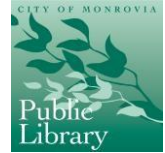




**CITY OF MONROVIA
LIBRARY BOARD
AGENDA REPORT**



DEPARTMENT: Community Services
Library Division

MEETING DATE: September 26, 2024

PREPARED BY: Jade Mushisky
Adult Librarian

AGENDA LOCATION: AR-1

TITLE: 2023/2024 Literacy Services Update

OBJECTIVE: To update the Library Board on the status of Literacy Services.

BACKGROUND:

Monrovia Public Library's Adult Literacy Services aims to help English-speaking adults improve their reading and writing skills so that they can reach their potential as workers, parents, community members, and life-long learners. With the help of trained volunteer tutors, learners meet with their paired tutor for one-on-one sessions or participate in the book club, write club, and conversation classes.

Our goals-oriented program operates under the guidance of California Library Literacy Services (CLLS). California Library Literacy Services was developed in 1984 as the first statewide library-based adult literacy service. Since then, library literacy programs have helped more than a quarter of a million learners and their families with their literacy goals. Monrovia Public Library's Literacy Services believes that literacy is more than just reading and writing. For nearly 20 years, the Adult Literacy Services program at Monrovia Public Library has helped adult learners achieve their goals and build better lives for themselves and their families.

UPDATE:

Tutors/Learners

Between July 2023 and June 2024, there have been 33 learners served in the program who completed at least one learning goal. In addition, five tutors have completed tutor training or began the onboarding process, and eight learners have been added to the program during this time. Currently, the program has 15 tutors meeting regularly with 20 learners and three tutors facilitating the four small conversation, writing, and book groups for 13 learners. Between July 2023 and June 2024, tutors have volunteered 1,457 hours to the Literacy Program. Based on calculations by the Independent Sector in Washington, DC, the current value of volunteers in California is rated at \$38.61 an hour, a value of about \$56,254.

Over the course of the fiscal year, a total of 106 programs were offered, serving 874 learners, tutors, and their families. Staff regularly collaborate with Youth Services staff to provide Family

AR-1

Literacy events in addition to the weekly, bi-monthly, and monthly programs offered to the learners and tutors.

Every learner enters the program with a goal, which may include obtaining a high school diploma, building vocabulary and communication skills for work and life, improving job skills such as writing reports and reading charts to get a better job, and increasing confidence to communicate with medical professionals or their child's teacher. Of particular note, learner goals completed during this period include navigating medical systems, attending library storytime with their child, volunteering as a community member, navigating public transportation, successfully meeting with a Citizenship Counselor, and becoming an official referee for their child's soccer league.

Tutor/Learner Support

2023

- Ongoing: Literacy provided the ongoing *Culture & Conversation* Group. This group supports learners who want to explore reading, pronunciation, and awareness of cultural and political events.
- Ongoing: Staff and tutors provided the *Learner Book Club*. This small group meets twice a month and serves learners who wish to improve their reading comprehension, vocabulary, and conversation skills.
- Ongoing: Staff and tutors provided the *Learner Write Club*. This group meets twice per month. In this tutor-led small group, learners build confidence in their everyday and creative writing skills.
- July: Staff and tutors provided a family literacy program called *Start with Art*, where learners and their young children enjoyed storytime, created collage art, and received picture books to support a love for lifelong reading at home.
- September: Staff facilitated *Watch & Talk*, a program that offers learners an opportunity to gather and enrich their conversation skills.
- October: In partnership with Youth Services staff, staff and tutors provided a family literacy program called *Trick or Read*, where learners and their young children enjoyed songs and storytime, engaged in literacy-oriented craft activities, and received picture books for their home libraries.
- November: Staff provided the Holiday Potluck for tutors, learners, and their loved ones to celebrate another year of literacy achievements. It was at this event where the 2021-2023 Literacy Anthology was debuted to program participants.
- December: Staff facilitated *Watch & Talk*, a program that offers learners an opportunity to gather and enrich their conversation skills.

