



It's been a busy month for Multnomah County Library and libraries around the country, as the fight with Macmillan Publishers has hit the mainstream. Over the past few weeks, our library system has publicly expressed its disappointment and opposition to a new policy by Macmillan to restrict libraries' access to purchasing new e-books. This decision will impact our communities, and specifically, those who rely on our libraries most for access to materials that they wouldn't be able to get otherwise. So far, we've seen strong support in response to our public stance on this issue, and I'm grateful that our library system has earned the trust and support of the community.

Amidst this, I'm also paying close attention to the developments around net neutrality. Equal and open access to the internet is a critical part of participating in our digital society and staying connected shouldn't be reserved for those who can afford it. I strongly support the American Library Association in firmly opposing the repeal of net neutrality protections and will continue to advocate for an open internet as this debate gets moved to the state and local level.

Vailey Oehlke
Director of Libraries

Multicultural Teen Alliance at North Portland Library

Written by Nasra Ali, Public Library Association intern and North Portland Library volunteer

Being an intern for the Public Library Association allowed me to take one of the many "no's" I've received over the years and turn it into a "yes." I have been fortunate enough to know the ins and outs of my local library for years and have volunteered for the well known Summer Reading Program. I applied for the PLA internship after having a positive experience volunteering.

Throughout high school, I enjoyed taking on leadership roles. I was extremely involved in my school community and really practiced activism; I tried to advocate for as many people as I could. I wanted to bring the idea of a Muslim Teen Alliance to my school. It was highly requested, as my school had a fairly large Muslim population. Unfortunately, despite all my efforts, it was turned down every year until eventually I had given up.

The library gave me the platform and resources to be able to explore an idea to start a Muslim Teen Alliance for the community. I made more progress in these last few months than I had in the last three years, but ultimately, the idea wasn't approved for legal reasons. However, it gave me the base I needed for a similar project: a Multicultural Teen Alliance at North Portland Library.

The goal of the Multicultural Teen Alliance was to bring a diverse group of teens with different cultural backgrounds into the library who live in the area. This program was a way to provide a safe space for teens in the community to allow them to make stronger connections and remove challenging barriers.

Through this process, I learned about the strength of perseverance. On the day of the kickoff event, several teens showed up and provided positive feedback about the experience, which made the whole process worth it.

Library staff joined Latino community to celebrate El Grito 2019, Mexico's Independence Day



Multnomah County Library's We Speak Your Language Spanish staff partnered with Lara Media on September 14 and 15 at the Moda Center for a celebration of El Grito, Mexico's Independence Day. The event drew about 6000 people over the two days.

The community event provided free adult, teen, youth, and infant books, as well as information about library services and literacy programs.

Thanks to library staff Delia Palomeque, Eufrosina Cervantes, Sara Garcia, Ana Ruiz Morillo, and We Speak Your Language Intern Lilibeth Vasquez for coordinating a successful event, which included scheduling volunteers and gathering and organizing all the library materials.



Library staff attend Night Strike under the Burnside bridge (left to right): Kate Schwab, librarian, Central Library; Lisa White, administrator, Albina Library; Vailey Oehlke, director of libraries; Nicole Newsom, program coordinator, Every Child a Reader.

Bringing the library to Night Strike

Written by Kate Schwab, librarian at Central Library

On a Thursday night in late August, a handful of library employees sat in a room full of volunteers attending the orientation for that evening's event, Night Strike. We listened to Marshall Snider, Founder and CEO talk about the reason we were there to serve that shares its name with the organization itself, Because People Matter.

[Night Strike](#) is a weekly event under the west end of the Burnside bridge, where people experiencing homelessness can access services including a free meal, clothing, hospitality, and some hygiene services, such as foot care and haircuts. About 100 volunteers come each week, primarily from churches in the region. When the library visits, we set up a table with information about library services, a circulation station to clear fines and sign people up for cards, and library branded giveaways of bags, notepads, pens, keychain lights, and business card magnifiers. Library swag items are usually considered fun prizes, but for

Night Strike attendees, many of whom have lost everything, a notepad is a tool for keeping appointments organized and a magnifier is a stand-in for too-expensive glasses.

Two library staff, Kate Schwab and Geoff Brunk, started leading every-other-month visits, after a suggestion from Library Social Worker Susan Voss-Rothmeier. Night Strike is a "low barrier" event, serving everyone who visits without requiring attendees to register for services. We often see people who haven't used the library in a long time due to fines or thinking that they won't be able to get a card due to their housing status. We may also see patrons who are unable or unwilling to use other organizations for various reasons, including a reluctance to be tracked.

Because People Matter staff, and their experienced volunteers, provide a welcoming atmosphere and track the safety and security of all people under the bridge. Staff are great at building relationships with guests and greet many of the regulars by name. Attendance varies from about 100 to 300 people, not including volunteers, and it can get quite crowded under the bridge on a busy night.

Visits to Night Strike complement the work that Kate, Geoff, and other library staff are doing to connect with people in our communities experiencing homelessness. We provide outreach to day and night shelters, deliver books to a range of organizations serving people in transition, and offer library programming like the monthly [Coffee and Conversation](#) at Central Library.

