

**AGENDA**  
**The Denver Public Library Commission**  
Regular Monthly Meeting  
**Thursday, August 18, 2016, 8:30 a.m.**  
Denver Central Library  
L7 Training Room

1. Call to Order.
2. Introductions.
3. Approval of Minutes of July 21, 2016, Regular Library Commission Meeting.  
Commission
4. Public Comment Period.
5. Report of the President and Members.
  - a. Welcome new Commissioners
  - b. Commission meeting dates/times
  - c. Committee roles
6. Report of the Denver Public Library Friends Foundation. Gay Cook and Diane Lapierre
7. Report of the City Librarian.
  - a. Written report items
  - b. Facilities Master Plan update
  - c. Other items
8. Community Engagement presentation. Brenda Ritenour
9. Other Business.
10. Adjournment.

### **Agenda Item 3**

Action Requested: Approval

**MINUTES**  
**The Denver Public Library Commission**  
Regular Monthly Meeting  
**Thursday, July 21, 2016, 8:00 a.m.**  
Denver Central Library  
L7 Training Room

Present: Lisa Flores, Greg Hatcher<sup>1</sup>, Judy Joseph, Mike King<sup>2</sup>, Taylor Kirkpatrick, Rosemary Marshall

Excused: Alice Kelly

Staff: Lisa Backman (SC), Rebecca Czarnecki, Nicanor Diaz, Rachel Fewell, Matt Hamilton, Letty Icolari, Cori Jackamore, Michelle Jeske, Chandra Jones, Anne Kemmerling, Bob Knowles, Susan Kotarba, Elaine Langeberg, Diane Lapierre, Zeth Lietzau, Hannah Miles, Ron Miller, Michael Murphy, Stacey Watson

Guests:

- Gay Cook, President Friends Foundation
- Brian Klipp and Maria Cole, gkkworks
- Dennis Humphries and Kalpana Mohanraj, Humphries-Poli Architects
- Dr. Zelda DeBoyes
- Gloria Rubio-Cortés, former Commissioner

1. Call to Order.

President Taylor Kirkpatrick called the meeting to order at 8:03 AM.

2. Introductions.

The Commissioners and staff present introduced themselves.

3. Approval of Minutes of June 16, 2016, Regular Library Commission Meeting.  
Commission

The minutes were approved as written.

4. Public Comment Period.

N/A

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<sup>1</sup> Greg Hatcher arrived at 8:17 AM

<sup>2</sup> Mike King arrived at 8:30 after the discussion of the award criteria

#### 5. Approval of Resolutions of Appreciation.

Michelle Jeske noted this was Taylor Kirkpatrick's last meeting and that Gloria Rubio-Cortés was in attendance so we could also recognize both of them for their service. Jeske read resolutions of appreciation for Kirkpatrick and Rubio-Cortés and presented them with gifts.

Commissioner Joseph thanked them both for their fantastic service and moved to approve the resolutions, upon second from Flores both motions were unanimously approved.

#### 6. Election of Officers for 2016-2017. Taylor Kirkpatrick

Kirkpatrick presented the slate of officers as recommended by the Nominating Committee consisting of himself, Lisa Flores, and Greg Hatcher. The nominees were: Rosemary Marshall, president, Judy Joseph, vice president, Alice Kelly, secretary. Upon motion by Kirkpatrick, and second by Flores, the slate was approved and the new officers congratulated.

#### 7. Second Quarter Financial Report. Ron Miller

Ron Miller reviewed highlights from the second quarter financial report. He noted an increase in equipment spending that was due to the purchase of a Chariot vacuum, a new mower, and a folder inserter.

Not as much has been spent on travel and conferences yet but that will catch up through the remainder of the year. Miller mentioned that DPL is sending a Western History and Genealogy staff member to a digital forensics and archivists conference in Baton Rouge.

Central and branch programming is tied into the school year so that money will get spent once school starts in the fall and ASIC and STEM activities are scheduled.

From the original to the revised budget, Central programming and equipment costs are down \$100,000 and up \$100,000 respectively. DPL has taken a new approach where funding is assessed at the start of the year to determine where things need to be allocated and to hold some money in reserve to allocate based on strategic plans.

Under statement 4 there is a significant increase in revenue for equipment. This is not really an increase, it is a repayment of money we used to fund the internet project. DPL had used special revenue fund money to cover the cost and have been reimbursed from E-Rate. E-Rate gave DPL a one time grant for equipment. DPL now has a 4-year Comcast contract of which E-Rate pays 80%. DPL is also doing an E-Rate filing for wifi and phone service.

Kirkpatrick thanked Miller and his department for all of their hard work as well as their ability to present their information in such a well organized and digestible manner.

#### 8. Report of the President and Members.

Rosemary Marshall introduced Dr. Zelda DeBoyes and gave her the floor to highlight minor changes to the Blacks in Colorado Hall of Fame and Juanita Gray Community Service Awards.

Dr. DeBoyes thanked Hannah Miles and Rosemary Marshall for their work and commitment to the awards committee.

Dr. DeBoyes gave background on the Juanita Gray award. She talked about Gray's legacy at DPL and how the award was created to honor her contributions after her life was lost in a tragic drunk driving accident. This award has been in place for over 25 years.

She then spoke about the changes to the award criteria which include: always having a member of the DPL community relations team on the committee, having a recipient between the ages of 14–18 to communicate to young people the importance of giving back to the community, and having the location always at either Ford-Warren or Blair-Caldwell.

Dr. DeBoyes mentioned that in 2017 they are going to try having the awards ceremony at Blair-Caldwell because the event might be outgrowing Ford-Warren. However, this is a difficult decision as Ford-Warren is where Juanita Gray worked and the community ties there are still very strong. Dr. DeBoyes also noted how DPL is the number one sponsor and supporter of this award and thanked the organization for that support.

The other award is the Blacks in Colorado Hall of Fame award which is given bi-annually. Dr. DeBoyes said they recognized Karen Ashby, the first African-American to sit on the Colorado Court of Appeals, and is nationally known for her work on the juvenile courts.

Rosemary Marshall thanked Dr. DeBoyes for being a dynamic leader. Marshall made a motion to approve revised criteria, upon second, the motion carried.

The conversation then moved to updates from the other Commissioners and Judy Joseph mentioned the Eleanor Gehres award and that the committee will be convening soon.

Lisa Flores asked about whether or not there was any news about new Commissioners. Jeske has been following-up with Anthony Aragon at the City and has not received any news yet. Flores mentioned she has a conflict with future Commission meetings. As part of her new role on the school board she has been appointed to a board where the meeting is in direct conflict with the Library Commission meeting. The Commission agreed to take a poll to see if another Commission time could be chosen to help accommodate Flores.

Mike King mentioned his son wanted to come to the Commission meeting again to rave more about the SOR program.

#### 9. Report of the Denver Public Library Friends Foundation. Gay Cook and Diane Lapierre

The Friends Foundation Retreat is coming up in the next week and they will focus their conversation on how DPLFF can increase fundraising for the Library.

The Book Sale was moved inside this year and was a success. They expected revenue is down because they had less space but expenses were way down, so the net was still greater. Last year the Book Sale netted about \$34,000 and this year it was around \$38,000. Additionally, cafe and online sales are booming. The Friends Foundation is only limited by how quickly they can get books listed online. There is also an ordinance before City Council to clarify the relationship between DPL and DPLFF and the deaccessioning of books for sale.

The Red Chair book shop will open in September in the old Fresh City Life space. It will be staffed with a combination of existing staff and volunteers.

## 10. Report of the City Librarian.

Jeske worked at Montbello for an afternoon to see what the staff experience during Summer of Reading and said she found it quite eye opening and busy! They are getting ready to open their ideaLAB at the end of August.

Miller also mentioned there is a presentation with the Denver Chief Financial Officer this afternoon, which is a critical part of the budget ask.

DPL has also been successful in getting a grant for three part-time peer navigators. Peer navigators are people who are recovering from mental health or homelessness issues and have been trained to work with those populations. Michael King asked how the navigators will be deployed in the system. Jeske responded she is not sure but thinks they will mostly be used at Central. If this goes well it is possible we will be granted a 4-year extension.

DPL received great press for Our House: An Empathy Project, an event designed to build empathy for people experiencing homelessness or poverty.

The last thing Jeske mentioned was that all Colorado public libraries can now circulate state parks passes. DPL also circulates passes for Denver Museum of Nature and Science as well as History Colorado. Passes can be checked out for one week.

Commissioner Flores asked if anything else had been heard from Brad Turk, the member of the public who spoke at the last meeting. Kirkpatrick replied that Mr. Turk received a letter from the Commission. The letter contained the suggestion the Commission discussed at the last meeting regarding Mr. Turk finding a research partner. Mr. Turk responded that he felt that was not a viable solution. Kirkpatrick said he sent one final reply stating that the Commission had no other alternatives to suggest and considered the matter closed.

## 11. Facilities Master Plan.

Jeske announced to the Commission that the next bond had been officially announced for the November 2017 ballot. The City process is moving very quickly and things are looking good for the Library. Jeske listed the criteria for the bond and noted that DPL is a poster child for project readiness and has already been included in presentations about the bond.

DPL is only considering one new facility for the next bond and that would be in Westwood as part of a Parks and Recreation partnership. Such a partnership would save money and could be a very interesting opportunity. Mike King noted that a similar partnership was considered for Sam Gary and never came to fruition. He said he would be interested in talking this through with Jeske at a different time.

Jeske then introduced the architects from Humphries Poli and gkkworks to give a presentation about what has come out of the Central (Re)Imagining Process.

Dennis Humphries and Brian Klipp talked about the many meetings with staff and the community that informed these ideations. They received several hundred ideas on how to enhance the Library. Some of the themes that rose to the top were outdoor spaces, event space, technology, children's, wayfinding, and of course, books.

Whatever the next design includes, they want to respect and honor this iconic building. Schlessman Hall and Western History and Genealogy came up as being sacred spaces in the building. They are also hoping this redesign can help address some of the deferred maintenance issues such as vertical transportation and flooding in lower levels. Klipp and Humphries discussed some of their ideas for the building:

- Featuring spaces for books and balancing that with innovative/collaborative spaces
- Allowing for more intuitive discovery of DPL
- Staff areas with a strong visual connection to public
- Welcoming and flexible spaces
- Addressing security safety/public restrooms
- Additional patron amenities
- Activating Acoma Plaza and collaborating with DAM
- Secure outdoor area for children
- Stronger Broadway experience
- Activating the North Lawn
- Providing a greater connection to Civic Center
- Creating a strong vision for the lawn area south of 13th.

The Golden Triangle neighborhood has changed substantially since 1995. The architects are thinking about how to transform the Library from outside in and inside out?. They want to make sure the Library is robust moving forward. Klipp then took the Commission through two ideas for what the interior renovation might look like.

At the end of the presentation Judy Joseph noted her excitement about the process and thanked the architects for their work. Flores and Kirkpatrick stated their affinity to plan A, remarking it's inspirational. King commented that he is very interested in seeing Broadway activated in a different way and that being able to do drop-offs more efficiently and safely could be a real benefit.

Commissioners also loved the idea of a secure North lawn and were curious how to practically do that. It was also asked where does the process go from this visioning point? Klipp and Humphries talked about how the visioning is in the middle of its process. They will also present to the Friends Foundation at their retreat and are still meeting with staff. Soon they will start working with an engineer to assign a cost to these ideas and the good news is that everything they have proposed has been vetted as structurally feasible.

