Library offers sewing classes for the Somali community

Multnomah County Library's new mobile sewing lab is on the move! Funded through the library's staff innovation program, Curiosity Kick!, the program is piloting a series of sewing classes in Somali at Capitol Hill and Gregory Heights libraries.

The Library Sewing Project began as an idea proposed by Capitol Hill Library Assistant Suad Mohamed, Central Library Assistant Lisa Taylor, and Capitol Hill Library Administrator Patti Vincent, after the team heard from the Somali community a desire to find free neighborhood sewing classes. When the proposal was selected by staff to receive $10,000 in Curiosity Kick! funding, they quickly jumped into action, forming a team and getting to work.

The team purchased ten sewing machines, a bin of sewing supplies, and a cart to transport the equipment and supplies throughout the library system. They also identified Somali speaking sewing instructors who could teach the four new beginning sewing programs.

When the new series of classes launched in March at Capitol Hill, all classes were filled to capacity with eight students each. The demand and interest for the sewing classes remains high.

“**This program not only responded to community requests, it created a space for women who usually don't feel safe or comfortable using public institutions due to language**
barriers. By providing an instructor that shares the same language and culture, we reduced that barrier, and got over 100% attendance, 100% of the time,” said Suad Mohamed.

The Library Sewing Project pilot program is scheduled to run through the spring, as the team looks to identify additional ways to continue the project in the future and bring sewing programs to other libraries.

**Pati Moran Wins ALA/ALSC Award**

Congratulations to Youth Librarian Patricia Moran on winning the [2018 Penguin Random House Young Readers Group Award](https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/), which includes a $600 stipend to attend the American Library Association annual conference this summer. The award announcement noted:

"Bringing bilingual and bicultural experience, international engagement with the profession, and a dedication to underserved communities, Moran’s endeavors are marked by extensive innovation and a focus on outreach. She mentors those newer to the profession, offers early literacy workshops with parents, presents storytimes in both English and Spanish, and works with community leaders and educators to extend library services beyond the library. Moran is an active participant in CILELIJ (Iberoamerican Congress of Language and Children's Literature), FILIJ (International Bookfair for Children and Youth), and REFORMA, and she frequently presents to internal and external groups on diverse Spanish language materials for children and youth."

Pati joins some great company — a number of current and former Multnomah County Library youth librarians have won this award over the past two decades. Well done!

**Library celebrates Bike to Books month**

During May, Multnomah County Library is celebrating National Bike Month by hosting “Bike to Books” in partnership with the Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT).

Throughout the month, select library locations are hosting Bike Storytime events, and anyone who bikes to a library location (including Title Wave) during the month will receive a free bike light, courtesy of Metro, while supplies last.

Young patrons in Pre-K through 12th grade can also enter a free coloring contest to design new bike lane art. Three grand prize winners will see their designs painted on Portland bike lanes, with second and third place winners receiving other great prizes.
Meet Violeta Garza, youth librarian at Troutdale Library

Violeta Garza still remembers the first time she saw the library as more than books:

“Growing up on the Mexican border, the one public library in town was the size of an average living room. Then we moved to Texas and my mom took us down to our new library. I couldn’t believe everything it had. It was a big space! They had blocks to play with, Disney movies to check out, and best of all, everything was free.”

Today, as a bilingual (Spanish) youth librarian for Troutdale Library, Violeta helps connect East County youth to the library world she fell in love with from an early age. She especially enjoys the connection she’s made with teen patrons.

“Working with teens is underrated. I can show them my goofiest self, and they really open up. We want to make the library a desirable and inclusive space for everyone. It can be a place of acceptance for them as they go from seeing the world as black and white to seeing the ‘grays’ in life.”

With Violeta’s leadership, Troutdale is reviving its Teen Council, an opportunity for teens from the neighborhood to develop leadership skills and get involved. The Teen Council meets bimonthly and develops programs for other youth to get involved in the library.

This May, Troutdale will host a special three-part event for teens and youth, Live in a Better World and Give Back, which will be an opportunity for attendees to craft and make tote bags that will be donated to women and children at the Rose Haven day shelter.

In addition to her role as youth librarian, Violeta worked for the past nine months as a regional librarian in East County, supporting Gresham, Troutdale, Rockwood and Fairview libraries. In her role, she spent time reaching out to organizations and listening to what East County neighborhoods want from their library; coordinating resource lists for patrons, such as where in East County houseless patrons can get basic services; and leading training opportunities for other youth librarians.
As Violeta reached out to neighborhood organizations, she recognized an increasing need for the library to be out telling the community all it can offer — for free — that goes beyond books.

“Some people think of us as another government organization, but we are so dedicated to helping people get the information they need, connecting them to resources and most importantly, protecting their privacy,” said Violeta.

As a librarian dedicated to serving East County, Violeta's commitment and passion for helping people in her community, and connecting them to the library, remains at the center of her work.

“I've always felt at home in the library. I want to help ensure others feel that way too.”

