

Dear Friends,

"The past has been a mint
Of blood and sorrow.
That must not be
True of tomorrow."

- Langston Hughes

The words of Langston Hughes are fitting as we find ourselves again at a critical juncture in our nation's history. A juncture that calls for candor not defensiveness, engagement not mere allyship, and action equal to the outrage we feel. Because Black Lives Matter.

The core purpose of the Friends is to support the Oakland Public Library and the broader Oakland community. The members of the Friends board work diligently to that end. The events since the death of George Floyd on May 25, 2020, have stirred rather than discomfited us, begun conversations, prompted self-examination, and spurred a renewed urgency in our work. We know the power of books and the myriad other resources available through the library to open up new

worlds for all in our diverse city. As a board, we have been intentional in our efforts to support historically underserved communities, most notably through our mini-grant program. To that end, we are actively researching an equity index as one way to ensure that our support flows to branches serving those most in need.

We recognize, however, that we must do more. Much more. Most especially and immediately, we seek to make our board reflect the diversity of the community it serves, recruiting more people of color with ideas, perspectives, and connections that will knit us together in this great journey. We will continue the thoughtful work of developing and supporting anti-racist initiatives in Oakland and beyond. We will not collaborate in the silence but rather work expansively for a more just future. Together we can make "hope and history rhyme."

To see our statement on Black Lives Matter, visit our newly redesigned website: fopl.org

Our redesigned website is live. Check it often for the latest news: fopl.org

Connect with Friends of the OPL on Social Media



BookmarkBookstore.FOPL



FOPL_Bookmark



FOPL_Bookmark

A letter from OPL

by Oakland Public Library Racial Equity Team

Dear Oakland,

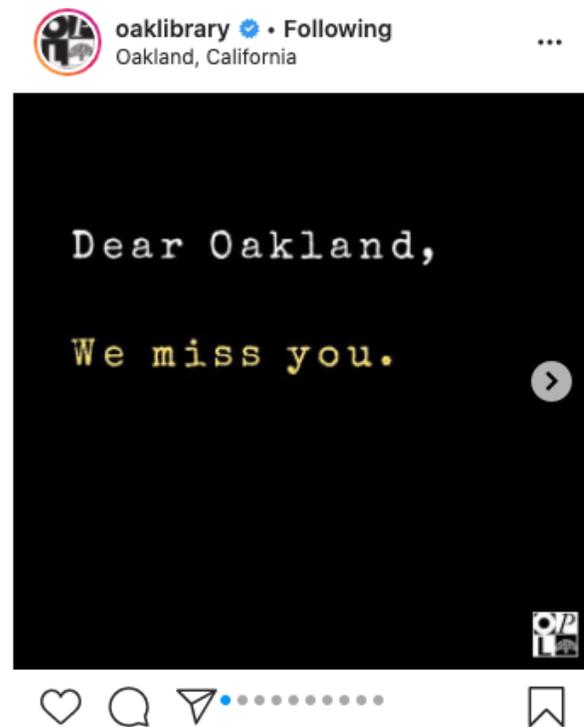
At this historic moment, a time of deep crisis in our community, the Library's Racial Equity Team recognizes the deep pain many are feeling. This pain is greatest in black, brown and indigenous communities. COVID-19 has disproportionate impacts on these communities, with higher rates of contracting the disease, higher rates of death, and deeper economic pain.

Black and brown communities are being pushed to their absolute limits. The recent killings of Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, George Floyd and the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on Black communities are linked because they're both caused by systematic and institutional racism. One of the steps toward dismantling these systems of white supremacy is for those with power to understand and acknowledge what is happening and why.

