



Oakland

Public Library



EDUCATION
IS
POWER

EDUCACIÓN
ES
PODER

Greetings

from the Director



Dear Friends,

I am extremely pleased to share this Oakland Public Library (OPL) Annual Report with you. It provides just a few highlights of library activities from the 2022-23 fiscal year:

- In the fall of 2022, OPL resumed two of our most treasured programs: Books for Wider Horizons and the Story Bus. Both serve preschool-aged children and were suddenly stopped in March 2020, due to the Covid-19 pandemic. I am thrilled that OPL is once again serving the community with these longstanding programs which engage young children with stories to promote early literacy.
- OPL had an amazing year online, thanks in large part to Community Relations Assistant Aliyah Muhammad, who manages OPL accounts on Facebook, X, Instagram, and TikTok. Social media is an important tool for library communications, and I receive compliments on ours all the time. If you haven't visited lately, check out @OakLibrary!
- One of OPL's older facilities - the Elmhurst Branch Library, which has occupied its current location since 1949 - had the distinction of becoming the City of Oakland's first fully electrified building in the spring of 2023. OPL looks forward to more sustainable improvements to library facilities throughout the system.
- Like many institutions, the library lost some of its traction as a community gathering space during the pandemic. In 2022-23, however, OPL provided many compelling reasons to visit the library. Please check out the stories in this report that profile our popular gardening programs and the inspiring new mural at the César E. Chávez Branch Library.

The greater library community supported these activities in so many ways. I'd like to acknowledge and thank the nonprofit Friends of the Oakland Public Library, the Library Commission, Branch Friends groups throughout the system, Books for Wider Horizons volunteer story readers, and the hundreds of individual volunteers throughout the OPL system and at the Bookmark Bookstore. Your support makes our libraries stronger, and I thank you for your many contributions!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jamie Turbak". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jamie Turbak
Library Director

Books

for Wider Horizons

Volunteers help spread the joy of reading and early literacy

Books for Wider Horizons (BWH) is one of the library's longest running volunteer programs. This innovative service matches trained volunteer story readers with early childhood classrooms throughout Oakland to provide weekly, interactive storytimes for children ages 3-5. In the fall of 2022, BWH resumed after a long Covid-related hiatus.

Launched in 1994 as a collaboration between OPL and Oakland's Head Start program to promote early literacy skills and library services, BWH leverages the significant contributions of dedicated volunteers and library staff to cultivate the natural enthusiasm young children have for stories and learning. Like many volunteer programs, BWH lost many long-time volunteers during the pandemic. Rebuilding a strong team is a priority for the library and our preschool partners.

BWH volunteer readers come from all backgrounds and age groups - from students and seniors to professionals on their lunch breaks. Bilingual volunteers often provide highly valued, multi-lingual storytimes at centers where children are English language learners.

Volunteers must be 18 years of age or older, and everyone is required to complete a 3-week training focused on how to create a fun and engaging storytime. After successfully completing the training session, each volunteer is assigned to a partnering preschool to provide a 25-minute storytime each week. Storytimes take place during school hours (weekdays, generally 9:00 am - 3:00 pm).

We ask for a 6-month commitment so that volunteers, children, and teachers have the chance to develop a relationship. Over time, the BWH volunteer storytime becomes a treasured part of each preschooler's weekly schedule. Many volunteers report that their preschool visit is consistently the best part of their week.



To learn more, please visit: oaklandlibrary.org/BWH

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The images of César E. Chávez and the Pyramid of the Sun represent strength, power, and contagious energy.

Art of the Library

A Mural for the Fruitvale Community

In January 2023, Xóchitl Gavidia, manager of the César E. Chávez Branch Library, was inspired to transform the functional but drab lobby entrance into a warm, welcoming space that celebrated the library and its Fruitvale community. Thanks to a Friends of the OPL Branch Equity grant, which provides extra support to OPL locations in historically marginalized neighborhoods, Ms. Gavidia was able to engage artist and muralist Xochitl Nevel Guerrero to create a mural that speaks to the library community.

Ms. Guerrero’s vibrant and evocative murals can be found on buildings throughout the Bay Area, including La Clínica de la Raza in East Oakland and The Women’s Building in San Francisco. Her work is also a part of the Chávez Library Poster Collection, an historical archive of community posters which spans more than 50 years and can be viewed on OPL’s website. As described in the blog post “Interview with Xochitl Guerrero” by Friends of the OPL board member Aniya Grimm, Ms. Guerrero included many elements from the library and Latinx culture into the mural:



Artist Xochitl Nevel Guerrero and Xóchitl Gavidia, branch manager César E. Chávez Branch, at the unveiling of the mural.