**Public libraries in a rapidly changing world: it's up to us**

I recently had the opportunity to participate on a library panel to discuss the newly published report, *From Awareness to Funding: Voter Perceptions and and Support of Public Libraries in 2018*. The report, an update from the original 2008 report, was produced by OCLC Research, in partnership with the American Library Association (ALA) and the Public Library Association (PLA division). The report surveys US voters and details an eye-opening shift in public opinion about the value and relevance of public libraries in the age of rapidly evolving technology and shifting demographics.

Perceptions of libraries have shifted over the years, and unfortunately, today only 48% of people believe the library is doing a good job of keeping up with changing technology — a drop from 60% reported in 2008.

Technology's relentless evolution isn't the only trend to which we must constantly adapt. The demographic shifts we see demand investment to ensure that everyone has equal opportunity and access. A widening opportunity gap presents critical challenges for people who are new to this country and others who might be left in the margins.

It's critical that libraries assign a sense of urgency to this report and find more ways for our public libraries to be strong, relevant and responsive to the shifting needs of our communities. I'm committed to ensuring that Multnomah County Library does the work necessary for our communities to believe in us. Read my full response to the report at tinyurl.com/vaileyblog.
Across
1. MCL's remaining Carnegie library buildings are St. Johns Library and ________
3. Library location without a meeting room
8. The library’s annual community reading program
9. Name of the library’s used bookstore
10. This library branch opened in 2010
11. The library provides programs and materials in five primary languages: English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese, and ________

Down
2. Most checked out book in 2017
4. The library’s staff innovation program that has generated new programs and services like “Dictionaries for refugees” and the library bike
5. Library of Congress head librarian
6. Branch that celebrated its 100th birthday in 2013
7. Largest MCL location
12. Founder of Library Journal
Patron comments

“Books are my window to the world. Multnomah County libraries are my resource. The library has given me lifelong access and pleasure to information, music, computer skills and much, much more. The library staff are a unique and remarkable mixture of professionalism, friendliness and helpfulness. I've depended on the Woodstock branch library for more than seventy years, including building changes, and I say it continues to improve with age. Every aspect of library services should be cherished and protected; but it continues to be the staff that ties together this remarkable resource. ‘Robots have no future here.’” — Joanne, April 2018

“Thank you for keeping the Best of the Writer's Library Project up for so long, I'm thrilled that my book, Queen of Incense, was featured. Writing a novel is a long hard slog; it's more gratifying than you can imagine to receive this attention.” — Signe, April 2018

“I truly appreciated the service I received on this day [March 23]. I am a Portland local who has grown up in this neighborhood. Recently, in my life, I have been isolating myself, but the library is a safe place that I'm now trying to reconnect with. Always trying to improve myself, being treated with kindness and care is uplifting in a world that faces many adversities. Thank you for regaining my confidence in the public library. You guys are wonderful.” — Maria, March 2018

“I had a book on hold and was out of town. I didn't know if it was possible to extend the hold. So I Called the number listed for the NW branch and was surprised that it was a general library number. I was further surprised when the man who answered the phone suggested that he might be able to help— and he did extend my hold and reminded me of an overdue book. And when I went to the library two days later, there it was! Nice system. — Marta, March 2018

“I am very happy to see more people of color at Central. Thank you for representing more of Portland residents.” — Central patron, March 2018

In the news

Whose well-loved teddy bear is this? (KOIN, April 24)
Portland Libraries Celebrate National Poetry Month (The Skanner, April 17)
19 Secrets of Public Librarians (Mental Floss, April 13)
Library to celebrate children and books with festive party (Gresham Outlook, April 6)
Upcoming events

**The Influence of the Constitution on Political Conversation**  
Tuesday, May 8  
6:00 pm  
Albina Library

**The Big One: Historic Earthquakes and Volcanoes**  
Saturday, May 19  
2:00 pm  
Gresham Library

**Mastering Public Speaking**  
Thursday, May 10 and May 17  
12:00 pm  
Central Library

**Underwater Creatures in Origami**  
Monday, May 21  
4:00 pm  
Hillsdale Library

**Our Story: A Place Called Home: From Vanport to Albina**  
Saturday, May 12  
3:00 pm  
Kenton Library

**Beyond Voting: Elections and Campaign Financing**  
Tuesday, May 22  
6:00 pm  
Woodstock Library

**Shibori Fabric Tie-Dying**  
Sunday, May 13  
1:00 pm  
Northwest Library

**SEO Basics**  
Tuesday, May 29  
5:30 pm  
North Portland Library

**Asian Cultural Evening**  
Tuesday, May 15  
6:00 pm  
Holgate Library

**Islamophobia in Our Communities**  
Tuesday, June 5  
6:00 pm  
Kenton Library

**Dig into Books & Science: Exploring Things That Grow**  
Wednesday, May 16  
5:30 pm  
Central Library

**Central Library Eco Roof Tour**  
Thursday, June 7  
12:00 pm  
Central Library

**Black Storytime with Food: Sharing Nutrition Knowledge**  
Saturday, May 19  
12:00 pm  
Midland Library

**Stamp It! Linoleum Block Cuts**  
Sunday, June 10  
1:00 pm  
St. Johns Library