Oakland is a very racially diverse city, strongly segregated by neighborhood. As black and brown people are economically pushed out of the city, inequities deepen. Oakland's history of redlining, not allowing black and brown people to purchase homes in many neighborhoods, along with the racially biased GI bill after World War II, continue to deeply impact us today. A few current examples of disparate racial realities from Oakland's 2018 Equity Indicators Report:

- African Americans are at least three times more likely than Whites to be living at or below the federal poverty level
- Latino and African American students are at least five times more likely than White students to score "Standard Not Met" on 3rd grade reading proficiency tests
- African American youth are at least 110 times more likely to be arrested on felony charges than White juveniles

Libraries have historically deemed themselves 'neutral' which effectively works to maintain the status quo of white privilege. We must reflect on the ways that



Oakland Public Library perpetuates institutional racism. In so many ways our library, an institution with power, is a reflection of our community. What is the racial demographic of our staff if you look at each classification? What does it cost an individual to advance professionally and how does that impact who gets promoted? How does our programming perpetuate white supremacy or a limited view of the needs of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color in Oakland?

Oakland has a rich legacy of racial justice. As library workers, we hold a shared vision for our community to be strong and informed -- and we have the power to shape this together. To realize our vision, we must hold ourselves accountable in our commitment to and work towards racial equity, inclusion, and justice.

The Racial Equity Team strives to infuse a racial equity framework into all of our decision making as a library. The team is currently working with other public library racial equity teams across Northern California, as part of the Cultivating Racial Equity Initiative, to identify strategic interventions and

Continued on page 3

Connect with OPL Advocates, a Coalition of Groups that Love Our Libraries!



A letter from OPL, cont.

by Oakland Public Library Racial Equity Team



develop a systemwide racial equity plan to increase equity within our institution and improve racial outcomes in our city. We look forward to sharing that plan in the near future. At the same time, we are promoting education and discussion among staff. We recently held a book group discussion of Zach Norris' book *We Keep Us Safe*, which was full-to-capacity at our Temescal Branch. Some of our plans, such as hosting Dante King to lead us in a conversation about implicit bias and cultural humility have been put on hold because of COVID-19. We look forward to the opportunity to gather again to continue these important conversations.

Earlier this year we asked all staff to take at least the first of the four part Advancing Racial Equity Academy through the City of Oakland's Human Resources Department. As more of us take this academy, it gives us a common language and understanding. It gives us all tools to transform this institution we all work for into one that builds equity in Oakland. We seek to strategically dismantle white supremacy and build racial equity within the Oakland Public Library.

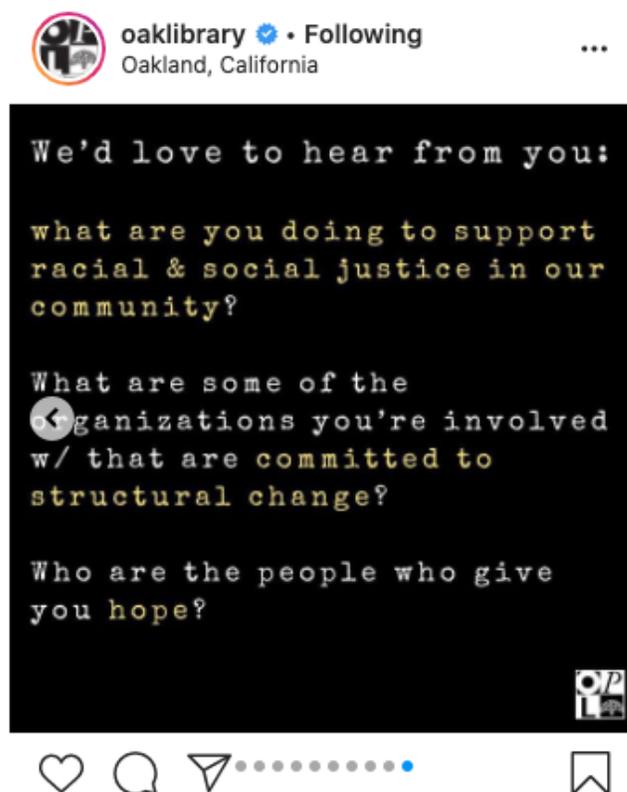
As a government agency, we are asking ourselves... How can we support those suffering the most? How can we seize this moment? Together, in struggle, we will find our way forward.

We need to learn, become more aware of our biases, and consider how inequity is materialized in our everyday lives. We must not only start conversations about race and racial equity but keep thinking about how our actions can actively disrupt white supremacy, in our profession and beyond.

