



As we close one year and begin both a new year and a new decade, I wanted to express my thanks to our dedicated library staff, our supportive partners, and of course, our community, whose use and love of the library is central to everything we do.

The library had many notable moments over the past year. From celebrating the [first graduates of the library's adult GED tutoring program](#), to advocating for [equitable e-book access](#), to partnering with Ooligan Press to publish print copies of a [Library Writer's Project](#) title, and modernizing our integrated library system, the library made great progress in honoring its new [priorities](#). The library will carry that momentum into 2020.

As noted below, the library is kicking off its 18th annual community reading project, Everybody Reads with Tommy Orange's powerful debut novel, *There There*. In addition to offering a series of events presented by members of the local Native community, I'm thrilled that this year both Multnomah County and the City of Portland will issue proclamations recognizing Everybody Reads and honoring Native voices.

Following the direction of the Library District Board in 2017, I've been continuing to work with library partners, community representatives, and industry experts to research and plan the future of our library spaces. This phase of work is nearing completion, and we will soon present our research and thoughtful proposals to the Library District Board for consideration.

I am proud of the evolving work of this library, and I look forward to all the ways we will progress over the next year to bring all members of our community a library system they can enjoy today and into the future.

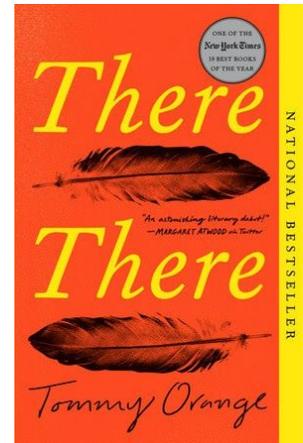
Sincerely,
Vailey Oehlke
Director of Libraries

Everybody Reads 2020 kicks off with free copies of *There There* available at all library locations

Multnomah County Library invites the community to participate in Everybody Reads 2020, featuring Tommy Orange's debut novel about the urban Native experience, *There There*.

Free copies of *There, There* are now available at all library locations without a library card (while supplies last). Patrons can also download the e-book or audiobook from the library catalog.

There There offers a series of gripping portraits and perspectives of Native people in urban America, told by twelve characters traveling to Oakland for a powwow, each of them contending with issues of identity, memory and belonging.



"For too long, the urban Native experience has been overlooked," said Multnomah County Director of Libraries Vailey Oehlke. "*There There* is a memorable and transparent story that explores the resilient search for identity and belonging while carrying the weight of inherited trauma."

The Multnomah County Board of County Commissioners will formally recognize Everybody Reads 2020 on Thursday, January 9.

The library will [host a series of events](#) from January 15 through March 5, to support discussion of the book and its themes. Events will be presented by members of the local Native community. Orange will speak on Thursday, March 5 at 7:30 pm at the Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall. [Tickets are available from Literary Arts.](#)

Everybody Reads, a community reading project of Multnomah County Library, is made possible in part by [The Library Foundation](#) with author appearance made possible by Literary Arts.



From left to right: Kenny Chen, Alonso Melendez, Delia M. Palomeque Morales, Sally Li. Not pictured: Sugene Yang-Kelly and Lan Phan.

Library staff partner with Portland Public Schools to provide families with access to valuable educational resources

Written by Delia M. Palomeque Morales

On November 2, Multnomah County Library bilingual information services staff collaborated, for the second year in a row, with Portland Public Schools (PPS) on a presentation about library services at PPS' English Language Learners Parent Academy. The academy is a PPS program that offers free workshops and family learning events to increase access to student and family success tools for diverse communities.

Library staff presented in English, Chinese, Russian (with an interpreter), Spanish, and Vietnamese. Attendees learned about library resources that can support their children's education at every level. Library staff also led a discussion about the differences between the US education and grading systems and other countries, and how those differences might impact parental involvement and student achievement.

Participants, interpreters, and PPS staff asked questions about live homework help, LearningExpress, library volunteer opportunities, and online MCL resources. Library staff emphasized the library's one-on-one appointment service, at which parents can learn how to access and use their children's academic scores to ensure their children are on track. Library staff also helped attendees sign up for library cards. The majority of the library cards were opened by the Russian-speaking group, with 22 cards in total.



Meet Library Safety Officer Martin Clark

On a typical day at Rockwood Library, you might find Library Safety Officer (LSO) Martin Clark asking patrons about their day or hanging out with teens in the Rockwood makerspace. While Martin is tasked with ensuring patrons follow library rules, his efforts center on building positive relationships with people and helping everyone use the library safely.

Driven by a desire to serve his community, Martin entered a police cadet program through the Gresham Police Department, prior to joining Multnomah County. He also worked for the Transportation Security Administration (TSA). That job helped him learn to talk to many different people every day and to understand complex security procedures.

Martin first worked at library branches while working as a facility security officer (FSO) with the Multnomah County Sheriff's Department. He welcomed the library's approach to safety and security and decided to join the library officially as a safety officer at Rockwood Library. Having grown up in the Rockwood community, Martin already felt a close tie to the neighborhood.

In 2016, Multnomah County Library added safety officers at some locations. Martin and the other safety officers are library staff, not police officers or security guards. They help patrons use the library successfully and apply the library rules. They also connect people with outside services and resources. Some safety officers also assist with shelving and other tasks.