The architects thanked the Commissioners for their time and support.

## 12. Other Business.

The meeting ended with Judy Joseph asking on a somewhat serious note if anyone knows Von Miller. She stated that given his enormous new contract can't he give some support to the Library?

The meeting was adjourned at 9:29 A.M.  
Submitted by Rebecca Czarnecki for Judy Joseph.

**Library Commission Standing Committees  
January 2015**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Judy Joseph</li> <li>• WHG Manager or other staff person</li> </ul>	Selection Committee usually meets in early May. Meets as needed (usually once) to choose honoree and prepare for late summer event.	<b>Eleanor Gehres Award</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alice Kelly</li> <li>• Mike King</li> <li>• Taylor Kirkpatrick</li> <li>• City Librarian</li> <li>• Finance Director</li> </ul>	In general meets once in June re next year's budget and once in December re next year's Special Trust Fund.	<b>Finance</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rosemary Marshall</li> <li>• Terry Nelson (BCL)</li> <li>• Ford Warren Branch Manager</li> <li>• Ford Warren Librarian</li> </ul>	Ford Warren Branch manager sets timeline annually during Black History Month. Event held first week of February at Ford Warren Branch	<b>Juanita Gray Community Service Award</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rosemary Marshall</li> </ul>	Meets approximately bi-monthly at Central Library. (Subject to change.) Dates and times TBA.	<b>Friends Foundation Board</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lisa Flores</li> <li>• DPL Staff Member</li> <li>• Woodbury Branch Manager</li> </ul>	Begins planning in June. Meets twice before event in September.	<b>Latino Awards</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greg Hatcher</li> <li>• Adm. Services Dir.</li> </ul>	Meets monthly the Friday after the Commission meeting, 8:30–10a.m. Location changes each month; call any staff council member or check web site for info.	<b>Staff Council</b>

## **Agenda Item 7a**

Action Requested: Receive Report

### **City Librarian Report**

#### **Update on Social Workers at the Library**

##### ***Peer Navigators Coming to DPL***

The library has been awarded a Justice Assistance Grant in collaboration with the City's Department of Human Services and the Colorado Mental Wellness Network. We're calling this project "It Takes a Library," which brings Denver Public Library and its partners together to increase access to mental health/human services and support the reduction of crime, delinquency and recidivism-before library policy/law violations by at-risk DPL customers lead to security contacts-using evidence-based practices of peer support and library social work models. Peer Navigators will work with and support DPL's Social Workers in outreach, assessments and human services referrals for customers who are traditionally at risk of (re)entering the criminal/juvenile justice system, either as victims or perpetrators-based on factors such as income level/poverty, homelessness, and mental health.

This grant will allow Colorado Mental Wellness Network to hire, train and employ three (20 hour/week each) Peer Navigators to work at the Denver Public Library. Peer Navigators are individuals with "lived experience" and are in recovery/have found stabilization in regards to housing, mental health and/or substance use. These individuals will meet with library customers to help them navigate the social service system in our community. They will also lead peer discussion groups to increase support to vulnerable populations. The grant starts October 1, 2016 and the peers should be hired and ready to go on January 1, 2017. The grant runs for one year with the potential to be renewed every year for four years if we meet our goals. This project is based on the model used in the San Francisco Public Library which has eight peers (Health and Safety Advocates).

##### ***Walk In Hours***

Our two Community Resource Specialists (Social Workers) have put together a new "walk in hours" approach to serving customers, made possible by the addition of the second staff position funded by the City in 2016. The new schedule allows one Community Resource Specialist to provide walk in sessions at Central, Byers, Blair-Caldwell and Gonzales on a regular schedule and visit other branches on two Thursdays a month.

##### **Highlights from the Central, Collections, Technology, and Strategy Division by Zeth Lietzau**

###### **Central:**

At the July commission meeting, the team of architects that we are working with to help us re-envision the Central Library presented progress to the commission. We continue to work with that team, and are beginning the process of determining how we can realize that vision in phases. While we do that work, we continue to offer new programs at the Central Library. For instance, in



the past two months we have held two Sunrise Concerts, inviting local bands to play music at the Broadway entrance, entertaining people who are waiting for us to open. There will be another concert on September 14th. These concerts have attracted significant attendance as well as positive press.

### **Collections:**

Beginning June 1, we made a handful of changes to our circulation software. We continue to look for ways to eliminate barriers to continued library use, and two of the changes go a long way toward that. First, we've instituted automatic renewals, meaning that when something comes due, if the item is eligible to be renewed (i.e., there are no holds on the item and it has not hit the maximum number of renewals), it will renew automatically, instead of moving into an overdue status and accruing fines. Additionally, we have removed fines from items checked out with MyDenver cards. These cardholders will still be charged for lost items, but no longer for things that are things that are simply overdue.

The library is part of Denver's ConnectHome initiative, a public-private collaboration developed to bridge the digital divide for families with school-age children who live in HUD-assisted housing. We have been working with the committee to help provide technology training for this population, and are now piloting the circulation of wi-fi hotspots at four branches in the ConnectHome area in Southwest Denver, as well as the Montbello branch.

### **Technology:**

Our Digital User Experience (DUX) and IT departments recently released an upgraded version of our main website, [denverlibrary.org](http://denverlibrary.org). This became a pressing need as the previous site was operating on an old version of the Drupal content management software, which was reaching end-of-life and would not be supported from a security standpoint. Therefore, this was not a full redesign as was recently done with the kids site, but while the teams were upgrading the "under-the-hood" technologies, they did make major improvements. Notably, the site now follows responsive design methods - it is one site designed to function well and look good on all devices, as opposed to our previous situation of having separate mobile and desktop websites. The new version of the software is better from an accessibility standpoint, so persons with disabilities will have a better experience. Finally, the new version aligns better with the library's brand, which has changed significantly since the main site was last redesigned.

### **Strategy:**

We continue to refine our strategic processes, and have a few big events coming up. At the end of August, strategic leads for most of the components on our work plan will be presenting the current state of their projects in a forum open to all staff. Leads will present the project's progress, opportunities for improvement, resource needs, and vision for 2017. Together, these presentations will offer a holistic view of the priorities of the organization, and they will inform strategic planning retreats E-Team will be having this fall. Then, in October we will be going through our next scheduled round of Service Planning Workshops. During our first round in late February, Senior Librarians from the branches created branch service plans based on library and external data that helped them define programming based on the needs of their communities. Those plans are being implemented now, and in October we will go through this process again for the branches as well as the public-facing departments at Central.

**Dates to Remember:**

- 8/20, 1-3 p.m., The Jungle Book: The Strength of the Wolf is the Pack author event, CEN-Basement Conference Center
- 8/25, 6-7:30 p.m., Latina Legacy Circle Celebration, Rudolfo "Corky" Gonzales Branch Library
- 8/26, 6-10 p.m., Untitled, Denver Art Museum
- 9/8, 6:30-8 p.m., Book Store Opening Event, CEN-First Floor
- 9/10, 10 a.m.-12 p.m., Latino Awards, Rudolfo "Corky" Gonzales Branch Library
- 9/23, 6-10 p.m., Untitled, Denver Art Museum

**City Librarian Activity Highlights****Mayor and City Council**

- Presented 2017 budget request to Chief Financial Officer and Budget Director
- Presented 2017 budget request to Mayor Hancock
- Attended Mayor's Government Entrepreneurial Leadership Accelerator Pitch Night
- Participated in Mayor's Cabinet in the Community meeting in Montbello
- Met with Councilman Lopez to provide update on library and branch renovation plans
- Participated in Mayor's City Center Challenges Team meeting to discuss drug abuse, illicit activities and possible solutions
- Volunteered to represent City agency heads at City Spirit Picnic (for City employees) at Denver Human Services

**Facilities Master Plan**

- Participated in many internal Facilities Master Plan meetings
- Attended meeting with Parks and Recreation, Arts and Venues, North Denver Cornerstone Collaborative, and RiNo Arts District to plan RiNo Park community meetings
- Participated in the GO Bond Executive Management Team meeting
- Met with Paul Washington and Seneca Holmes from the Office of Economic Development to discuss the Globeville Community Center as a potential bond project
- Met with Corona Insights and library staff to discuss upcoming library public perception survey

**Community Engagement**

- Welcomed attendees to the U.S. Patent and Trademark workshop
- Met with Nancy Walsh, Denver Museum of Nature and Science, to discuss potential collaborations and share community insights
- Participated in Golden Triangle Night Out
- Met with the Director of the Colorado Photographic Arts Center about RiNo

**Early Learning**

- Participated in Read Aloud training

**Services to Immigrants and Refugees**

- Met with Jay Salas, Director of the City's Financial Empowerment Office, to discuss the possibility of placing a Financial Empowerment Center at Central, Blair-Caldwell and/or Gonzales (chose Gonzales to start)
- Held workshop to plan library partnership with City's Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs

**Library Commission**

- Met with Rosemary Marshall, Library Commission President

**Friends Foundation**

- Presented library vision to the Friends Foundation Board at its annual retreat

**Staff Support**

- Held a Coffee and Chat for Central Library staff
- Hosted a Youth Services sharing lunch with staff

**Other**

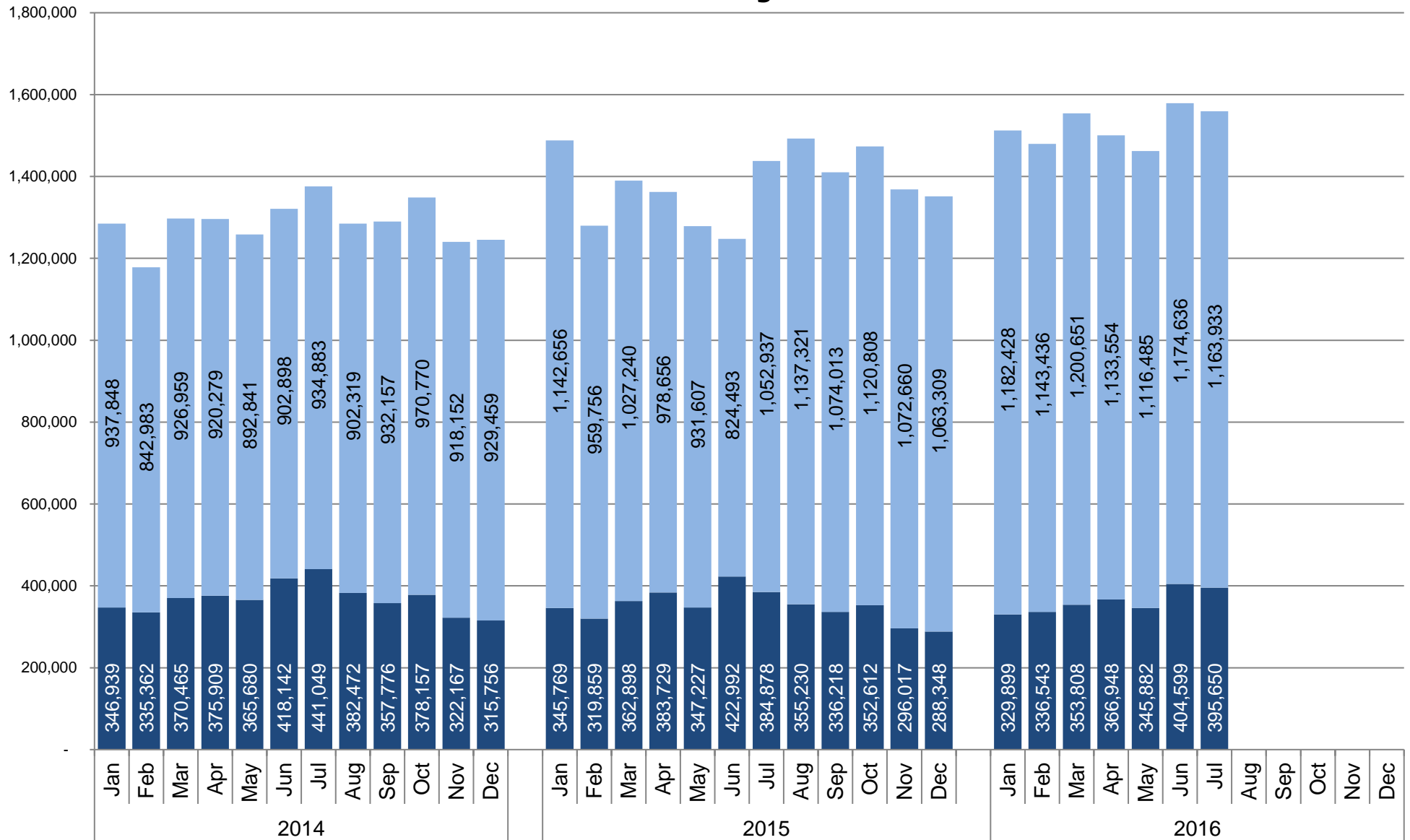
- Interviewed by Colorado Expressions magazine
- On vacation 8/4-14

