



BERKELEY  
PUBLIC  
LIBRARY  
ANNUAL  
REPORT

2014



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*Library on Wheels* stops by the South Berkeley Farmers' Market, with craft projects for kids, a selection of materials to check out, and more.





**2014** was an extraordinarily busy year for Berkeley Public Library. With the completion of West Branch in December of 2013, we closed the long chapter of rebuilding and renewing our well-loved Branch libraries. We celebrated with the community in April during *Branch Out*, our month-long event, which brought a host of fun (and free!) programs and events to Berkeley. We are proud of our achievements this year—and they didn't go unnoticed. The Library received the **Berkeley Environmental Achievement Award** for outstanding leadership in advancing environmental sustainability at the City of Berkeley by integrating green building strategies into the Branch libraries renovations. We were also awarded the Library Foundation's **Fred and Pat Cody Award** for the "brilliant transformation of Berkeley's beloved branches."

We also opened some exciting new chapters. We launched our three-year strategic plan, gathering community input to develop the three major themes—Community, Conversation, and Collaboration—which will guide the Berkeley Public Library down a new path

to supporting the community in broader and more innovative ways. We also had a momentous changing of the guard. I joined the staff in November 2014 as the Library bid a fond farewell to Donna Corbeil, Director of Library Services since 2007. The strategic plan themes came from the community but reflect my personal vision of community-driven library service. As Director, I want to make the Library the community hub, a place where people come to find meaning, have conversations, make a difference—providing all Library users a place to engage with their world in the ways that suit them best. The Library will continue to transform—in a direction dictated by the needs and desires of the Berkeley community.

Moving forward, we have even more exciting plans for 2015! You will see the Library step out of our buildings with the new Library on Wheels program. Look for the Library on Wheels book bike at community events and farmers' markets throughout Berkeley. And, we'll be reorganizing a portion of Central Library to prepare for a new and expanded Teen Center—a state of the

art space for Berkeley teens. Working with teens themselves, we will design a flexible space, suited for exploring, collaborating, and creating.

For me, the library has always been a magical place. There is a sense of wonder in the possibilities, both in our collections and in how we serve the community. I am excited to be a part of this library and the Berkeley community. I look forward to helping you discover the magic at your Berkeley Public Library!

— Jeff Scott  
Director of Library Services



## Statistical Highlights

With the opening of the final improved and rebuilt Branch Library during FY 2014, patrons are rediscovering their neighborhood libraries. Visits are up dramatically over the last two years, rapidly rebounding toward pre-construction levels. While resting on our laurels and gloating over these beautiful spaces is tempting, we've shifted our focus to spreading the word about all of the amazing happenings at the Berkeley Public Library.

- Despite the closure of West Branch for part of FY 2014, the Library welcomed over 1.3 million visitors. Staff issued 109,078 new library cards, which featured five new designs. Many of those new cards were used to check out materials from our physical collections of books and media, which circulated 1,973,998 times.
- Our dedicated staff answered 320,385 reference questions—a 66% increase over last year—assisting patrons with research, job searching, and general computer questions, many during one of the 176,479 computer sessions users logged over the year.
- Hand-in-hand with the newly improved neighborhood libraries came more opportunities to enjoy them. With new extended hours, all four Branch libraries are now open later on Tuesdays and earlier on Wednesdays,

Music duo Leon Williams and Dave Prieto bring bossas, blues, jazz, and original music to Claremont Branch for a special lunchtime concert.

raising the total number of open hours to 52 hours per week. This brings the number of open evenings to three per week and mornings to five per week—above and beyond the pre-construction hours.

- After a year of planning and design work, **the Library launched its new website, welcoming over 400,000 visits in the first five months alone.** The site features improved navigation and a new visual identity. Built from the ground up with input from the community, the site expresses Berkeley Public Library's commitment to meeting our users' wide range of interests as well as providing convenient access. The website allows easy access to account information, along with the ability to checkout downloadable music, movies, magazines and books, search full-text databases, and access the Library's online catalog and much more 24/7. With an increasing number of people accessing the Library while on-the-go, the site was designed with mobile users in mind, adapting easily to tablets and mobile devices.
- The Library's new website highlights the Library's growing digital collections. This year, there were **1,433,562 uses of our electronic resources**—databases, e-books, digital magazines and streaming/downloadable music!