With the Rockwood makerspace only a few years old, Rockwood Library has worked hard to find new and better ways to serve youth. Martin sees his position no differently.

Martin's approach to safety and security includes finding ways to help patrons use the library without being punitive.

"I enjoy building relationships with patrons so when they come in the library and see me, they have a positive experience, rather than thinking they're going to be followed around. I want everyone to feel welcome."

Martin works to build relationships with the youth and adult patrons who use the library. Rockwood library is bustling after school, with many teens making use of Multnomah County's only free makerspace. While the small library can get busy, Martin's compassionate approach has helped decrease incidents, particularly among youth.

"For some, the library is a place of safety from other outside pressures or difficult personal situations," says Martin. "Whatever their reason for being here, I want to help them use and stay at the library, which sometimes means needing to communicate the library's expectations for conduct in the library."

Having experienced some of the same challenges as the youth patrons at Rockwood Library, Martin knows firsthand what his life would have been like without a caring adult in it. He sees his position as a way to pay it forward to the community.

"The best ability is your availability," says Martin.

People notice Martin's contributions to the library. As one patron commented,

". . .Martin is such a great and exceptional asset to "our family library" here at Rockwood. It is great to see someone that is always smiling and he just makes our trips to the library an all-around general excellent experience. Not to mention that he is very, very helpful... Thank you for hiring such an individual as him."

Patron comments

"I so enjoy the Lucky Day, Staff Picks, and curated shelves on Floor 2. Also the new books - 1st Floor and revolving exhibits on the 3rd Floor. I love my library. Thank you for doing such a GREAT JOB of choosing books for me! Central Library is the best!" — Irina, December 2019

"Kudos on the calligraphy exhibit. A quick look pulled me for a long slow regard. There is some stunning work in that show. Thanks!" — Chris, Central patron, November 2019

"I like how inclusive and free the choices are. The books and thoughts aren't tightly controlled. It is information not limited by state censorship or money for the reader. I can find books that intrigue and disgust me. I can learn." — anonymous, November 2019

"I just want to say thank you to Multnomah County Library for being such an amazing hub of resources. I am an immigrant trying to educate myself. This is my first year in college, and I am working on many writing projects. I like reading different articles from the New York Times, The [Los] Angeles Times and other news outlets that require to have a membership which equals paying. Even when the fees start as low as \$1.99, I can't be paying for all the different things I want to read, take a glimpse or watch. After I learned I could access many of these same sources through Multnomah County Library I was in disbelief. I can create PDFs, print articles, watch documentaries all at no cost! In my native country of Argentina, we never had this, so I am so impressed by all the things available to me just having a library card. I feel really good about having the opportunity of pursuing higher education here in the United States and having access to resources that will make that journey easier." — Juan, November 2019

"Kate is worth her weight in gold and then some! I can attest to this as she patiently and with determination helped me with my PCC course work by helping me convert an impossible file into what I needed for my homework. She never gave up on accomplishing what we (unclear) mostly through diligent trial and error many many times. It was daunting and best and she never lost her pleasant composure and her good nature. She is as "real" as they come and its easy to see what a wonderfully dedicated employee she is. You did well the day you hired Kate. Well done :) — Central patron, Rosemary, November 2019

"Thank you for the helpful desk clerks, and use of the beautiful and easier to operate scanner. My low income status is not a limitation here. Thank you!" — Central patron, November 2019

In the news

[‘There There’ kicks off county’s Everybody Reads 2020](#) (Portland Tribune, January 3)
[Portland Loved Vodka, Blue Dream, Michelle Obama, Billie Eilish and Documentaries about Mushrooms in 2019: The most important cultural stats of the year](#) (Willamette Week, December 25)
[Children’s books can help start a conversation about race. Parents have to continue it](#) (Washington Post, November 22)
[Explore electronic reading through the library](#) (Gresham Outlook, November 8)
[Condado de Multnomah promueve literatura a través de dispositivos digitales/Multnomah County promotes literature through digital devices](#) (Univision, November 8)
[Multnomah County Library boycotts top publisher](#) (KOIN, November 7)

Upcoming events

[From Historical Trauma to Historical Wisdom: How a Generation is Healing](#)
Wednesday, January 15
6:30 pm
Central Library

[Hand Block Printing from India](#)
Friday, January 17
3:30 pm
Troutdale Library

[SISTAS Dolled Up: Doll Making Workshop](#)
Saturday, January 18
3 pm
Rockwood Library

[Fake News Survival Guide](#)
Tuesday, January 21
10:30 am
Midland Library

[Senior Health Insurance Benefits Assistance](#)
Thursday, January 23
5:45 pm
Hillsdale Library

[Native Story Hour](#)
Saturday, January 25
12 pm
North Portland Library

[Easy and Affordable Mason Bee Hosting for Adults](#)
Sunday, January 26
1 pm
Northwest Library

[Crispy Vegetarian Wonton](#)
Sunday, January 26
2 pm
Kenton Library

[An Intimate Evening with Black Belt Eagle Scout](#)
Wednesday, January 29
7 pm
710 SW Jackson St (PSU campus)

[The History of African Storytelling](#)
Saturday, February 1
12 pm
Central Library