August 2016

# Denver Public Library

## Total Visits By Month

■ Online  
■ In Person



➔ Gonzales Branch opened February 23, 2015

**Online visits** - total website, Overdrive, catalog, and database visits by session, as reported by DUX

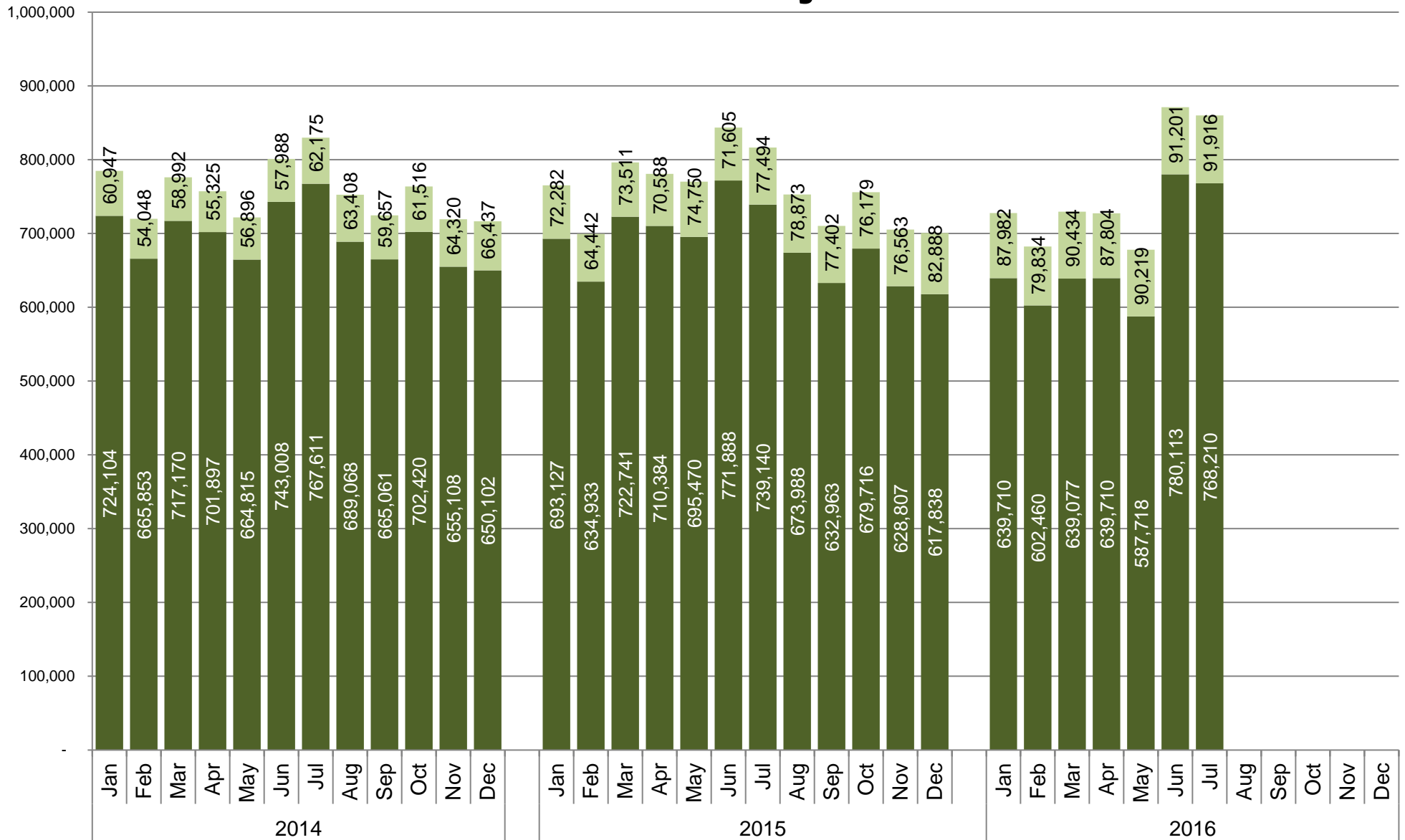
**In Person visits** - total door count from all locations, as submitted to TrackVia Door Counts application; data collection methodology changed to be more consistent across all locations in 2015.

# Denver Public Library

## Total Circulation By Month

Downloads

Materials



→ Gonzales Branch opened February 23, 2015.

→ Auto-renewals began on June 1, 2016.

**Downloads** - total downloads, including electronic books, movies, magazines, and music, as reported by DUX

**Materials** - total circulation of physical materials at all locations, from Polaris ILS

# Denver Public Library

## Monthly Circulation by Branch

### July 2016

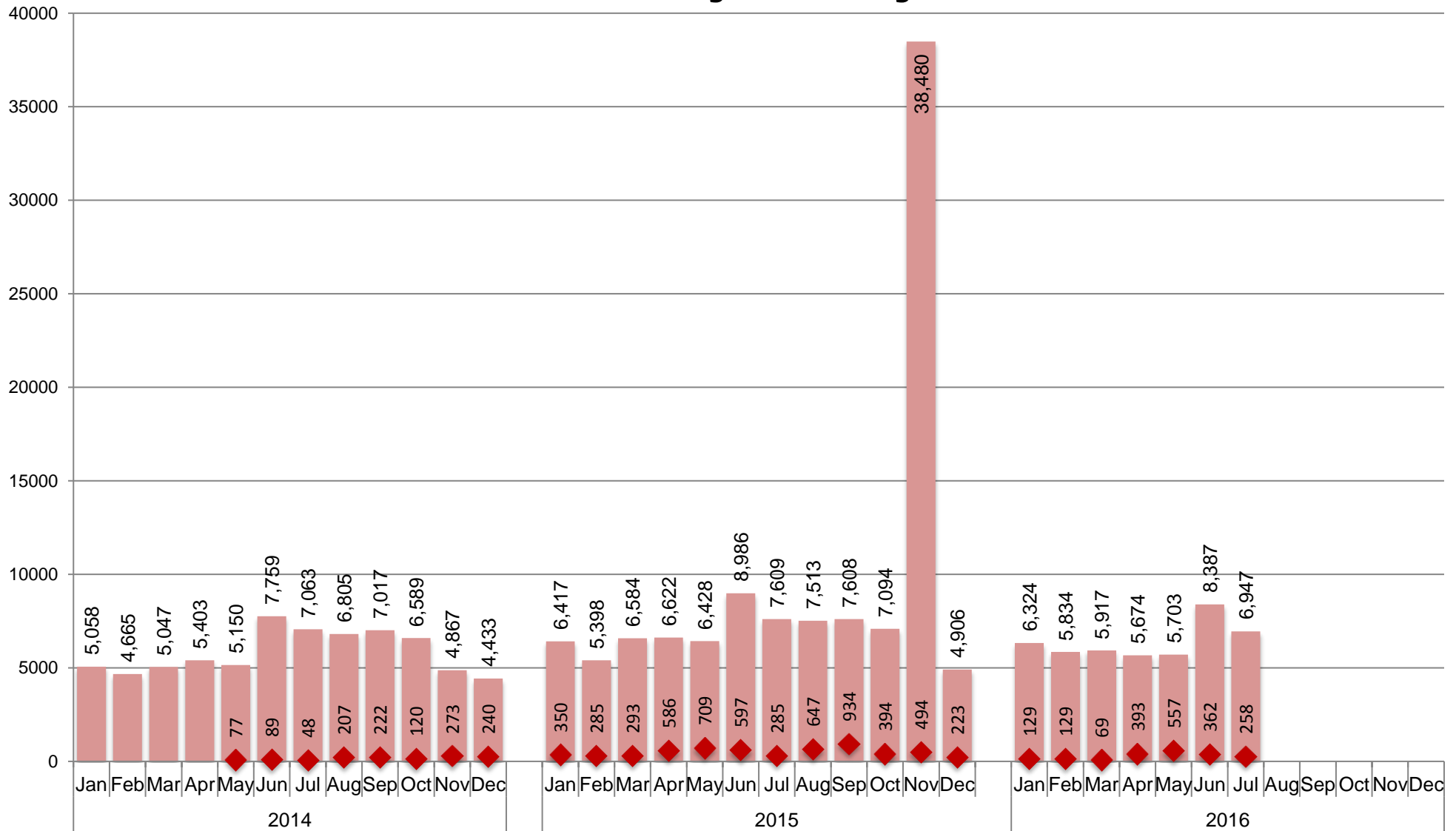
Location	Total Circulation	+/- Previous Month	2016/2015 Year/Year
Athmar Park	10,920	↑ 26	↑ 835
Bear Valley	37,168	↓ (606)	↓ (3,775)
Blair-Caldwell African American Research Library	9,967	↓ (550)	→ (147)
Bookmobile	3,322	↓ (2,773)	↓ (2,474)
Byers	3,826	→ (331)	→ (470)
Central Library	109,254	↑ 2,055	↑ 1,139
Decker	16,639	↑ 588	↑ 1,236
Eugene Field	29,130	→ (467)	↑ 2,454
Ford-Warren	15,049	↓ (865)	↑ 444
Green Valley Ranch	34,140	↓ (1,576)	↑ 1,682
Hadley	15,867	↑ 74	↑ 1,844
Hampden	41,167	→ (112)	↑ 741
Montbello	14,704	→ (352)	↑ 1,067
Park Hill	35,330	↑ 77	↑ 2,043
Pauline Robinson	6,891	↑ 166	↑ 845
Rodolfo "Corky" Gonzales	32,241	↓ (744)	↓ (6,145)
Ross-Barnum	12,353	↓ (659)	↑ 847
Ross-Broadway	15,370	↓ (508)	↑ 4,900
Ross-Cherry Creek	29,672	↓ (1,886)	↑ 1,543
Ross-University Hills	60,572	↓ (895)	↑ 2,123
Sam Gary	73,772	↑ 1,644	↑ 10,718
Schlessman Family	63,553	↓ (2,479)	↑ 4,117
Smiley	25,719	→ (388)	↑ 489
Valdez-Perry	5,406	↑ 618	→ (195)
Virginia Village	35,706	↓ (936)	↑ 2,884
Westwood	4,646	→ (254)	↑ 481
Woodbury	25,826	↓ (770)	→ (156)
Denverlibrary.org Downloadables	91,916	↑ 715	↑ 14,422
<b>Total</b>	<b>860,126</b>	<b>↓ (11,188)</b>	<b>↑ 43,492</b>

→ Auto-renewals began on June 1, 2016.