Let us be gentle with each other. We are all traumatized by recent events, some of us holding deep grief. Let us support each other, allow space for expressing the pain and create opportunity for healing.

Resources from OPL:

- [Working Toward Racial Justice](#)
- [Institutional Racism: The context for #BlackLivesMatter](#)
- [Protest, Social Movements and Community Visions for Racial Justice](#)
- [Police Conduct, Race and the Justice System](#)
- [Talking to Kids about Racism and Justice](#)
- oplraciaequityteam@oaklandlibrary.org



What's happening at the Bookmark Bookstore?

by Julie Waldman, Director, Friends of the OPL

The bookstore has been closed to the public since March 16 in accordance with local shelter-in-place orders.

Starting on June 19th, we opened for curbside pickup and free local delivery for purchases over \$25. We created a [Virtual Bookstore](#) on our new website where we have a gallery of photos of our inventory. Each photo has a link to email us if there's a book you want to purchase. If you're looking for something you don't see in a photo, email us at bookmark@fopl.org and we'll check the shelves for you. We will continue posting "shelf shots" on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter so you can select titles to purchase from there as well.

We have continued selling special books online through our [Amazon](#) and [eBay](#) storefronts. In April, we announced

Summer Programs at the Library

by Sara DuBois, OPL Coordinator, Grants & Volunteers

Typically, summer is the library's busiest time of year. And many things are different this summer, but we are striving to keep things as consistent as possible with OPL's popular Summer Programs.

On May 29, OPL launched the Kids' Summer Reading, Teen Summer Passport, and Adult Summer Reading programs – all with the modifications needed to make them work remotely!

Each week through August 1, we have a different theme that relates to the activity, reading list, or online program available for kids, teens, and adults. Week One, for example, was "Kick-Off to Summer." Kids enjoyed an

another way to buy (new!) books and support the Oakland Public Library at the same time through [Bookshop.org](#)! If you're in the market for a new book, go to [our page on Bookshop.org](#) and shop for books! When you purchase books from our page, all of the profit – 30% of the purchase price – will come directly to us.

The site is sponsored by the American Booksellers Association and has been set up to provide financial support to independent booksellers. Inventory and shipping are handled by [bookshop.org](#).

Additionally, you can [support The Bookmark by purchasing an e-giftcard](#).

For more updates, watch social media and [our website](#) for updates on donations and special promotions.

online performance by the Grammy-winning musical group Alphabet Rockers, adults were treated to a special reading list focused on new fiction, and teens learned how to make ice cream in a bag!

Each of these programs allows participants the chance to win fabulous prizes – many of which have been purchased with grants from the Friends of the OPL! And every child (0-12) who completes the program will receive a new book to keep, once the libraries have reopened.

For more information – or to sign up – please visit the [OPL website](#) for more info!

The news you've been waiting for: OPL reopens for curbside pickup!

The Oakland Public Library is offering [sidewalk pickup service](#) starting June 19, 2020 at five (5) locations. Patrons will have the opportunity to pick up holds for books, DVDs, CDs, and WiFi hotspots at our doors. Indoor areas are closed to the public.

For questions, please call 510-238-3134 or email answers@oaklandlibrary.org.

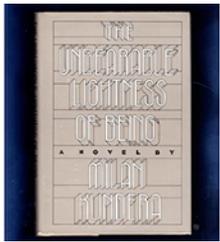


"I don't care about anything reopening except the library," said John Rapko, a library patron.

Read more in the [San Francisco Chronicle!](#)

FRIENDS OF THE OPL BOOK & MEDIA RECOMMENDATIONS CORNER

Found on [The Bookmark @Amazon](#) & [The Bookmark @eBay](#)



THE UNBEARABLE LIGHTNESS OF BEING

Milan Kundera

Interwoven story of the lives of two couples in 1968 Prague.