Teens create all manner of pirate gear at the *Talk Like a Pirate Day Party* at North Branch.





There were 146,030 checkouts from our e-book collection on Overdrive, and 11,505 check-outs on Zinio, our e-magazine service. Hundreds of users utilized Freegal, accessing almost 14,000 songs from our streaming and downloadable music platform!

- As part of our commitment to improve communication with the community about library services, events, and programs, **the Library launched four new electronic newsletters.** The first of these monthly newsletters launched in April, with the others starting shortly thereafter. The newsletters capture the highlights of upcoming programs and information on special projects and new services. Two of the e-newsletters—*Kids* and *Teens*—are especially youth focused. Currently, **over 2,000 Library users have subscribed**, and we expect that number to grow exponentially.
- This was an exciting year for BerkeleyREADS, the adult and family literacy program of the Berkeley Public Library. **Volunteers recorded 6,120 tutoring hours in FY14**, or over 1,000 more hours than last year. In total, **BerkeleyREADS staff and their 170 volunteer tutors supported 220 adult learners** working toward their literacy goals, through one-on-one tutoring, small group instruction, and drop-in tutoring for additional support.

It's craft time at South Branch as kids create with perler beads.



## Services and Programs

With all five Library locations open, patrons had more opportunities to enjoy the myriad events organized by Library staff. Visitors flocked to more than 2,000 programs, and while we saw an increase in program attendance across all age groups, we saw more preschoolers than ever before. The 25,000 attendees at preschool programs represented 49% of our total program attendance—that's about five program visits per preschool-aged child in Berkeley.

- *Paws to Read!* was our highly-successful Summer Reading Program for children, which this year welcomed preschoolers. In keeping with the theme, the Library participated in the statewide *Paws to Give* drive run by the California Library Association to benefit animal welfare organizations. As part of this drive, patrons and staff donated pet care items to the Berkeley Humane Society.
- The well-attended *2014 Summer Workshop* for teens, led by local young adult author and Berkeley Writers' Workshop founder Erica Lorraine Scheidt, brought three published writers to the Library to lead three 90-minute writing workshops. Thirty teens attended all three workshops, and 70% of the 132 participating summer reading program teens were enrolled at Berkeley High.

Families enjoy "not very scary" stories and songs at *Family Halloween Story Time* at Claremont Branch.





- The **Women's Plumbing Center** offered two plumbing programs at South Branch. The class provided hands-on experience to 75 participants, who learned how to handle common home plumbing issues, using tools available from our own Tool Lending Library.
- National Book Award-nominated graphic novelist and Bay Area native **Gene Yang** spoke to a capacity crowd about his award-winning two-volume work, *Boxers & Saints*.
- A multigenerational capacity crowd was completely entranced by the **San Francisco Shakespeare Festival touring company's presentation of *Julius Caesar*** at Central Library, complete with sets, costumes, props, and recorded music.
- Central Library hosted an after-hours concert featuring **Soji and the Afrobeat Band** as part of the *National Library Week* and *Branch Out* celebrations, enjoyed by nearly 200 music aficionados at Central Library.
- Partnering with the **Alameda County Small Business Development Center**, the Library offered a slate of workshops geared towards the small business owner, such as *Starting a Business*, *Doing Business with the Government* and *e-Marketing for Small Business* amongst others.

Young visitors get close and cuddly with some furry friends at Central Library during a visit from Little Explorers Mobile Petting Zoo.

## Branch Out

In addition to the final opening event in December for the West Branch Library, the Library, in partnership with and supported by the Berkeley Public Library Foundation and Friends of the Berkeley Public Library held *Branch Out*—a month-long public celebration of the four newly reopened next-century libraries, and an opportunity to thank the community for its generous support, remind our users that all locations were now open, and introduce Library programs to new users.

*Branch Out* not only encouraged people to experience each of the new and improved Berkeley Public Library branches, but also to expand their own horizons via an array of free events and activities designed to inspire all ages and interests. The program featured after-hours concerts, art exhibits, ‘pop-up’ libraries connecting patrons to e-books at food truck gatherings, author talks, mindfulness meditation, a sleepover party for stuffed animals, a family-friendly evening of art and music, visits with award-winning filmmakers, and much more. During the month of April the Library hosted 180 events that attracted over 5,800 attendees, many of them first-time visitors to the Library. Four newly-renovated branch libraries mean an enhanced quality of life for Berkeley residents. That is our greatest success!