“Because of the [library’s] gardening program, she incorporated seeds of rosemary and chamomile. The myriad of books represents learning about life and heritage, regardless of age. Remembering family that has passed is an important element of Latino culture, so she included items used to celebrate the Day of the Dead. The images of César E. Chávez and the Pyramid of the Sun represent strength, power, and contagious energy – all of which Guerrero felt when meeting Chávez and visiting the pyramid. The work she has done will live on in the community, and serve as a reminder that knowledge is power, especially when we know our history.”

After Ms. Guerrero’s design was completed, the work began. And while the library’s branch manager had known the mural would delight the community, she did not anticipate how much people would enjoy witnessing its creation. Library patrons, staff, and passersby were captivated while watching Ms. Guerrero bring her vision to life. The entire project was a success, and the mural was unveiled and celebrated in May 2023. OPL is grateful to Ms. Guerrero and to the Friends of the OPL for this lasting gift to our community.

Going Viral

Social media helps libraries engage communities in meaningful ways. A strong social media presence boosts visibility of library services, encourages community engagement, and makes space for information sharing like book recommendations and research tips. It affords us valuable data on our community and makes the library's resources more accessible to those who may not physically be able to visit the library or its events.

Oakland Public Library @OakLibrary has a vibrant social media presence on three major outlets: Instagram, Facebook, and X (formerly Twitter). In January 2023, OPL launched its TikTok account to connect with audiences through short, lively videos featuring the charismatic, bubbly, and humorous personalities of OPL staff.

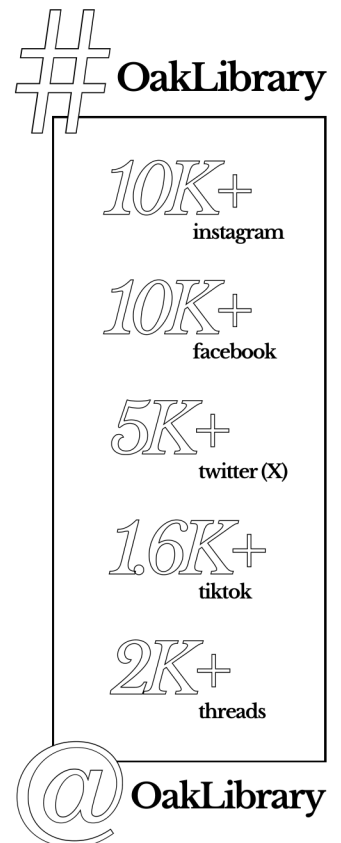
Highlights of our viral videos include:

- The Barbie dogs dancing trend, showcasing our Self-Check Out machines on IG reels (~23,000 views & 4,000 likes)
- A response video to a user recalling OPL's participation in Oakland Pride 2018 on TikTok (422.k views & 78.7k likes)

Since focusing more on video content, patrons have been tagging OPL in their videos, sharing their experiences. For example, a local content creator (@sitynoms) dubbed Montclair branch the "Cottage Core Library" of Oakland, garnering 347,000 views, 36,000 likes, and 11,000 shares. An increase in user-generated content improves patrons' awareness of and confidence in OPL's programs and services.

Overall, leveraging social media fosters community engagement, promotes library services, and enhances communication between OPL and its patrons, aligning with our mission to empower, exploration, and connection.

Visit OPL's social media outlets @OakLibrary to see more.



The Story Bus

Advancing literacy &
the love of libraries in
West Oakland

On Wednesdays and Thursdays during the school year, West Oakland Library staff prepare for extra-busy days. At 9:15 am, someone calls out, "The bus is here!"

This is the Story Bus, arriving with a group of young children and their teachers from a neighborhood school. The students line up to enter the library, find a seat in the storytime area, and settle in to enjoy books, songs, and rhymes with the librarian. After the fun, interactive storytime, the children browse the library's extensive picture book collection. Each child chooses one book to take back to school and then lines up to check out. Then there are farewells with library staff, which are usually accompanied by lots of high fives and elbow bumps.

The children are headed back to school, but they will return in 5-6 weeks. For the library, however, the day is just starting. After returning this class to their school, the bus picks up another group. By early afternoon, library staff will have hosted three to four separate classes.

In the beginning of the year, some of the children are first-time library visitors. But it is not long before many children are asking their adults to bring them back to the branch on Saturdays. By providing transportation, OPL's Story Bus program is creating new generations of library users in West Oakland. In 2022-23, the Story Bus provided 21 classes totaling 378 students (ages 2-7) with regular library visits.