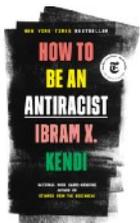


GENDERED RESISTANCE: WOMEN, SLAVERY, AND THE LEGACY OF MARGARET GARNER

Edited by Delores M. Walters & Delores M. Walters

Historical and contemporary stories of resistance to oppression

Found on [The Bookmark @Bookshop.com](#)

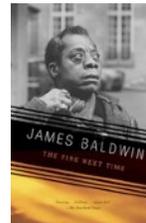


Recommended by M.C. Abbott

HOW TO BE AN ANTIRACIST

Ibram X. Kendi

The title says it all.



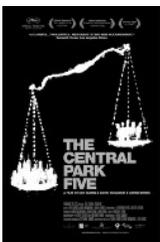
Recommended by M.C. Abbott

THE FIRE NEXT TIME

James Baldwin

Without queer Black artists, where would America be?

Media Recommendations on [kanopy.com](#)



THE CENTRAL PARK FIVE

Ken Burns

From the legendary documentarian, a look at the wrongful conviction of 5 BIPOC youth in the rape of a white jogger

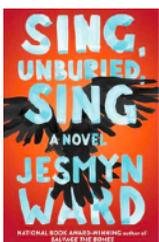


WHOSE STREETS?

Sabaah Folayan & Damon Davis

"A searing film gives a voice to the people of Ferguson." – The Guardian

OPL Books available on [OverDrive/Libby App](#) or curbside pickup!

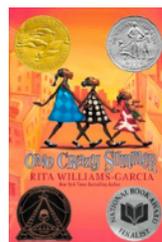


Recommended by Elizabeth Falkner

SING, UNBURIED, SING

Jesmyn Ward

Compelling and heartbreaking, this National Book Award winner shows the power of fiction to tell important stories. [Audiobook](#) and [ebook](#).



Recommended by Elizabeth Falkner

ONE CRAZY SUMMER

Rita Williams-Garcia

While the target audience is grades 4-7, this kids' view of the Black Panther movement in 1968 Oakland is a great read for the whole family. [Ebook](#)

Get to Know Your Librarians: Kirsten Baldock, Senior Reference Librarian

interviewed by Corey Hatcher, Director, Friends of the OPL

Why did you decide to get involved in Libraries?

I think like most Librarians, I have the not-so-secret origin of having loved libraries my whole life. From the excitement of sitting on the whistle-shaped chairs during story time in elementary school, to having a Librarian hand the book that she knew would speak to me very personally as a high school student, to spending hours poring over the Oxford English Dictionary in college, libraries have always been magical places to me. So Librarianship is a dream-come-true job for me.

How long have you been with OPL and why have you stayed here?

I've worked for the Oakland Public Library for 20 years this past month. I never imagined being at any job so long, but I guess when you love what you do, you just keep on doing it, right?

In your own words, what do you do for OPL?

I am the Senior Librarian in charge of Reference Services for the Main Library. Before that, I was the head of the Magazines and Newspapers at the Main library for 11 years, where I primarily helped people with local history and genealogical research. A good portion of that reference work was done through mail or email, so it

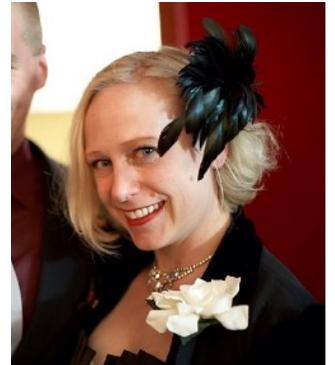
gave me pretty good practice for the email reference work I am doing now during the library's closure for the current public health emergency.

What is the most enjoyable part about your work?

As the child of two scientists, research has always been a part of my life and continues to be the thing I find most fun about my job. Some of my favorite aspects of my research work at the Main Library is using our local Oakland historical materials to help people verify family legends, share their high school sports successes with their children, or finding that long lost favorite recipe!

Anything else you feel the readers should know?

In addition to being a Librarian, I also co-own the award-winning comic book store, Isotope in San Francisco. And when I am not working at the library or at the comic book store, I am probably participating in my favorite hobby... Flying Trapeze! (Yes, really!)