# Denver Public Library

## Total New Library Cards By Month

■ New Cards  
◆ Outreach Signups



➔ MyDenver card program large DPS database upload in November 2015.

➔ Gonzales Branch opened February 23, 2015.

➔ Brew Ha! Ha! programming and outreach blitz - September 2015

**New Cards** - total number of new library card registrations (including computer user only cards), as reported by IT

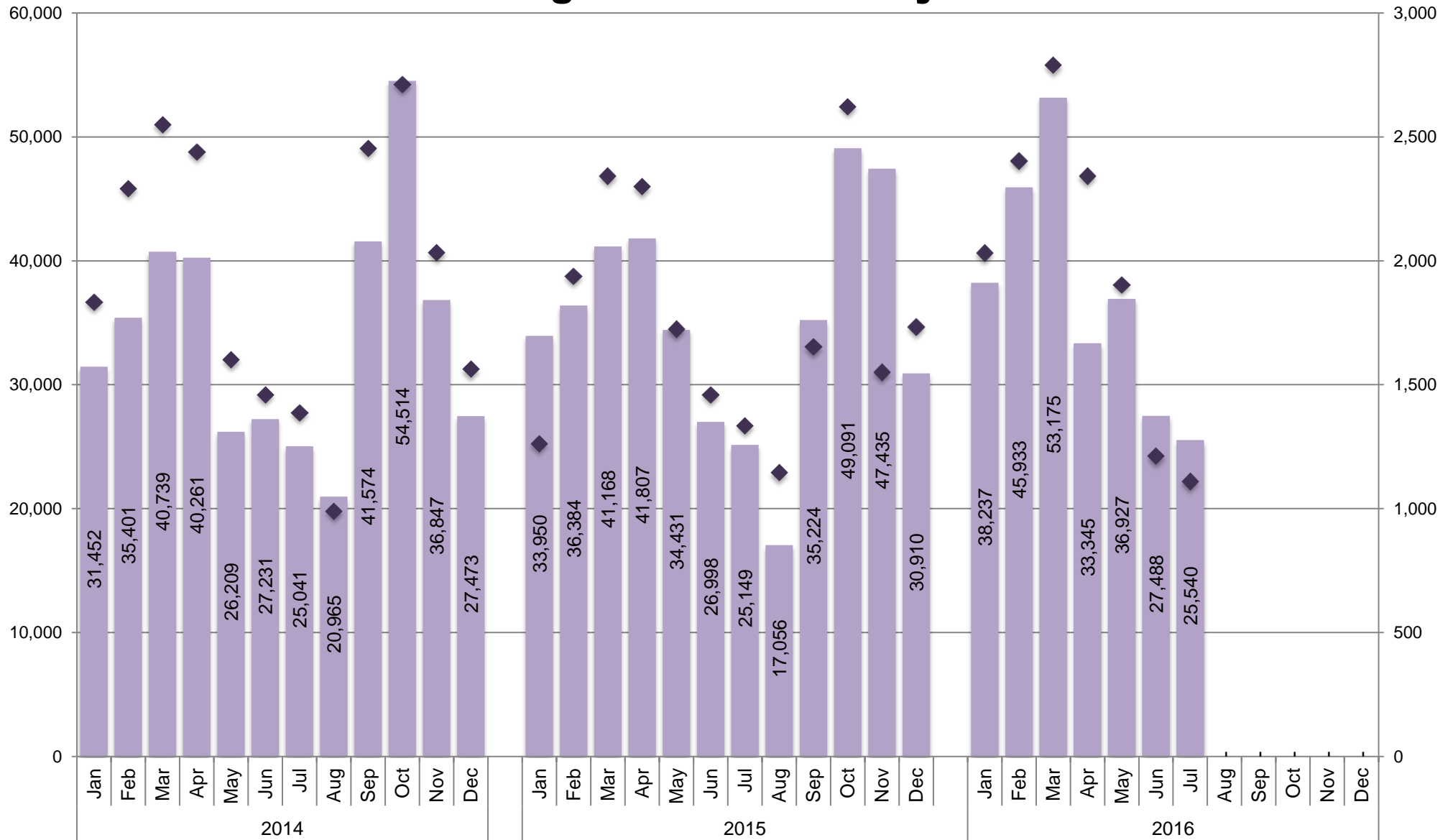
**Outreach Signups** - total number of new library card signups occurring at Outreach events in the community, as submitted to TrackVia Program & Outreach Tracking application. (Note: 2014 data includes some estimates, as our tracking system did not capture this information before 2015.)

# Denver Public Library

## Total Program Attendance By Month

■ Attendance

◆ Sessions



➔Brew Ha! Ha! programming and outreach blitz - September 2015

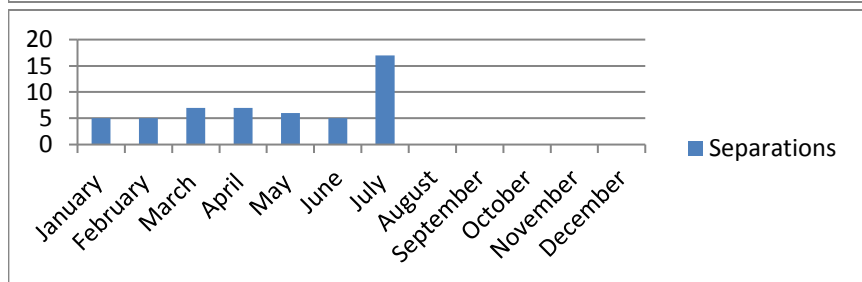
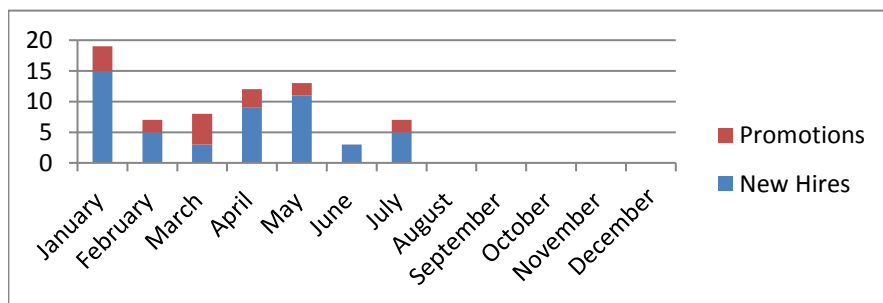
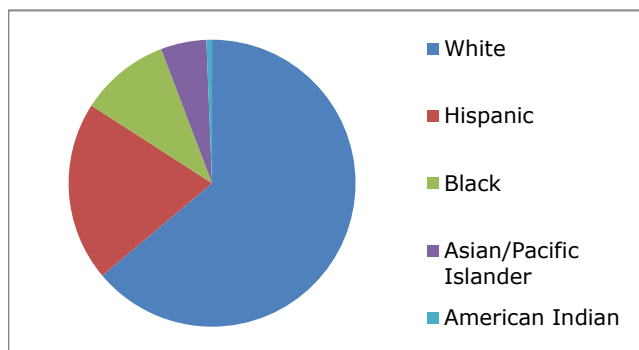
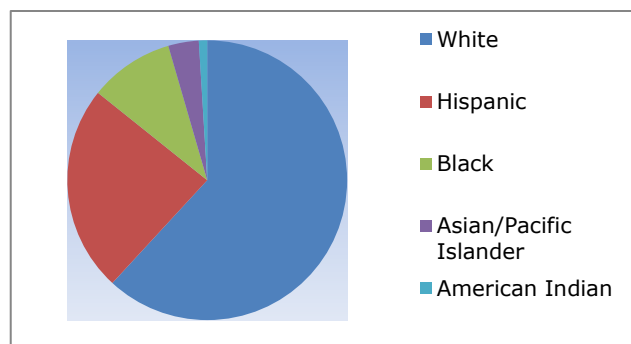
**Attendance** - total program attendance from all locations, as submitted to TrackVia Program & Outreach Tracking application (includes programs, library events, storytimes, and tours); prior to 2015, attendance figures were not aligned with state reporting definitions and may include (Appointment Services, Exhibits, and Passive Programs).

**Sessions** - total number of program sessions offered (as defined in Attendance), as submitted to TrackVia Program & Outreach Tracking application



# Denver Public Library Human Resources Dashboard

August 2016



DEMOGRAPHICS			
Workforce Size	624	Female	62%
2015 Comparison	619	Exempt	28%
White	62%	Non Exempt	72%
Hispanic	24%	Average Age	43
Black	10%	Average Years of Service	8.9
Asian/Pacific Islander	4%	Exempt over 55	25%
American Indian	1%	Non Exempt over 55	21%
Ethnic Minorities	38%		
2015 Comparison	38%		

APPLICANTS			
Month of July	1150	Female	65%
2015 Comparison	720	Male	33%
White	61%	Other/Unknown	2%
Hispanic	19%		
Black	10%		
Asian/Pacific Islander	5%		
American Indian	1%		
Other/Unknown	4%		
Ethnic Minorities	35%		
2015 Comparison	43%		

NEW HIRES AND PROMOTIONS			
New Hires YTD	51	Promotions YTD	18
2015 Comparison	77	2015 Comparison	22
Ethnic Minorities	39%	Ethnic Minorities	50%
2015 Comparison	44%	2015 Comparison	32%
Female	65%	Female	67%
2015 Comparison	57%	2015 Comparison	55%
Transfer/Reassignments YTD	17		

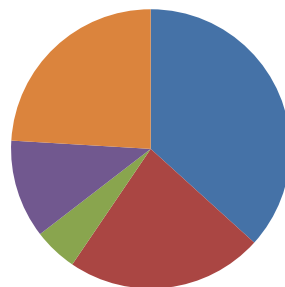
SEPARATIONS			
Separations YTD	52	Turnover YTD	8.8%
2015 Comparison	54	2015 Comparison	9.1%
Retirements YTD	8		
2015 Comparison	6		

# Denver Public Library Human Resources Dashboard

August 2016

## Open Leave Cases in July

- FMLA - Intermittent
- FMLA - Continuous
- Leave of Absence
- Interactive Process (ADA)
- Medical Disqualification
- Workers' Compensation