Thanks to funding from a State & Federal transportation grant, this popular program ran from 2007-2020. In March 2022, the West Oakland Library resumed Story Bus service with funding from individual donors, private foundations, and the Friends of the Oakland Public Library. The program continues to grow and currently serves 409 students in 24 classes.



OPL is pleased to announce that the entire cost of the Story Bus service for the 2024-25 school year will be paid by a donation from Robert C. Toll, in memory of his wife and long-time Friend of the Oakland Public Library, Judith (Judy) Toll. The library is grateful for Judy's service and for this generous gift in her memory.



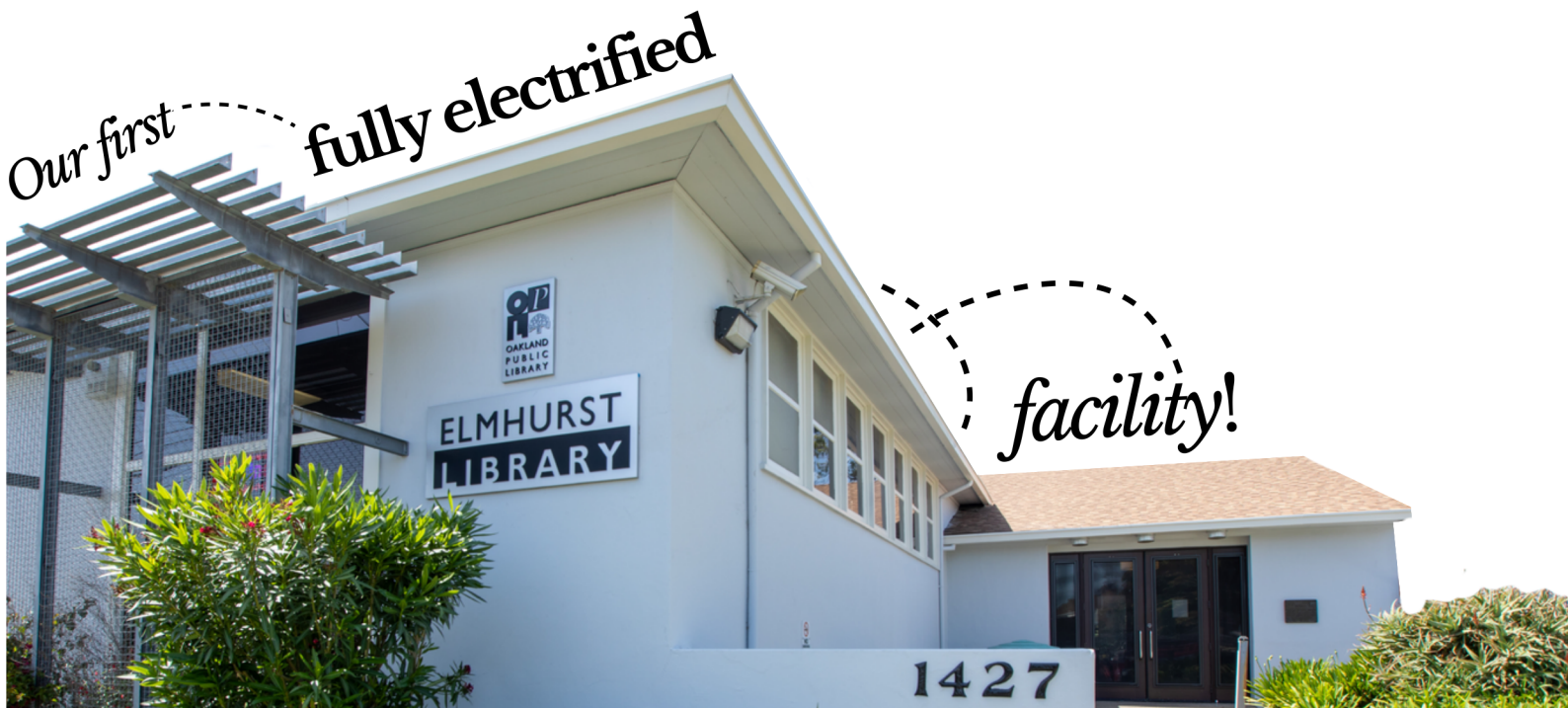
Elmhurst Branch

In April 2023, the Elmhurst Branch of Oakland Public Library opened as the City of Oakland's first fully electrified facility. Building electrification has numerous community benefits, from improved energy efficiency to reduced air pollution. It also moves towards the City's goal of electrifying all existing buildings in the city by 2040, building on Oakland's 2020 Ordinance prohibiting the use of gas in any new building.