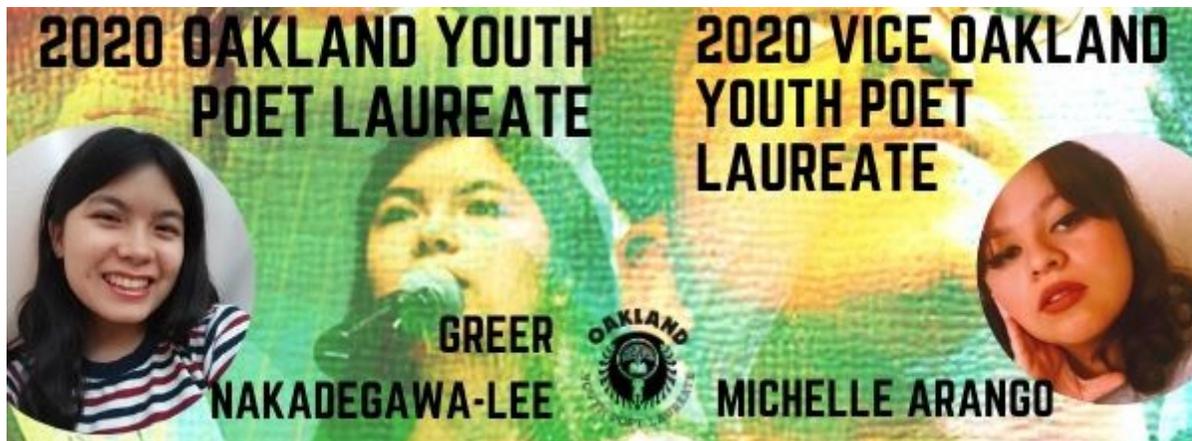
Giving in 2020

We honor and celebrate these special contributions to the Friends of the Oakland Public Library:

- In honor of **Polly Jackson** on her 93rd birthday from Rebecca and Randy Litteneker
- In honor and celebration of **Kathryn Sterbenc's** birthday. She loves Oakland Public Library and we love her.
- In honor of **Nina Lindsay** from Paula Holmes
- In honor of **Rosalia Arteaga-Romo** on the occasion of her retirement from the Oakland Public Library from Winifred Walters
- In memory of **Jean Christie** from Randi Cruze, Barbara McConnell, and Carolyn Storm
- In memory of **Karen Thomas** from Anonymous, Winifred Walters, and the Walton Family Fund, a Donor Advised Fund of Napa Valley Community Foundation
- In memory of **Willie Dickey** from Anonymous
- For the Second Start Adult Literacy program in memory of **Luella Edmond**, from her family and friends: Judy Martin, Cynthia O'Neal, Barbara Oseroff, Martha McWoodson, Wendy Alfsen, Doris Jackson, William and Christine Sinn, Carrie Sachs, Susan Hughes, Betty Cherry, Juwanna Early, Martha Green O'Neal, and Dino O'Neal

Youth Poet Laureate

by Sharon McKellar, Supervising Librarian, Teen Services



Oakland's 2020 Vice Youth Poet Laureate is Michelle Arango. Ms. Arango is 17 years old and going into her senior year at Oakland Military Institute. She is a dedicated activist for environmental and social justice

Greer Nakadegawa-Lee has been named the 2020 Oakland Youth Poet Laureate, winning a \$5,000 college scholarship -- funded by the Friends of the Oakland Public Library -- after competing with five other Finalists. The scholarship is funded by FOPL. The award was announced the evening of Friday, June 5, following live performances by the finalists on Facebook Live. You can view the event and performances on [Facebook](#) or on the [library's YouTube page](#).

Ms. Nakadegawa-Lee, going into her junior year at Oakland Technical High School, will represent the Oakland community through poetry, media, and public appearances. She was also a Finalist for the Oakland Youth Poet Laureate in 2019 and has already had the opportunity to speak and perform at numerous events. Her first chapbook, "A Heart Full of Hallways," was published in 2020 with Nomadic Press.

Ms. Nakadegawa-Lee says, "The place of poetry in our society is amplified right now. If you're looking for something that is beautiful and emotional and a distraction from what is going on, you can definitely find that in poetry. But also what you could find is similar levels of anger and anxiety about what is going on right now and our country's response to it. Being the Youth Poet Laureate is like someone saying to me, 'your poetry can change the world,' and then being given the opportunity to prove that."