Summer Reading 2019 was out of this world!

It was another successful Summer Reading program! This summer, kids and teens in our community read more than 29 million minutes!

In feedback about the program, nearly 50 percent of youth responded that they felt their reading skills improved, and 50 percent said they used the library more in the summer because of Summer Reading.

As one patron noted, "This program encourages my whole family to go to the library more often, making the library feel more welcoming and establishing a wonderful habit that I'm certain will serve us well."

The program also has a strong impact on volunteers:



"The library is like my home and you were the first to invite me in. Now, all of the library staff are like my library family and I will always cherish and remember everyone," said a volunteer at Holgate Library.

By the numbers:

- 112,242 babies, children and teens registered for Summer Reading in 2019.
- 97.5% of all elementary school students in Multnomah County were registered.
- 851 volunteers were recruited to run the Summer Reading program, with 93% under age 18.
- To make volunteering more accessible, the library offered Trimet assistance to teens. Of the 73 teens who requested a Hop Fastpass, 75% said they either could not have, or would not have been as likely to volunteer without it.

Summer Reading is supported by gifts to The Library Foundation.

Patron comments

"I would like to say how much my family and I appreciate our [My Discovery] passes. When a budget is stretched, cultural events are the last thing in the list or it is never in the list. Thank you very much." — Ana, library patron

"I am a psychotherapist from California & had to use the library for several hours to copy documents & do research for psychological assessments. The library was buzzing, there were babies crying, folks trying to arrange for bus tickets on cell phones, folks doing research, children learning about advanced coding & reading & everyone seemed to need help! The library assistants were gracious, loving & patient. They were calm & even took over the duties of copying when the machines were not working properly. I can see the library is really now a community center & requires not only ample funding but considerable praise for a wonderful job! Thank you for making my time here less stressful & assisting me & everyone else with grace." — Cornelia, Troutdale Library patron, August 2019

[This email came in from a patron about the My Librarian service. Included in the original email was every book selection that Heather had recommend] "Dear Heather, It was 5 years ago this month, September 2014, when you consented to be My Librarian. It changed my life-- forever and for better-- I truly believe that. Your first recommendation was Rules of Civility by Amor Towles. My god Heather, you knocked it out of the park, first try, and we were off and running! Below I've listed every Heather Selection I've read since. 70 titles in all. When I

found a book I especially enjoyed, I'd tell my 2 dearest friends, Karen and Kris: You've got to read this book! It's a Heather Selection!". They both eagerly jumped on board and remain there to this day. Reviewing this list now brings back many fond memories, not just of the books and their authors, but of the many discussions we shared as well. It's really an amazing testament. Thank you for being My Librarian. . . — Dan, library patron, September 2019

"I had a difficult computer issue, and your staffer, Tara, proved both very clever and very helpful - and charming to boot." — Daniel, Central Library patron, September 2019

"Just wanted to thank you for your excellent branch at St. Johns. And especially, thank you for your excellent staff member, Sharon! Sharon hosts groups for book clubs, and knitting, and is always so lighthearted and pleasant. Everyone feels welcome, and the time flies by -- with minimal -- but very diplomatic and funny -- remarks from Sharon. At the front desk, Sharon is tireless and pleasant (though really, all the staff are!). . ." — Anna, St. Johns Library patron, September 2019

In the news

[The New Town Square](#) (Oregon Business Magazine, September 25)

[Libraries Fight e-Book Pricing And Policies](#) (OPB's Think Out Loud, September 25)

[Multnomah County Library Asks People to Sign Petition Protesting Restricted Access to E-Books](#) (Willamette Week, September 25)

[Book challenges put small library in a bind](#) (Portland Tribune, September 24)

[Multnomah Partners with Portland State U. to Publish Local Ebooks in Print](#) (Library Journal, September 18)

[Play bingo with Poison Waters During Banned Books Week](#) (KGW8, September 16)

Upcoming events

[Pageturners Author Visit with Willy Vlautin](#)

Tuesday, October 8

St. Johns Library, 1:00 pm

[How to Become a Certified Small Business](#)

Wednesday, October 23

North Portland Library, 1:30 pm

[Emergency Preparation Training](#)

Tuesday, October 8

Central Library, 6:00 pm

[Great Ladies of Jazz Homage to Nina,](#)

[Aretha, Ella, Roberta, Miriam and more!](#)

Sunday, October 27

Kenton Library, 2:00 pm

[Costume Swap-o-rama-rama](#)

Saturday, October 12
Gregory Heights Library, 1:00 pm

[Portland Opera Preview: Madama Butterfly](#)

Sunday, October 13
Central Library, 2:00 pm

[Launch Your Own Podcast](#)

Saturday, October 19
Gresham Library, 3:30 pm

[The Prairie Blossoms: Shining the Spotlight on Native American Music](#)

Saturday, November 2
Kenton Library, 3:30 pm

[Day of the Dead Indigenous Stories and Songs of Mexico](#)

Saturday, November 2
Gresham Library, 4:00 pm

[Free Range Poetry](#)

Monday, November 4
Northwest Library, 6:00 pm