improving the program, with goals to attract more GED students, add GED tutoring in Spanish, and conduct more outreach to social service agencies and community colleges.

Library volunteers have also expressed how meaningful the tutoring experience has been:
“Volunteering in this role makes me feel like I'm helping build the kind of community I want to live in” said one Midland volunteer.

Drop-in tutoring resumes at Midland Library on Tuesday, September 19 from 5 to 7pm, and will expand to Central Library every Thursday beginning October 12 from 10:30 am to 2pm.

**Eclipse fever**

During the month of August, eclipse fever took over Oregon, culminating with the rare solar event on Monday, August 21. For weeks prior, library locations held special eclipse-themed programming, offered book recommendations and handed out 20,000 free eclipse glasses, provided by a grant through the Space Science Institute's Star_Net Initiative.

The demand for eclipse glasses reached an all time high just a few days before the event, with many other places in the Portland-area sold out. The library's contact center even set a one-day record of 853 calls — more than 300 calls above the daily average!
At Belmont, Gresham and Holgate libraries, kids and adults enjoyed a total solar eclipse party featuring fun solar crafts. At Hollywood Library, Dr. Williams Thierfelder shared myths and superstitions about eclipses before explaining some of the actual science behind solar and lunar eclipses. At the end of the program, attendees were thrilled to leave with a pair of eclipse glasses.

“An eclipse is such a unique event and it was fun to see our patrons so excited to learn about it.” — Tama Filipas, clerk at Hollywood Library.

Welcome Aaron Bluitt, neighborhood libraries director

Multnomah County Library recently welcomed Aaron Bluitt as the third neighborhood libraries director. Aaron brings a wealth of experience managing different types of libraries — small and large, rural and urban. He most recently managed a branch at Austin Public Library, where his accomplishments included increasing program offerings, diversifying staff, reconfiguring the library's layout and creating a focus on outcomes.

As he learns his way around Portland and the library system, Aaron is focused on getting to know the seven neighborhood libraries he manages: Albina, Belmont, Capitol Hill, Hillsdale, Hollywood, Sellwood and Woodstock.

“Our library staff are actively engaged at all levels and passionate about what they do,” he said.

Looking ahead, Aaron hopes to draw from his various experiences to help our libraries evolve to meet patron needs:

“As a library, we were built for consuming content, but now we have to ask ourselves, how can we help serve the need for content creation? We have to be the most usable and flexible for our community that we can be.”
Library lends itself to fire response

Early this month, communities across the region struggled with the destruction and peril to life and property caused by the Eagle Creek Fire in the Columbia River Gorge. Multnomah County and its partners quickly initiated a robust emergency response, including a disaster declaration from Chair Kafoury and establishment of a shelter for evacuees at Mt. Hood Community College.

Multnomah County Library was there to help. As the fire and evacuation notices expanded rapidly, library staff set up a room with books, games and activities for children and a computer lab for adults. The library also compiled a comprehensive list of information and resources about the Eagle Creek Fire to help people get accurate and reliable information.

As we share in our sadness for the profound impact to a beloved natural treasure and seek a way forward, the library will be there for the community we serve. As Woody Guthrie once sang about the Columbia River itself we, too, will roll on.
Patron comments

“I just wanted to say "Thank you" for taking my suggestion of purchasing a CD by the Thompson Twins. I really appreciate that you listen to suggestions by library patrons. Many thanks from this huge library fan” — Susan, August 9

"Just wanted to tell you what a superb teacher for young children you have in Shaunda (Bailey), the youth librarian. I have been bringing my grandson, Darion, to storytime for over a year now and she has taught him many skills. Her sweet disposition and patience with each child is exceptional. She builds up their self-worth as well as their skills. Shaunda is a natural-born teacher. My grandson is fortunate to have such a young lady for his first teacher." — Jan, August 12

“Thank you to Percy, my library angel, for so much help with early Baroque French solo vocal music!” — Central patron, August 19

In the news

Students’ artwork rides to new spot on city bike lanes (Portland Tribune, July 7)
Kenton Library Launches ‘Curious Minds’ (The Skanner, July 13)
Life Inside The Multnomah County Library (OPB, July 14)
Reptiles rule the roost at Gresham Library (Gresham Outlook, July 20)
Multnomah County Sues Big Pharma for $250 Million, Charging It Fueled Opioid Crisis (Willamette Week, August 4)
Library Announces Upcoming Computer Classes (The Skanner, August 9)
Goodnight, sun (the Outlook, August 11)
Trustworthy eclipse glasses are out there, but going fast (KGW, August 17)
Area nonprofits, Multnomah County library work to help homeless, those in need enjoy eclipse event (Portland Tribune, August 17)
Join a book club at your neighborhood library (The Skanner, August 17)

Upcoming events

Free College and Career Planning for Teens
Thursday, September 14
St. Johns Library

Make College Happen: Workshop for Busy Adults
Tuesday, September 19
North Portland Library
What is “the Cloud”?
Friday, September 15
Hollywood Library

Mushroom Foraging
Saturday, September 16
Gresham Library

Home Repairs for Aging in Place
Monday, September 18
Kenton Library

Doing Dough: Apple Pie
Monday, September 18
Troutdale Library

Beginning Digital Design for Laser Engraving
Saturday, September 23
Rockwood Library makerspace

Pete Seeger: The Man and the Music
Saturday, September 23
Central Library

Cooking Around the World: Mexican Flautas
Sunday, September 24
Holgate Library

Generations of Pride: Coming Out Stories from Diverse Voices
Sunday, October 1
Central Library