## Percentage of Staff on Leave

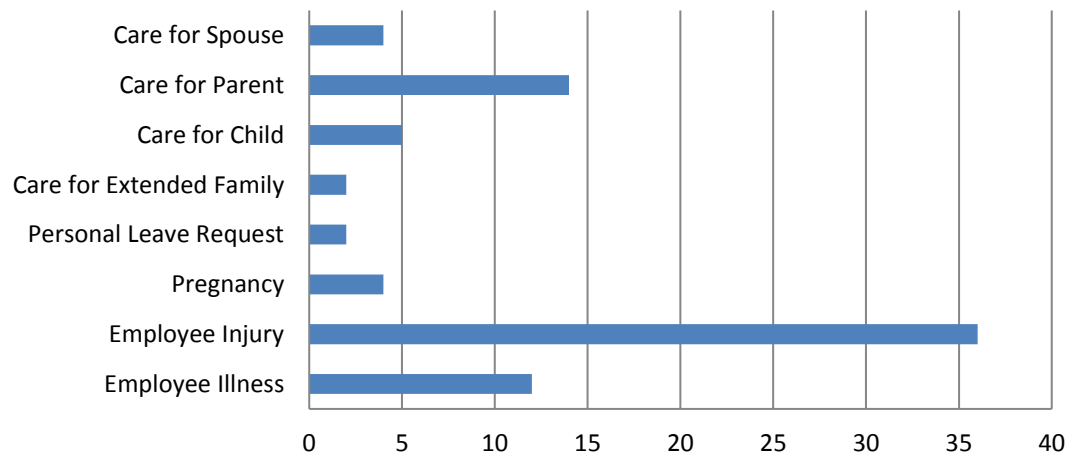
13%

## Open Leave Cases in July

FMLA - Intermittent	29
FMLA - Continuous	18
Leave of Absence	4
Interactive Process (ADA)	9
Medical Disqualification	0
Workers' Compensation	19

The cases respresented are the actual number of employees on leave for the month

## Type of Leave Taken in July



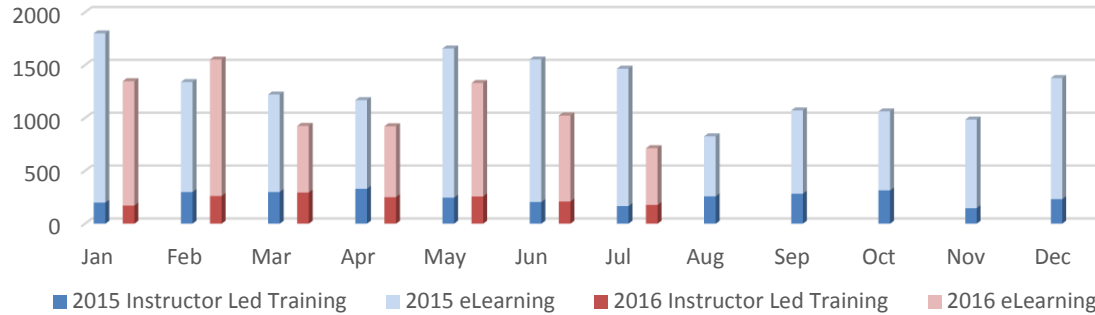
## Leave Usage in July

Employee Illness	12
Employee Injury	36
Pregnancy	4
Personal Leave Request	2
Care for Extended Family	2
Care for Child	5
Care for Parent	14
Care for Spouse	4

# Denver Public Library Human Resources Dashboard

August 2016

## Completed Learning - Year-to-Year Comparison

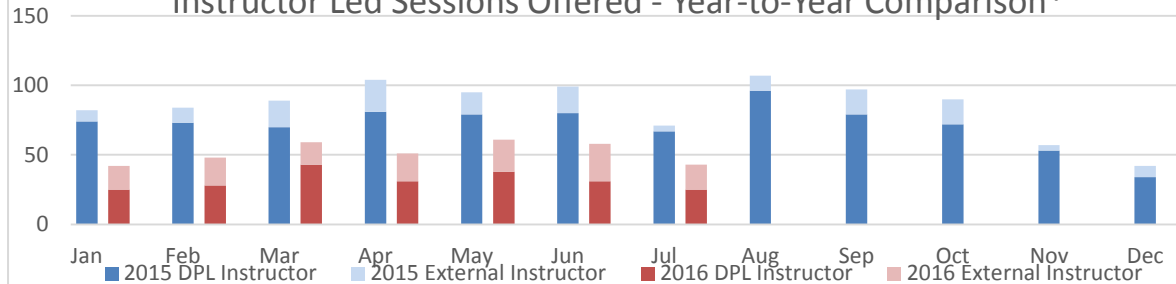


### Last Month:

#### Staff Learning Completions

eLearning	1073
Instructor Led Training	258

## Instructor Led Sessions Offered - Year-to-Year Comparison\*



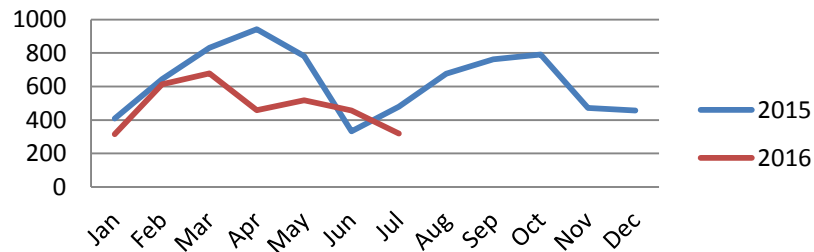
### Last Month:

#### Instructor Led Training

Sessions Offered	61
Percentage Taught by DPL Staff	62%

**\*2016 decrease due to staffing limitations**

## Instructor Led Training Hours Completed by Staff



## Top 5 Training Items Last Month

Title	Type	Rank
Conditional Weeding Overview	Document	1
Child Abuse and Neglect Awareness	Online Class	2
Ergonomics: Proper Lifting Techniques	Session	3
Safe Lifting Poster	Material	4
Defensive Driving	Session	5

# Denverite

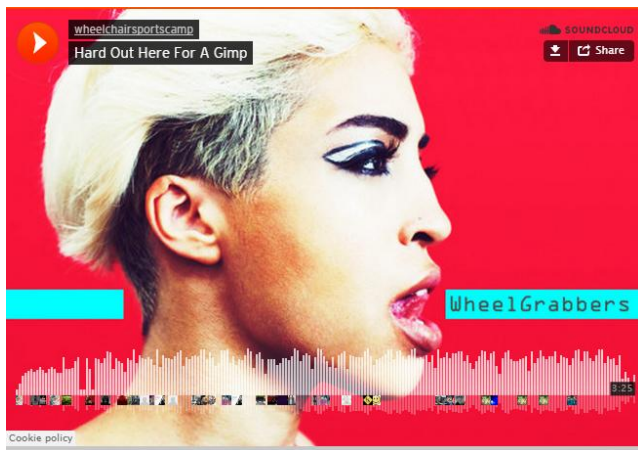
August 7, 2016

Author [Andrew Kenney](#) Categories [Denver news](#), [Entertainment](#)

## Wheelchair Sports Camp will light off your Tuesday morning this week

Want to go hard at the library on a weekday morning? We've got you covered. Denver Public Library is hosting Wheelchair Sports Camp, the hip-hop group led up by Kalyn Heffernan, on Tuesday, August 9. They'll set it off at 9:15 a.m. outside the central library, 10 W. 14th Avenue Parkway.

Here's a sample of Heffernan's work, which sets her bars against a mix of jazzy instrumentals and experimental electronics.



The concert is part of the library's sunrise series, which aims to bring a little joy to the library's front steps, where homeless people often gather to wait for the doors to open.

"If we can just make a simple difference, I think it's our duty to be a light to people who are in a dark place," said Brandi Shigley, one of last year's performers, [in a Westword piece](#).

August 9, 2016

### **WATCH: Wheelchair Sports Camp dropping bars on the Denver library**

We told you Kalyn Heffernan [was about to go unreasonably hard](#) for a good cause on a Tuesday morning. Here she is with her band, Wheelchair Sports Camp, playing a set that was meant to bring together housed and homeless people.





# PUBLIC LIBRARIES

A Vital Space for Family Engagement



M. ELENA LOPEZ  
MARGARET CASPE  
LORETTE MCWILLIAMS

Harvard Family Research Project  
Public Library Association

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A full-text PDF of this report is available as a free download from: [www.hfrp.org/librarycta](http://www.hfrp.org/librarycta)

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## About Harvard Family Research Project

Harvard Family Research Project has over 30 years of experience with promoting children's learning and development through family and community engagement. We serve a diverse national audience that includes policymakers, researchers, educators and practitioners. Network building, documentation, policy analysis, evaluation, and professional development are core elements of our family engagement work. Visit [www.hfrp.org](http://www.hfrp.org) for more information.

## About the Public Library Association

The Public Library Association (PLA) is the largest association dedicated to supporting the unique and evolving needs of public library professionals. Founded in 1944, PLA serves nearly 9,000 members in public libraries large and small in communities across the United States and Canada, with a growing presence around the world. PLA strives to help its members shape the essential institution of public libraries by serving as an indispensable ally for public library leaders. Visit [www.pla.org](http://www.pla.org) for more information.

## Acknowledgements

This project would not be possible without the vision and deep investment from our colleagues from the PLA and the many librarians who have spoken with us. We appreciate tremendously their time and insights. We wish to thank Anna Asendorf and Sarah Ghermay for their assistance in reviewing the literature. We are particularly grateful to Kathleen Reif, Clara Bohrer, Scott Allen, the PLA Family Engagement Task Force, and members of the PLA and HFRP Family Engagement Learning Community for their helpful comments and feedback on previous versions of this report. We also thank Linda Jackson and Susan Pasternack for editorial services, Robert Neubecker for illustrations, and Helen Lewis for design and layout.

We would also like to acknowledge the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, which took a bold step in funding our work in family engagement to promote early childhood development through public libraries; and to the Heising-Simons Foundation for its core support.





## To Our Colleagues: A Note from Harvard Family Research Project

Children and youth learn in countless ways, anywhere, anytime. And one of the most powerful levers of children's learning—from the early childhood years through adolescence—is families. Children exhibit healthy development and academic success when families foster warm and nurturing parent-child relationships, take responsibility for children's learning, support children's interests and curiosity, and encourage children to focus on effort and learn from failure. Libraries are important learning spaces and poised to engage families more meaningfully across children's development. The rich digital and hands-on resources libraries offer—especially when guided by librarians—can prompt families to steer children's learning, pose questions, make connections, exchange information, and instill in children not only a love of learning but also the skills for learning that last a lifetime. Even more, libraries embrace the entire family—from infants and toddlers to teens to grandparents—making it a space that is not limited to just one age group, but rather a place that spans generations.

With this in mind, we partnered with the Public Library Association (PLA) to better understand family engagement in public libraries. To do this work we surveyed library directors around the country about their family engagement practices, met monthly with a learning community of nearly 20 librarians interested in family engagement, interviewed librarians from cities and towns big and small, and reviewed the literature to closely study family engagement practices in public libraries.

Simply put: What we've learned is extraordinary. We heard from a librarian in Alaska who reaches out to families—so geographically dispersed that you need a plane to get to them—by setting up satellite book shelves in fire stations. We talked with a librarian in California who brings the ideas of predominantly Spanish-speaking parents from low-income households to all of its services. We learned that a librarian in Ohio goes on home visits to help reinforce literacy concepts among families who seldom come to libraries. We spoke with a librarian in rural Maine who offers, with the help of a community volunteer, a weekly opportunity for families to play games together and meet their neighbors. We even heard from a library system in Pennsylvania that has reenvisioned the supportive role that libraries can play for families by running the city's afterschool programming.

Through our work we've learned that libraries are in a prime position to create and reinforce a pathway of family engagement that promotes children's learning across time and across community and virtual spaces. It is our pleasure to bring to you this “call to action” as the first in a series of resources to support and further the efforts of libraries in promoting family engagement. In the coming months, as a follow-up to this document, we will bring you a set of resources with a compendium of ideas and practices that you can adopt and adapt in your library.