The new energy improvements include an electric heat pump system with increased filtration and smart thermostats. The newly installed heat pumps provide heating and cooling. The cooling system is a much needed first for the Elmhurst Branch. All sinks now have electric on demand Point of Use (POU) electric hot water heaters. For better climate control, the project team also installed improved weatherstripping, new low-solar heat gain window film, attic insulation, thermostatically controlled exhaust fans, and smart thermostats.

In addition to the work at the Elmhurst Branch, OPL replaced nine of our eighteen gas water heaters with electric heat pump water heaters. These upgrades completed a key recommendation of the Zero Net Energy Building Integration Cost Analysis (ZNE) report, which was funded by a PG&E / BayREN incentive. The project was so successful that the City of Oakland is now rolling out similar upgrades for 100 city facilities.

OPL strives to lead in reducing Oakland's greenhouse gas emissions, improve the health of residents, and increase community resilience.



Culturally

Relevant Gardening at OPL



In the fall of 2022, OPL received a grant to help expand its gardening programs and resources. With its mild climate, Oakland is a great place to garden. And gardening is good for you. It soothes frazzled nerves, builds community, and provides food to eat and share. But many Oaklanders do not have easy access to gardens, and so community-based gardens and garden programs are especially important.

The Culturally Relevant Gardening project allowed OPL to carry out 22 in-person gardening programs in the spring of 2023. These programs were taught by local gardening experts with Acta Non Verba, Indigenous Permaculture, and Pollinate Farms, among others, and served almost 300 people at 16 OPL locations. 60% of people who attended reported that it was the first time they had ever taken part in a library program!

Funds from the grant were also used to enhance 8 library gardens with new plants, soil, and equipment. OPL now has seed libraries at 15 locations, and this project added more diverse offerings to these community resources: 53 pounds of seeds for 59 varieties of plants and herbs. These seeds are available to everyone - no library card required - although gardeners are asked to save some seeds after the harvest and bring them back to the library.

This project also generated new information resources in five languages: three pamphlets and a gardening zine that provide information on seed saving, OPL seed libraries, and common gardening issues. Grow Kits on Indigenous, African American and Latinx heritage crops were created and distributed. These included seeds along with information on how to grow the plants, their cultural significance, how to cook with them, and resources with more information.

With the broad appeal of gardening and the special focus on diverse crops, this project engaged new and existing library patrons. OPL plans to continue the garden and seed programs thanks to funding from the Friends of the Oakland Public Library.



To learn more and find an OPL seed library, visit: oaklandlibrary.org/seeds

Financials

2022 / 2023

2022-23 Financial Statistics*

Expenditures by Fund Source

General Purpose Fund	\$13,527,979
Measure Q	\$17,703,014
Measure D	\$13,094,303
Measure HH	\$12,549
Local/State/Federal Grants	\$467,956
Trust Fund & Others	\$110,491
Total	\$44,916,292

Expenditures by Category

Personnel	\$33,082,138
Operations & Maintenance	\$8,831,306
Books & Other Materials	\$3,002,848
Total	\$44,916,292

Population Estimates

July 1, 2022 - from the United States Census Bureau

Oakland	430,553
Emeryville	12,913
Piedmont	10,811
Total OPL Service Area	454,277

Average Investment

Per Capita	\$98.87
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*Numbers subject to audit by Oakland City Auditor

The Oakland Public Library is grateful for the generous support that we receive from the community. The following organizations provided financial support for specific library programs between 7/1/22 - 6/30/23. The library also appreciates the 1,000+ individuals who donate to the Friends of the Oakland Public Library and branch friends groups.

2022 / 2023

Supporters

Amigos of the César E. Chávez Branch Library

Herman Auerbach Memorial Fund Trust II*

California State Library*

Eat. Learn. Play. Foundation*

First 5 Alameda County*

Friends of the Asian Library

Friends of Dimond Library

Friends of Elmhurst Library

Friends of Lakeview Library

Friends of Melrose Library

Friends of Montclair Library*

Friends of the Oakland History Center

Friends of the Oakland Public Library

Friends of the Oakland Tool Lending Library

Friends of the Piedmont Avenue Library

Friends of Rockridge Library*

Friends-Stewards of AAMLO

William G. Gilmore Foundation*

Harnly/Roeper Fund at the East Bay Community Foundation

Hellman Foundation Fund*

Matson Foundation*

Oakland Athletics*

The Bernard Osher Foundation*

Pacific Library Partnership*

Kenneth Rainin Foundation*

Sunlight Giving Foundation*

West Oakland Library Friends

Young Family Charitable Fund

*Provided support through the Friends of the Oakland Public Library

Friends of the Oakland Public Library

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*On September 26, 2023, the Oakland City Council changed the name from the Library Advisory Commission to the Library Commission.



Jamie Turbak
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