Learn more about her by watching her in conversation with [2019 OYPL Samuel Getachew](#) and enjoy learning about all of the other Finalists on that same page.

and uses poetry and other art in her work. Ms. Arango says, "I want to use this platform and my voice to raise awareness about a lot of issues I am passionate about. It will not only help me in my role as an environmental and social justice activist, it will help a lot of other people because a lot of our voices are not heard. With this attention on one person I can actually change a lot of what is going on especially here in Oakland. This is empowering, and I want to empower others."

The Oakland Youth Poet Laureate program, in its ninth year, is run by Oakland Public Library Teen Services and is an unprecedented citywide effort to celebrate literacy through poetry and connect young writers to far-reaching opportunities. Each year, OPL accepts submissions from talented Oakland writers (ages 13-18) to be considered for the honor.



2020 Youth Poet Laureate Greer Nagadegawa-Lee

Get to Know Your Grants

Sara DuBois, OPL Coordinator, Grants & Volunteers

Despite significant challenges, two of our 2019-20 Friends of the OPL Mini-Grant winners found a way to continue their projects while the library's buildings were closed.

On May 8, Community Relations Librarian Amy Martin released the third episode of the OPL podcast, "Check Your Shelf," which was made with equipment purchased with grant funds last fall. You can listen to this latest installment – "Your Library at Home" – or any of the previous episodes [here](#).

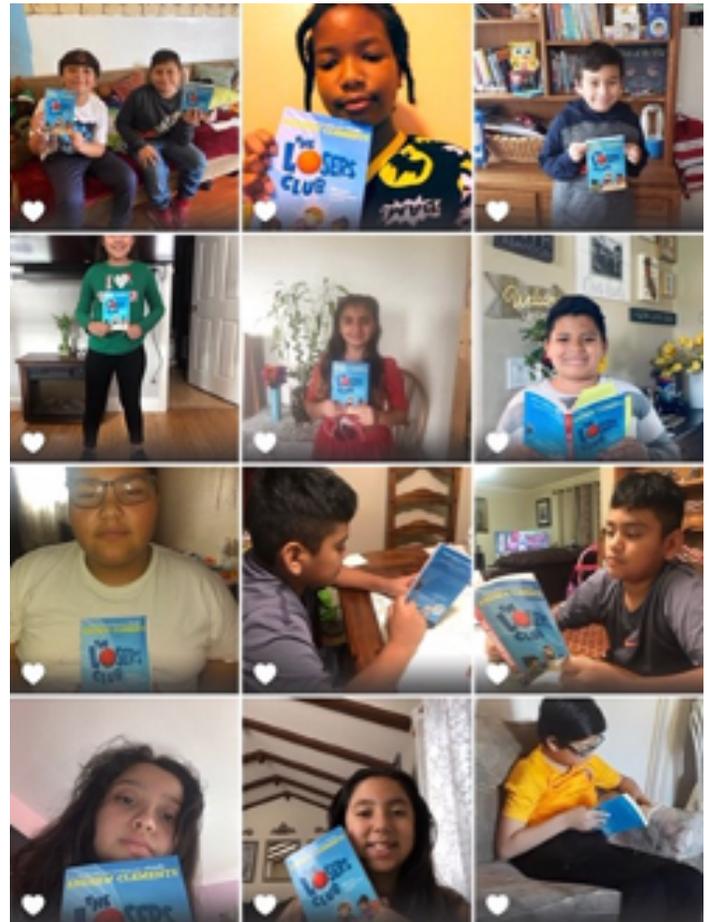
Sally Engelfried, Children's Librarian at the 81st Avenue Branch, applied for and received a mini-grant to establish a book club for 4th and 5th graders from nearby Acorn Woodland Elementary School. The "Book Worms" Book Club had just had their first meeting when the shelter-in-place orders were made. To everyone's great delight, Sally took the club online!