Heather B. Weiss, Director  
Harvard Family Research Project

## To Our Colleagues:

### A Note from the Public Library Association

The family engagement partnership between the Public Library Association (PLA) and Harvard Family Research Project (HFRP) helps public libraries take a natural next step in their already strong support of children's learning and development. Early literacy efforts PLA has led—like [Every Child Ready to Read@ your library](#)\* (ECRR)—support parents and children and create a springboard for new ideas and practices libraries can use to engage families even more successfully. These initiatives combine new knowledge and skills with the programs, services, collections, and community goodwill libraries have long provided. HFRP's deep experience and expertise, as well as the staff's understanding of and commitment to public libraries, bring new perspectives and rich resources to libraries at a critical time, as they position themselves to be even stronger community partners in education.

In implementing ECRR and researching its impact on public library service and on parents, PLA is supporting the library's emerging role as a community partner in family engagement. The potential highlighted by this work, and the recognition that family engagement goes well beyond just support for early literacy and our youngest children and encompasses the wide range of services offered by libraries for families and children of all ages, led the PLA Board of Directors to establish its Family Engagement Task Force in the spring of 2015. The task force is cochaired by Clara Bohrer, chair of the PLA advisory committee for the early literacy research grant, and Kathleen Reif, past chair of the ECRR oversight committee.

Successful examples of library family engagement projects are plentiful. In Maryland, the state's Early Childhood Advisory Council (ECAC) recognized that public libraries are in a unique position to interact in meaningful ways with all members of a family. The state was awarded a U.S. Department of Education Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge grant, and one of the grant's family engagement projects utilized public libraries across the state to achieve its goals. Librarians received support to work with local partners to reach families most at risk, presenting ECRR workshops and conducting Library Cafés, which included facilitated training, to engage families who were not using libraries. As a result, librarians in all 24 Maryland library systems reached new families with ECRR workshops and Library Cafés, and they expanded their partnerships with local community organizations.

Examples like these illustrated for HFRP the ways libraries can impact family engagement. M. Elena Lopez, associate director at HFRP, learned about the Maryland initiative and worked with her team to include it in the [FINE \(Family Involvement Network of Educators\) Newsletter, Expanding Opportunity: The Potential of Anywhere, Anytime Learning](#). The HFRP team recognized the potential of public libraries to engage the community and families. In the [report](#) they wrote,

The research is clear: libraries have the resources and expertise to assist in preparing early learners for school.

HFRP was eager to learn more about public libraries and how we could collaborate to support effective family engagement activities for our communities. An important next step in our partnership was HFRP securing initial funding from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation.

The project, [Libraries for the 21st Century: It's a Family Thing](#), included an assessment of the public library field, creation of a Learning Community to share program ideas, and presentation of a highly attended program at the PLA 2016 Conference. Through the project, HFRP and PLA also produced this “call to action” document, and are developing a set of resources with a wealth of information and examples of family engagement services provided by public libraries.

The PLA Family Engagement Task Force truly believes that Libraries for the 21st Century: It's a Family Thing will result in new and improved public library practices that will serve all families more effectively. PLA and members of the task force look forward to supporting this work with HFRP, and we thank HFRP for partnering with public libraries.

### **PLA Task Force on Family Engagement**

Kathleen Reif, Cochair, St. Mary's County (Maryland) Library (Retired)  
Clara Bohrer, Cochair, West Bloomfield Township (Michigan) Public Library  
Toni Garvey, Providence Associates, Phoenix (Arizona)  
Jo Giudice, Dallas (Texas) Public Library  
Christine Hage, Rochester Hills (Michigan) Public Library  
Susan Hildreth, Peninsula Library System (California), Pacific Library Partnership,  
NorthNet Library System, and Califa Group  
Michelle Jeske, Denver (Colorado) Public Library  
Meaghan O'Connor, District of Columbia Public Library  
Felton Thomas, Jr. Cleveland (Ohio) Public Library

Barbara A. Macikas, Executive Director, Public Library Association  
Scott G. Allen, MS, Deputy Director, Public Library Association

Public libraries are going through significant changes and interacting with patrons in new and different ways. The Institute of Museum and Library Services, for example, has called for libraries to play a stronger role in early learning for young children.<sup>1</sup> The Aspen Institute sees libraries as centers of community support for citizens in today's digital age.<sup>2</sup> And national surveys underscore that as libraries stand at these crossroads, the public wants and needs new services for themselves and their community.<sup>3</sup>

Libraries are also changing the way they engage with entire families, including those that are increasingly diverse—linguistically and culturally. Librarians are intentionally providing services to support and enhance family well-being and to guide children's learning in ways that extend well beyond early literacy. From makerspaces to water-wise gardening, STEM activities to writing clubs, libraries are responding to parents' desire to spend quality time with their children in constructive and mindful ways.

After all, family engagement is no longer just about how families are involved in schools—it is much broader. Children and youth learn anywhere, anytime—not just in school. They thrive when they explore and discover things they are curious about, whether it's in school, at home, in libraries and museums, during afterschool programs, and in parks and recreation activities. When families connect with children in these various learning spaces, they are building a pathway for lifelong learning.

Engaging families in anywhere, anytime learning is critical for children's academic and social development, but it is also a matter of equity. Families with high incomes spend nearly seven times more money on out-of-school enrichment activities—such as music lessons, summer camps, and travel—than families from low-income homes.<sup>4</sup> The opportunities for success for low-income children are diminished. Libraries are free, trusted, safe, and welcoming places in virtually every community that can help counterbalance these inequalities. Libraries have books, digital resources, and expertise that are now available or accessible to every family in every home. And they are spaces where children and adults can learn together to use these resources and strengthen their relationships.

## What Is Family Engagement?

Family engagement is a shared responsibility among families, educators, and communities to support children's learning and development. Family engagement begins at birth and continues through young adulthood. It happens everywhere children learn—especially at the library.

## Family Engagement Is a Shared Responsibility

Family engagement is about developing the knowledge, attitudes, values, and behaviors that enable children to be motivated, enthusiastic, and successful learners. In libraries, this means having respectful partnerships with families and providing information, guidance, and opportunities for families to be active in their children's learning and development. Families support their children's learning when they believe that they are responsible for their children's education and feel confident that what they say and do makes a difference.<sup>5</sup> Trusted community educators, including librarians, can encourage and inspire families to be engaged in their children's learning at any point in a child's lifetime.<sup>6</sup> They can provide this inspiration and reaffirm family members' important roles in their children's learning by:<sup>7</sup>

- Creating welcoming spaces for families and children;
- Inviting families to participate in learning activities in the library;
- Giving families opportunities to be involved in young children's learning activities; and
- Modeling specific actions that family members can take to support learning.

## Family Engagement Is Important from Birth through Young Adulthood

Family engagement in learning helps children get ready for school, succeed in school, graduate, and go on to college and careers.<sup>8</sup> However, specific family practices change as children grow and become more independent.

- Young children benefit when parents provide direct support, such as coreading books and using digital media together.
- In the elementary grades, parents provide the motivation and structure for homework, afterschool programs, and extracurricular activities.
- In middle and high school, family members encourage teens to make thoughtful decisions about the use of media and take responsibility for their actions. They set high educational expectations and link in-school and out-of-school learning to careers and future success.<sup>9</sup>

Family engagement can also address achievement gaps. In the early years, family engagement is associated with children's positive growth



and development, and often sets children and families on a pathway of lifelong learning.<sup>10</sup> When family involvement levels are high during the elementary grades, the achievement gap in average literacy performance between children of more- and less-educated mothers disappears.<sup>11</sup>

### Family Engagement Happens Anywhere, Anytime Children Learn



Each year, children spend about 1,000 of their 6,000 waking hours in school.<sup>12</sup> That means most of family members' engagement in children's learning is happening during those other 5,000 hours. Whether during a conversation over dinner or while swinging on the playground, learning is more likely to happen within the context of supportive family relationships. Parents can also help influence what children want to learn and improve children's reading comprehension by reading together,

talking about school-related matters, and visiting the public library.<sup>13</sup> When parents help children choose library books and navigate Internet-based learning resources, children spend more time reading and acquire more knowledge than those who are left to figure out library resources on their own.<sup>14</sup>

## Why Do Families Matter?

Nurturing and supportive families are important for children's healthy development and positive feelings toward learning—but not only during the early years. Even into early adulthood, guidance and encouragement from family members help shape young people's attitudes toward school, relationships, and life.

### Families Matter for Brain Development

Over the past decade, brain science has drawn attention to the importance of parenting and family engagement. Starting at birth, parent-child interactions influence the development of a child's brain. The way a parent responds to a child's gestures, smiles, and cries affects the



neural connections forming in the child's brain that support communication and social skills.<sup>15</sup> Infants' brains grow when caregivers make eye contact and repeat babies' words and smiles. Young children who grow up in a rich, home-reading environment develop strong brain connections that promote long-term memory, oral language development, and executive functioning skills,<sup>16</sup> such as the ability to plan, focus attention, remember instructions, exercise self-control, and delay gratification.

Family engagement is important from the early childhood years through young adulthood. While 95 percent of brain development takes place before age five or six, a second wave of development takes place during adolescence, beginning around puberty and continuing through approximately age twenty-four. Over this long period,<sup>17</sup> strong, supportive relationships with adults—including family members, teachers, coaches, and afterschool instructors—can help youth learn how to make informed decisions, develop relationships with peers, and avoid impulsive and risky behaviors.<sup>18</sup>

## Families Matter for Children's Language, Literacy, and Reading Abilities

Of all the ways in which families matter for children's learning, perhaps most important is how they support children's language, literacy, and reading abilities. Learning to read is a complex process that begins in the earliest years of a child's life and involves the ability to weave together knowledge of sound systems, comprehension of words, and environmental print cues. Reading also involves the more advanced skills of using text to learn new ideas, integrate information, and form critical opinions.<sup>19</sup> But children do not develop literacy skills on their own; they need support from and experiences with others—particularly the people in their families. Through reading at home, everyday conversations, telling stories, sharing books, singing, and playing, families help children's language and literacy skills grow.<sup>20</sup> Family engagement is also important for young dual-language learners as they attempt to maintain their native language while also learning English. Children who live in bilingual homes show more advanced executive-control skills than their monolingual peers and are better able to take perspectives that are different from their own.<sup>21</sup> Social interactions, from the earliest stages of infancy and language learning, help these bilingual skills develop.<sup>22</sup>

## Families Matter for Mathematical Skills

The home environment also impacts children's mathematical development. Numerical learning activities in the home, school outreach to families, and supportive parenting activities—including positive and high-quality parent-child interactions—are all related to mathematics achievement in young children.<sup>23</sup> When parents and children interact together with digital media tools and apps focusing on math, children grow in mathematical reasoning. These activities are especially helpful for parents who have their own anxieties over math.<sup>24</sup>

## Families Matter for Children's Social and Emotional Learning

When families offer children and youth opportunities to explore and cultivate their interests—both in and out of school—children develop feelings of competence and a desire to learn. Family members motivate children when they make them feel accepted and supported while learning, stress effort over performance, and encourage responsibility by offering choices.<sup>25</sup> Among young children, this might be allowing them to choose the type of toy or book to enjoy with parents. Children take cues from their parents. When parents show an interest in children's development, praise them for their efforts, and offer constructive feedback, they are helping their children develop a growth mindset. This means that children will learn that effort is important and that knowledge and skills can be developed through struggles, mistakes, and perseverance.<sup>26</sup> Perseverance and self-control—which families can foster through words and actions—predict how well students do in school. These qualities also help children avoid risky behaviors, and over the long term lead to higher educational attainment and the capacity to stay with a job.<sup>27</sup>

## Families Matter for Literacy in a Digital World

Families play an active role in guiding and monitoring children's use of digital media. On average, parents of two- to ten-year-olds spend about an hour a day using media with their children, including watching television, using mobile devices and computers, and playing video games.<sup>28</sup> These parents view their participation as protecting children from inappropriate content as well as spending time together. When parents use digital media alongside their children, the educational value of the experience is enhanced. Young children are more likely than older ones to coview digital media with their parents.<sup>29</sup> Among older youth, families often play multiple roles in the development of technological fluency, including teacher, collaborator, teaching broker, resource provider, nontechnical consultant, employer, and colearner.<sup>30</sup>

Children and youth use digital media to acquire information, produce new content, make social connections, and work collaboratively with others to solve problems and develop new knowledge.<sup>31</sup> Functioning effectively in this “participatory culture” requires not only technical proficiency but also a new set of literacy skills. These include problem solving, synthesizing, evaluating, and disseminating information; experimentation and creativity; teamwork; and collaboration. Family members also look to schools, libraries, and their own social networks for guidance in this area, especially digital safety. Libraries offer support by guiding youth in making meaningful choices with their use of media.