Soji and the Afrobeat Band gets the crowd moving during a *Branch Out* evening concert at Central Library.

Photo: Marina Parreira





# Budget Summary

The services and programs offered by the Library are supported by funding from the local Library Services Tax, private and public grants, awards from the California State Library, and the generous monetary gifts and donations received from individuals, businesses, organizations, and trusts.

## Fiscal Year 2014 (July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2014)

### Year-end report (Library Tax Fund)

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Final total income	\$16,234,500
Final total expenses	\$15,702,066
Ending fund balance	\$ 2,300,679 (net of reserves)

**Milestones:** In FY 2014, the Library celebrated and consolidated achievements accomplished over the past several years. With all five Library locations now open and offering full public services the Library hosted a community-wide celebration dubbed *Branch Out* in honor of the completion of the Measure FF Branch Library

Improvement Program. Additionally, branch library hours were extended to 52 hours per week allowing an additional evening and morning of service each week at each branch location. The fiscal year marked the launching of an all new easier-to-use website featuring improved navigation and a new visual identity; and an automated materials handling system was installed in the Central Library shortening recirculating turnaround time on materials.

**Projections:** FY 2015 closes out the FY 2014 and FY 2015 biennial budget cycle. Major FY 2015 initiatives include the commencement of construction activities in the Central Library for a new dedicated and enclosed teen room, and the conclusion of a new community focused three-year strategic plan to guide the Library through to FY 2018.

**Branches:** The Measure FF Branch Library Improvement Program, which began in 2009 following the November 2008 voter approval of \$26M in general obligation bonds to improve the four neighborhood Branch libraries, closed out all major construction activities with all branch facilities open for public services. At the close of FY 2014, to-date bond program expenditures were \$24,777,033.

# Friends of the Berkeley Public Library

The Friends of the Library is a non-profit membership organization whose purpose is to support the educational, cultural, and outreach programs of the Library. New and gently-used donated books are sold at the Friends' two bookstores: one in Central Library and one at 2433 Channing Way near the Cal campus. Money raised through the bookstores and at annual book sales funds children's reading events, author talks, musical events, Internet computer classes, and branch library events. The Friends has been an early and significant donor to Library capital campaigns. Anyone with an interest in supporting the Library is encouraged to join the Friends.

Sandy Bails, President  
Friends of the Berkeley Public Library

[www.berkeleylibraryfriends.org](http://www.berkeleylibraryfriends.org)



Photo: Alexis Silver

## Berkeley Public Library Foundation

The Berkeley Public Library Foundation amplifies public investment in the Berkeley Public Library through fundraising and advocacy, helping to make a great library extraordinary. Donors to our recent Neighborhood Libraries Campaign generously gave more than \$3 million to outfit the renewed Branch Libraries. Building on the success of that campaign, we are supporting the planning phase for improvements to the Central Library, with special emphasis on a new teen room. The Foundation celebrates Berkeley's vibrant literary and artistic community and raises funds for our public libraries through our annual gala Authors Dinner as well as special events throughout the year.

Patricia D. Hawthorne, President  
Kirsten Cowan, Executive Director

[www.bplf.org](http://www.bplf.org)



## Board of Library Trustees

The five-member board, appointed by the City Council, is charged with management and governance of the Library. The Board meets monthly to formulate major policies and long-range plans for the Library. Members serve four-year terms.

Winston Burton

Abigail Franklin, Chair Person

Darryl Moore, City Councilmember

Julie Holcomb, Vice-chair

Jim Novosel

### FY 2014 Accomplishments

- Prioritized strategic capital improvements, including the approved development of a new and enlarged teen room at the Central Library.
- Made recommendations to City Council for approval of the Library's FY 2015 tax rate, biennial budget update, and fee schedule.
- Accepted over \$1.2 million dollars in grants and gifts from the Library Foundation, Friends of the Library, California State Library, and other organizations and individuals.
- Approved the process for recruitment, selection, and hiring of a new Director of Library Services.

[www.berkeleypubliclibrary.org/about/board-library-trustees](http://www.berkeleypubliclibrary.org/about/board-library-trustees)

Back row, from left: Jim Novosel, Darryl Moore, Winston Burton  
Front: Abigail Franklin, Julie Holcomb



[www.berkeleypubliclibrary.org](http://www.berkeleypubliclibrary.org)