The grant paid for five books for each of the 23 students (two titles were distributed at the library in February and the other three were mailed to participants at home.) Meeting online to discuss books while sheltering in place was a bright spot for the students and for Sally.

The club ended in late May with an unforgettable online visit from award winning author and illustrator Jerry Craft, whose book "New Kid" – a *New York Times* bestseller – was the last title discussed by the book club. The students had the chance to ask Mr. Craft questions, hear about his experiences, and see some of his amazing art.

Sally said, "We had so much fun reading and discussing books together, both before and during shelter-in-place. The kids loved getting their own copies of all the books we read, and our book discussions and the games we played helped forge deeper connections between all of us, especially while we were sheltering in place. Many thanks to the Friends for making this possible!"

Each year the library submits a "wish list" of grant requests to the Friends of the Oakland Public Library.



Members of the 81st Avenue Branch Book Worms Book Club pose with their new copies of "Losers Club" by Andrew Clements.

This list comprises projects that library staff would like to pursue, but which simply aren't possible without extra funding. The library is very grateful for the possibilities that these grants create. For more information, please contact Grants Coordinator Sara DuBois at sdubois@oaklandlibrary.org or (510) 238-6572.

The Friends of the OPL website has a fresh face! Learn more about the impact of our grants and mini-grants at fopl.org/impact

Library Staff Redeployed as Disaster Service Workers

Some Oakland Public Library staff have been serving as Disaster Service Workers while library locations are closed. They have been packaging produce and other food for giveaways, handing out free prepared meals and produce bags, phoning high-risk individuals to offer them connections to services, distributing masks in public spaces, and more!

Check out all OPL has been up to [here!](#)

Unless otherwise noted, all photos were taken by Doug Zimmerman.



Photo by Mahate Osborn



Photo by Chris Kyriacou



Friends of the OPL Board Members

- ✦ M.C. Abbott, *Newsletter Editor*
- ✦ Ynez Arce, *Vice President*
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- ✦ Michael Dalton
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- ✦ Valerie Villanueva, *Secretary*
- ✦ Julie Waldman, *Co-Treasurer*
- ✦ Winifred Walters, *Co-Treasurer*

Our mission is to advance the role of the Oakland Public Library as a vital community resource and as an institution critical to the culture, education, and welfare of our diverse community.

The Friends of the Oakland Public Library is the only organization that provides support to all Oakland Public Libraries.

In addition to that great feeling that comes with supporting the library, members receive our quarterly newsletter that includes a special feature highlighting grants to the library.

The Bookmark Bookstore operates on volunteer power and is a community resource for anyone who loves books. The Bookmark has been in Oakland since 1992. Proceeds benefit the Oakland Public Library. Members receive a discount on purchases.

Special Thanks: The Friends of OPL is awarded a CA CARES Relief Grant

by Winifred Walters, Director, Friends of the OPL

We acknowledge the support of California Humanities through a CA CARES Relief Grant. We are honored by this award to support our bookstore operations. Among other activities, the Bookmark Bookstore distributes 12,000 books each year to more than eight community non-profit agencies, ranging from the Prisoner's Literacy Project to Community Education Partnerships. Funding for this grant has been provided by California Humanities and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) as part of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act economic stabilization plan of 2020.

The Friends of the Oakland Public Library is also grateful for the continued support of our members and other donors at this unprecedented time. We will include a complete list in our annual donor roll.

Your support has never been more critical:

Your annual member dues help fund grants to the Oakland Public Library. **In the last 10 years**, Friends of the OPL granted over **\$2M** for library programs and projects.

More ways to support Friends of the OPL:

- Invite a friend to become a member
- Leave a legacy by naming Friends of the OPL as a beneficiary in your estate plan
- Donate gently-used books to the Bookmark Bookstore
- Volunteer! www.oaklandlibrary.org/volunteer
- Shop online at smile.amazon.com and Amazon will donate 0.5% of your eligible purchase when you select Friends of the Oakland Public Library.

Thank you!