## Why Do Libraries Matter for Family Engagement?

**L**ibraries are an important space to engage families for three main reasons—there is public will behind it, they are ready to do this work, and they have the resources to do it effectively.

### Families and Communities Want to Be Engaged in Their Children's Learning through Library Settings

Surveys show that family members believe libraries are in a unique position to support families in their children's learning and development. For example, parents with young children are more likely than other adults to use library services, and having a child or grandchild increases an adult's use of library services.<sup>32</sup> The rich digital and hands-on resources offered in libraries—especially when guided by librarians—can prompt parents and caregivers to steer children's learning, ask questions, make connections, and exchange information with each other. These experiences instill a love of learning in children as well as skills for lifelong learning. Libraries also have the resources and programs to embrace entire families—from infants and toddlers to teens and grandparents—making them spaces that span generations.

Public libraries are particularly important for families in low-income neighborhoods, providing them equal access to the resources and skills they need to live productively in today's knowledge-based economy. Families living in poverty are more likely to visit a library than any other community venue, such as a bookstore, theater, or museum.<sup>33</sup> Compared to families from upper-income homes, parents earning less than \$50,000 per year say the library helps them find information for their children, allows free access to the Internet, and provides quiet study spaces, broader selections of e-books, and more interactive learning.<sup>34</sup> Lower-income families and communities of color are also more likely than other groups to turn to libraries for training, job searches, and services for immigrants or first-generation Americans.<sup>35</sup>

### Libraries Are Poised and Ready to Be the Heart of Family Engagement in a Community

Library services have evolved, moving beyond traditional “story time” to providing children and other family members with opportunities to play together, make and tinker with objects, and explore digital media. Librarians are also on hand to provide families the knowledge and resources they need to support young children's literacy and school readiness skills. The Every Child Ready to Read @ your library (ECRR) program, sponsored by the Public Library Association (PLA), is one example of a program that has helped librarians include all family members in supporting children's literacy.<sup>36</sup>

Libraries are also poised to provide leadership beyond the area of literacy. They help families connect with each other and find other community resources and organizations. Many libraries are already doing this, but much more work can be done to make sure that all libraries are willing and prepared to engage with parents, and have the vision, ideas, and capacity to do so systemically.

## Libraries Have the Assets and Infrastructure to Support Family Engagement

Perhaps most importantly, libraries have three key assets to build a foundation for family engagement that promotes children's lifelong learning. The Aspen Institute has identified these three overlapping, yet distinct assets as people, place, and platform.<sup>37</sup>

**“Libraries as people”** means libraries are no longer just about building collections. Instead, libraries are about building people. Librarians serve in the role of coaches, mentors, facilitators, and teachers. From this perspective, family engagement means librarians are creating trusting relationships with families to make them feel comfortable coming to libraries with questions and ideas. They are listening to families and codesigning with them programs and services for children, and sharing the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that promote children's development.<sup>38</sup> They support children, youth, and families from birth through high school, and work with those facing extra challenges, such as special learning needs or learning English.

Librarians are also adopting the role of media mentors, meaning that they are guiding families in how to use technology and digital media to support children's learning. Research shows that it is not enough for families to have access to digital media tools; they also need the knowledge and skills to be able to use these tools well. In a nationally representative study of 1,557 parents with children age two to ten, more than half of parents said that they needed more guidance locating quality educational media to support their children's learning.<sup>39</sup> Low-income, Latino, and less-educated families were even more likely than others to express this need. Librarians, with their expertise and access to technology, are particularly well-positioned to take on this role.<sup>40</sup>

### Family Engagement in Libraries

#### People

Libraries develop the capacity of all families to develop the knowledge, skills, and confidence they need to support children's learning.

#### Place

Libraries bring families together in a welcoming and supportive space to create social bonds and networks that benefit children and families.

#### Platform

Libraries offer opportunities for families, schools and communities to come together to innovate and build creative and unique pathways to empower families and support children's learning.

**“Libraries as place”** refers to the library as a mainstay institution in a community. Today’s library is both a physical and virtual space, but it continues to be the *physical* presence of the library that helps strengthen social bonds, community identity, and helps people get to know one another. Libraries have collections of books, digital media resources, as well as desks and meeting spaces, where families can come together. Libraries are welcoming, responsive, and active community spaces that connect neighbors and people to one another and provide a safe and trusted location for all families, children, and youth.

Library spaces are also incorporating health, wellness, and exercise programs into their services. For example, the Urban Libraries Council has recognized a free summer lunch program for children who might otherwise go without a healthy meal as one of the top library innovations.<sup>41</sup> Today’s libraries also extend beyond their physical walls. Bookmobiles and satellite branches in unlikely places, like shopping malls, housing projects, or health centers, help bring the library to families.

**“Libraries as platform”** advances the idea that with its variety of tools and resources, the public library also provides a “platform” for individuals and families to discover, innovate, and create new knowledge. The library supports the learning and civic needs of the community and becomes a jumping-off point for innovation and evolving ideas. Families interact and explore new ways of making and doing things, and libraries are collaborating with schools and community organizations to offer new and innovative programs that fill gaps in community services and link families to the resources they need. Libraries enhance family well-being by providing written and digital resources, as well as adult education classes, such as GED, English as a Second Language (ESL), and computer literacy courses. These programs contribute to lifelong learning and lead to reductions in stress, real savings in time and money, and the acquisition of important job skills. ESL and adult literacy classes also help immigrant parents better communicate with their children’s teachers so they can be more involved in learning.

Libraries are also a platform for creating new ways to engage and support diverse families. The U.S. is more culturally and ethnically diverse than ever. The English language learner population is expected to grow rapidly, and the number of school-age children from immigrant families is expected to increase to 17.9 million by 2020, up from 12.3 million in 2005.<sup>42</sup> As platforms for innovation, libraries work with families and community leaders to become the



hub of resources on the histories and cultures of different nationalities. Libraries help different cultural communities connect with their past so that they can better shape their future.

## 5Rs: Ways Libraries Encourage Family Engagement

**M**any libraries throughout the country are leveraging their assets to design new ways of engaging families. Extensive conversations with librarians and library directors have revealed five promising ways that libraries engage families in children's learning and development. Examples from across the country are also provided.

- **Reach Out:** Libraries reach out to families to promote the programs, collections, and services that are vital in a knowledge economy.
- **Raise Up:** Libraries elevate family views and voices in how library programs and services are developed and carried out.
- **Reinforce:** Libraries provide guidance on and modeling of the specific actions that family members can take to support learning, reaffirming families' important roles and strengthening feelings of efficacy.
- **Relate:** Libraries offer opportunities for families to build peer-to-peer relationships, social networks, and parent-child relationships.
- **Reimagine:** Libraries are expanding their community partnerships; combining resources and extending their range; improving children and families' well-being; and linking new learning opportunities.

A coherent family engagement system begins to develop when libraries engage with families in each of these ways and in all aspects of how a library operates—program leadership, space, daily operations, and programming.

### Reach Out: Libraries Reach Out and Serve All Community Members, Wherever They Are

Libraries are continually striving to link with families in their communities, especially those that are less likely to use library resources. Libraries with effective outreach efforts identify the characteristics of families that might not be using the library consistently, whether it's because they are unaware of the tools, resources, and expertise a library has to offer or simply because they choose not to come. Libraries then use various strategies, such as partnerships with schools, health clinics, or special needs agencies, to invite families to visit

and participate in library programs. These strategies include placing posters in community spaces, attending community events, offering transportation to events, and asking highly involved parents to reach out to others they know.

**Waukegan Public Library** in Illinois has community ambassador volunteers who are active and embedded in the community. The ambassadors meet families and work with them to assess their needs. Fifty-seven percent of the community is Latino, and literacy rates are low; ambassadors who are trusted members of the community help connect with families by alerting them to all available services that can be found at the library, such as bilingual story times and conversational ESL programs.

Reaching out is critical because there are troubling disparities—based on race and class—in families’ access to the resources and opportunities that promote learning. The quality of schools in disadvantaged communities has received considerable attention, but now it’s clear that there is unequal access to rich learning opportunities for children outside the classroom as well. The statistics are sobering. By the time they reach sixth grade, middle-class children have likely spent 6,000 more hours learning—through home literacy, preschool experiences, field trips, summer learning, and afterschool and extracurricular programs—than children born into poverty.<sup>43</sup>

Because of a lack of resources and the stresses related to poverty, parents from low-income households are less likely than those from upper-income homes to provide young children with access to books, other literacy materials, and the language-rich conversations that help children prepare for school.<sup>44</sup> These differences impact children’s language and cognitive development from even the earliest ages. When children enter kindergarten, the average cognitive score of those from the highest-income homes are 60 percent higher than the scores of those from the lowest-income homes.<sup>45</sup> There is also evidence that these differences exist as early as eighteen months of age.<sup>46</sup> Disparities exist in library usage as well. Families from low-income homes are less likely to use the library than families from upper-income homes.<sup>47</sup> Studies also show that the lowest rates of utilization of children’s services at public libraries are concentrated in areas of the U.S. with the highest need.<sup>48</sup> In this context, libraries need to be actively and intentionally reaching out to disadvantaged families, empowering them to lead their children to successful educational pathways.

## Raise Up: Libraries Uncover, Strengthen, and Raise Up Families' Voices

Libraries incorporate family voices into how library programs and services are developed and delivered. Families have important feedback and input for libraries. By soliciting, listening, and responding to family members' views, libraries empower families to improve their libraries and their communities.

Two promising approaches to raising family voices have emerged. The “funds of knowledge” approach is the notion that all families have resources, strengths, experiences, and knowledge to impart to their children, often rooted in everyday routines that communities and cultures value.<sup>49</sup> Libraries that adopt this perspective reject the idea that parents need to improve, and instead focus on what families are already doing and provide them with support.<sup>50</sup>

Human-centered design or design thinking<sup>51</sup> is another approach that enables families and caregivers of young children to share their insights and cocreate library services. Design thinking allows libraries to get to know families and their children deeply, through observation and informal and formal data collection. At the heart of design thinking is empathy—understanding and appreciating families' experiences, hopes, desires, fears, and frustrations. Librarians might ask: “What do parents and family members see, hear, and feel when they enter the library? How do librarians regard parents and caregivers? How do I know?” Asking these questions increases the chances that libraries will pull in families that traditionally have not participated in library programs.