2024

- January: Staff facilitated the first of many *Tutor Roundtables*. Tutors are encouraged to share ideas, make suggestions to the program, gain inspiration, obtain program updates, and receive ongoing training.
- February: With the help of tutor support, staff provided *Read, Write, Love*, a Valentines' Day-themed family literacy event which consisted of songs and storytime, Valentine card creativity, and free picture books.
- March: Staff facilitated the final *Watch & Talk*. In response to feedback from the learners and tutors who participated in the program series, staff transitioned to *Speak Easy* the following month to better serve the evolving needs of the learners.

- April: Staff reintroduced *Speak Easy*, a monthly program that offers learners an opportunity to gather and enrich their conversation skills and knowledge of English-language idioms utilizing conversation prompts. This program serves to replace and fill the literacy needs of learners who previously attended *Watch & Talk*.
- April: Tutor Training was provided as a two-part series led by Dianna Baycich, Literacy Projects Coordinator. Baycich instructed tutors on best practices for increasing learner writing and for supporting stronger reading skills at home.
- May: In partnership with Youth Services staff, the Literacy program provided *Family Literacy + Craft-tastic*, a family literacy event that aimed to empower parents as their child's first teacher and celebrated all types of families. Families created crafts together, engaged in songs and storytime, and received free books for the home library.

Technology & Materials Support

Literacy Services provides hybrid virtual/in-person services to best fit the scheduling, transportation, and child care needs of the learners and tutors. In response, staff conduct ongoing technology training to learners and tutors to enable more participants to engage in literacy services and program offerings.

- The *Book Club*, *Write Club*, conversation groups, one-to-one tutoring, and tutor training opportunities are offered online via Zoom to best fit the busy scheduling needs of learners and tutors.
- Staff continues to update and offer *MPL Adult Literacy Online Resources* using Padlet. This is an online resource-sharing tool for tutors and learners to access current learning materials, all categorized into literacy goals. This user-friendly resource enhances opportunities for tutors and learners to access the library and its resources 24/7.
- Staff provides technology equipment as needed to ensure all members of the program have the items they need to engage in virtual programming and training.

Literacy Services continues to provide materials for new and struggling readers, and this includes access to new materials such as the *Fresh Reads* stigma-free and high interest, lower lexile (hi-lo) collection as well as the updated literacy materials for tutors and learners.

- *Fresh Reads* is a collection of quick and easy reads for adults looking for non-intimidating novels and nonfiction titles. The collection removes the stigma of illiteracy and is instead promoted as convenient for new adult readers and for those with hectic schedules in search of a quick read.
- *Citizenship & Civics Corner* is a dedicated space to support learners with US Citizenship as a literacy goal. The Citizenship Corner includes resources for learners interested in studying for the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration exams, and includes books, flashcards, workbooks, DVD's, voter registration forms, and more.

The Literacy Center loans laptops, Wi-Fi hotspots, tutor camera accessories, and phone and tablet stands to facilitate learners in the hybrid virtual learning process. In order to continue to deliver quality hybrid online services such as tutor training, learner programs, and family literacy classes, the Literacy Center's updated Vibe video conferencing system allows for clear video and audio for online participants. This system is mobile, and it enables staff to create virtual classrooms anywhere in the library. Literacy technology equipment is provided by funds from the Monrovia Public Library Foundation and CLLS grant funds.

Program Funding

The State of California provides annual CLLS grant funding for adult literacy programs across the state. In 2023/2024, they awarded Monrovia \$24,952 for the Adult Literacy Services program and \$39,366 for the Family Literacy Services program. The grand total for Adult Literacy Services and Family Literacy Services for 2023/2024 was \$64,292. Grant funds are used to offset staffing costs. The Monrovia Public Library Foundation provided \$9,900 in additional funds for materials and equipment in 2023/2024.

RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends the Library Board move to receive and file AR-1 2023/2024 Literacy Services Update.

LIBRARY BOARD ACTION REQUIRED: If the Library Board concurs, the appropriate action would be a motion: **Receive and file report AR-1 2023/2024 Literacy Services Update.**

AR-1