**To learn more, visit www.fopl.org or call The Bookmark Bookstore at (510) 444-0473.
The Friends of the Oakland Public Library is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit.
Our tax ID is 94-2553734 and all contributions are tax deductible.**

#OPLRESPONDS

During the unprecedented days of COVID-19, people are reaching out to the Oakland Public Library like never before.

Even with our buildings closed, OPL staff are ready to serve them.

People are enduring the isolation and stress of sheltering in place.

#OPLResponds with increased access to resources

1,828 library accounts created or restored during closure

Extended due dates for 156,860 physical books, movies, and other items currently checked out

Increased limits for popular digital ebook, audiobook & movie platforms Hoopla, Kanopy, and Overdrive

One-on-one help using ebooks by appointment

Weekly "read right now" booklists on our Advice for Readers blog

56 personalized reading lists provided through Book Me service as of May 18

Moving community connections online

3 existing neighborhood book clubs and 1 ESL conversation club now held over Zoom

OPL's Youth Leadership Council and impactful Youth Poet Laureate program moved online



Hoopla checkouts

+70.1%

Feb - Apr 2020

Kanopy checkouts

+141.3%

Feb - Apr 2020

Overdrive checkouts

+25.8%

Feb - Apr 2020

156,860

OPL physical items checked out as of May 20

People need to get online.

#OPLResponds with free internet access.



500 hotspots donated by OPL to OUSD

Extended activation of OPL's 300 WiFi hotspots currently checked out

3376 uses of OPL WiFi outside our buildings as of May 20

People are hungry and need food for their families.

#OPLResponds with food distribution at branch libraries & home delivery to seniors.

400-600 prepared meals distributed every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at 81st Ave Branch

As of May 15, 100+ meals delivered every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday to seniors through Great Plates Delivered

Produce pickup at West Oakland Branch and meal distribution at César Chávez Branch began week of May 18

OPL staff serving as Disaster Service Workers distribute food and coordinate service

Total meals served

2,549

May 6 - 18

Walk up, curbside pickup & home delivery

52%

of families served are Spanish speaking

96%

of those served live in East Oakland



On an average day during COVID-19:

People check out

1,786

digital books, movies, magazines from OPL

29

people gain access to OPL with a new or restored card

54

people use WiFi outside our buildings

800

people use a WiFi hotspot provided by OPL

244

people read an OPL blog post

600

meals are picked up at 81st Ave food distribution site

36.4

questions get answered by a reference librarian

People have lost income and need help.

#OPLResponds with access to community support and funding

Created community **resource guides** on OPL's blogs, including information for "What If You Can't Work From Home?"

Provided access to resume review and job interview preparation through **Tutor.com**

Introduced remote access to **Foundation Directory Online**, a portal for nonprofits to find grant funding

Engineered a remote version of **Lawyers in the Library**, a popular service offering free legal consultations



People want accurate information.

#OPLResponds with City and County information by phone, email & social media

2,367 questions answered by email as of May 20

Help by phone in English, Spanish, and Cantonese

1,000 census reminders from OPL staff by phone and postcard as of May 20

Instructions on making a no-sew face covering, **viewed over 22,000 times**

OPL Instagram, Facebook & Twitter sharing City of Oakland information on **COVID-19 testing**, help for residents, & County Shelter-in-Place order

3 videos in Maya Mam on wearing face coverings, getting tested for COVID & library information

Blog posts on community resources

Kids are suddenly learning from home.

#OPLResponds with online learning, fun, and support for parents

Access to **Tutor.com**, offering live, remote classroom help for K-12 students in English and Spanish

OPL librarians create and share **3 storytime videos a week** in English, Spanish & Chinese, including Storytime with Mayor Libby Schaaf

Published "**How to Learn From Home**," a guide for parents to OPL's children's resources

Created **8 guides** for screen-free activities for kids

Created **instructional videos** for using Kanopy Kids, World Book Online, Tumblebooks & other digital resources for children



The City is in a State of Emergency.

#OPLResponds with direct support for those on the front lines

More than **30%** of OPL staff are serving as Disaster Service Workers as of May 20

One-on-one COVID-19 testing registration help by appointment

Collected **face masks** in Main Library book drop for distribution to front-line workers



Your Library is still here for you.