Raising up parent voices gives families opportunities to lead and connect to other families while also giving librarians the important information they need to build collections and design spaces that families want.

Librarians from **Watertown Free Public Library** in Massachusetts keep families coming back by involving them in creating the programming. By offering programs and services that families say they want, libraries demonstrate that they are listening and responding to feedback. This fosters a positive library-family relationship as well as a sense of ownership among families.



## Reinforce: Libraries Boost and Enhance Families' Roles in Teaching and Learning

Libraries model and provide guidance on the specific actions that support learning, and in doing so, reaffirm family members' important roles and strengthen their feelings of efficacy. A broad research base supports the idea that families and home environments matter a great deal in the development of children.

Libraries are implementing a variety of programs and services to reinforce parents' role as their child's first and most enduring teachers. These programs span all stages of development—from early literacy efforts like Every Child Ready to Read @ your library, to college and career and readiness programs for youth in high school. Libraries have a role to play in giving *all* families not just access to resources but also the knowledge, skills, and confidence to use these resources effectively to support children's learning.<sup>52</sup> This is particularly true when it comes to librarians mentoring families around digital media.

Libraries, however, face a core challenge—how can they ensure that families come to programs, workshops, or events consistently enough to reap the benefits of library services? The nature of the library is such that many families just drop in when they have time or visit at different times or on different days of the week, depending on their schedules. This creates unique challenges for libraries when they develop programs in a series. Even the most exciting and well-designed programs can struggle with recruiting sufficient numbers of families and ensuring that they keep coming back.<sup>53</sup> Some libraries have created programs with mandatory attendance provisions, and others offer programs with extended and longer hours and multiple times a day over the course of a week so that parents have several opportunities to participate.

The **Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh** works in partnership with the Ready Freddy program, bringing together educators from the Pittsburgh Public Schools, parents, and community partners to focus on kindergarten enrollment, transition, and school readiness. Through this partnership, the libraries host a weekly storytime program that begins in late winter and focuses on the transition to kindergarten. With the support of the librarians, families read books, sing songs, and engage in various other activities to ease children into the routine, daily activities, and expectations of kindergarten.

## Relate: Libraries Connect Families to One Another and to Other Resources in the Community

Libraries offer welcoming and safe spaces for social interaction for all children and families. Libraries have influence over the type of social networks people make and maintain with each other.<sup>54</sup> While families might spontaneously meet and connect or reconnect at the library, libraries can also intentionally introduce families to each other through their programs and services.<sup>55</sup> These linkages can offer families informational support (e.g., “Where is the nearest food pantry?”), emotional support (e.g., “Tough day today?”), and logistical support (e.g., “Can you help me? My car broke down”).

When family members are less isolated and are part of a community, they are less likely to experience depression and have trouble providing for their basic needs—both of which are risk factors for child maltreatment and child behavior difficulties, especially among families living in poverty.<sup>56</sup> And simple library practices, such as asking parents to introduce themselves at the beginning of a story time or activity, can influence how families connect with each other. Many libraries sponsor regular adult events that foster these social connections, such as book readings, arts and crafts projects, parent cafés, early literacy workshops, and author visits.



**Public libraries in Maryland** hold Library Cafés, bringing together families of young children. After a group meal, the kids play and enjoy literacy activities separately while the adults get a chance to socialize with each other and share useful information in a relaxed and supportive environment. Librarians talk with parents, focusing on parent strengths and assets. They direct families to local resources while also asking families what libraries can do to better serve their needs. Families—including those with educational, financial, and emotional needs—report satisfaction and gratitude for the programs offered and the relationships made at the library.<sup>57</sup>



## Reimagine: Libraries Expand Community Partnerships in Support of Families

Today, libraries are linking to a more varied group of community partners than ever before, such as schools, early childhood education organizations, social service agencies, health care providers, and local businesses.

These partnerships expand the web of support for children and families and create a network that endures over time as children grow and families frequent various settings.<sup>57</sup> Partnerships allow organizations to combine resources, such as funding and personnel, but also to pool expertise. Libraries are sought-after partners because they are regarded as valuable hubs in the community, with the infrastructure to reach many families and the capacity to improve community well-being.<sup>58</sup> As demographics change and more people live in dense, urban areas, libraries will be adapting their programming even with increased restraints on budgets.<sup>59</sup> Engaging in partnerships allows libraries to do more than they could alone, such as conducting home visits with an emphasis on literacy, or implementing school-readiness initiatives with families experiencing homelessness.

High obesity rates among youth and adults are a significant health concern in Houston. To address this community need, more than fifty agencies have partnered with the **Houston Public Library's** Healthy L.I.F.E. (Literacy Initiative For Everyone) program, which empowers families—particularly youth and families from low-income backgrounds—to lead healthy lives. The program uses a family-learning approach, where family members learn together by attending events, such as a community resource fair. The program offers access to resources, such as books, fresh fruits and vegetables, immunizations, and health screenings. Families can also sign up for a library card or enroll in the Your Texas Benefits program. Healthy L.I.F.E. has served more than 3,100 family members, many of whom would not have had access to such programs otherwise.<sup>61</sup>

## A Call to Action

**T**he PLA and Harvard Family Research Project (HFRP) are collaborating to make family engagement an integral part of library services and functioning.

Conversations with librarians and directors across the country, the results of a national survey, and a review of the current research reveal that libraries are taking action. They are leveraging their assets to establish a foundation for family engagement that begins in the early childhood years and has the potential to continue throughout the school years. They are taking action in five areas—reaching out, raising up, reinforcing, relating, and reimagining—to engage all families in children’s learning.

Libraries are in a great position to create and reinforce a pathway of family engagement that promotes children’s learning across time and across community and virtual spaces. Libraries are “effective at supporting informal learning, connecting diverse learning experiences, filling gaps between learning opportunities, and offering new learning models that may not be feasible in schools.”<sup>60</sup> The services libraries provide are especially important for the youngest learners and those from impoverished and disadvantaged circumstances.

PLA and HFRP are committed to this work, and understand that librarians and library directors need access to promising ideas and practices for how to make this work a reality—such as those described in the examples above. For this reason, PLA and HFRP will soon release a set of resources that will provide libraries with more concrete ideas and guiding principles for building family engagement systems. The resources will highlight promising practices from libraries across the country that are doing this work well.

**There is no better time than the present** for libraries to pull together with schools, community organizations, and service providers to establish a system of family engagement that extends throughout a child’s life, supports children and families, and optimally prepares children for success in school and life.

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# Westword®

August 4, 2016

## The Broke Music Fan's Guide to Denver: Libraries and Museums



Denver Public Library

Hey, we all pay our taxes, right? Some of that money goes toward the upkeep of city facilities like libraries and museums, so in a way, we pay for music without knowing it, because many of those places host musical events and/or have music to borrow. If you haven't already, check out your local city amenities. It's not as completely uncool as it sounds. Here's why.



## 5. Renting Music

Every public library has its own rules regarding fees for borrowing CDs, but if there is a charge, it's minimal. Libraries are still a great way to hear music you might not otherwise hear.

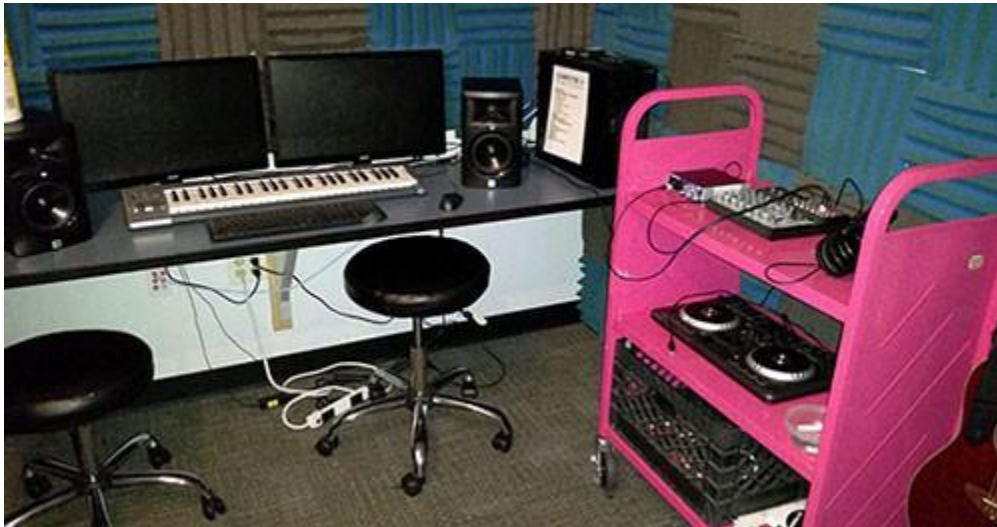
Meanwhile, the [Denver Public Library](#) has an excellent biography section, featuring plenty of great books about musicians. It is also one of the [best resources for local music](#).

## 4. Concert Series

The Boulder Public Library has some wonderful concert series, including a lunchtime series on Tuesdays. They're usually free, and forthcoming events include Jazzy Ash & the Leaping Lizards at 6 p.m. on August 27, Banshee Tree at noon on September 20, and CU Pendulum at 4 p.m. on October 16. [The Longmont Museum](#) has a summer concert series in the garden, but that has ended for 2016. However, the newly renovated (and gorgeous) Stewart Auditorium plays host to regular concerts, from classical music to world music. Beware, though — they're not always free.

## 3. Recording Studio

Denver Public Library has the ideaLAB Recording Studio, which locals can use for one hour at a time. Inside is a PC, mixing board, and various microphones and instruments. It is sound-treated (but not soundproof) and has a door to close out the noise from the rest of the library. Employees are available to help, and the room is big enough for a modestly sized band. That's quite a resource.



ideaLAB Studio

*Courtesy of Denver Library*

## 2. Workshops

Local libraries often host musical workshops for children or adults. The [Boulder Library](#) is

particularly good for this, and at 1:15 p.m. on August 16, Annie Savage, the Savage Hearts and the Young Pickers will teach a bluegrass-fiddle workshop called “Learn to Jam.” “Bring your fiddle,” they say, so one has to assume that you already have to own a fiddle and have some interest in fiddling prior to the class. But still, a free class. Yay.

#### RELATED STORIES

- [Video: Inside the Denver Public Library's Sunrise Concert for the Homeless](#)
- [Check This Out: Denver Public Library Releases Local Seven-Inch Record](#)
- [The Denver Public Library is seeking local music for its brand-new Volume Denver program](#)

#### **1. Check out these cheap live shows for a deal IRL.**

When you're done with free streaming of your music, here are a few options happening this week in Denver:

Lipgloss, Friday, August 5, Bar Standard, \$5

Rhythm Junkies, Saturday, August 6, Riffs, free

City Park Jazz, Sunday, August 7, City Park, free

# Westword®

July 22, 2016

## Sunrise Concerts Welcome Downtown Library Patrons

Few places bring together the variety of people that the Denver Public Library draws daily. To thank its devoted patrons, the Central Library branch heads up the Sunrise Concert series. At 9 a.m., a band welcomes library patrons, many of whom are experiencing homelessness or poverty, who gather outside awaiting the doors to open. As librarian Simone Gruene puts it, "We...take pride in serving everyone."

## VIDEOS



01:22 03:20 HD

EXPAND PLAYER