All 73 Los Angeles Public Library locations now have official ballot drop boxes.
President’s Note

As we enter the last few months of 2020, I am happy to be in touch with all of you. Thank you for your support as together we find our footing in modern digital spaces. Preserving quality programming and staying connected to you is our highest priority. Our joint commitment to seeing the Library thrive, especially during this time, is a testament to the critical value the LAPL provides to our communities.

This September, the Library Foundation was pleased to offer unique programming that expanded our vision of changing Los Angeles through the power of our Library. Our ALOUD series presented renowned political activist Robert Reich and Reverend Dr. William Barber speaking about the critical issue of equity and its importance to the most vulnerable populations in this country. What has stayed with me from their inspiring exchange is their shared belief that change in our country is something that we can all work toward together. Their thoughts about how to do this filled me with inspiration and optimism. Clearly, I was not alone in feeling fortunate to be a part of this two distinguished figures; the program has received over 217,000 views to date. As you know, our ALOUD programs have traditionally taken place in the 230-seat auditorium in the Central Library’s S. Mark Taper Auditorium. Being able to reach such large numbers digitally is a lesson for the future.

The ALOUD series also presented acclaimed author D.J. Waldie speaking with journalist Carolina Miranda. Waldie’s just-published book, Becoming Los Angeles: Myth, Memory, and a Sense of Place, has always been a place of change and growth. From its online services to the Library To Go feature, the Library is providing thousands of Los Angelenos with free access to much needed reading and personal knowledge of world literature to the Council through its weekly newsletter. While I continue to miss the physical presence of the Library, I am reminded that the Library has always been a place of change and growth. From its online services to the Library To Go feature, the Library is providing thousands of Los Angelenos with free access to much needed tools, information, and, of course, books. The public library remains a place where all are welcome and what we are learning in these unexpected times will inform our future and be remembered for years to come.

Ken Brecher, President

Support Your Library on Giving Tuesday

Mark your calendar for Giving Tuesday on December 1!

Join us in celebrating the life-changing work of the Los Angeles Public Library on Giving Tuesday, a day of global generosity for individuals to help transform and inspire their communities by giving back to the organizations they value most.

Although you can give at any time, making a gift to the Library Foundation in honor of Giving Tuesday is a great way to help us keep the Library strong, vibrant, and able to pivot when necessary to increase digital access to the crucial programs and services that our community relies on.

Your gift of any size on Giving Tuesday will go twice as far! All donations and new or upgraded Memberships will be matched by Bank of the West—up to $50,000!

Visit lfla.org/give

Los Angeles Public Library News

The Library Continues to Evolve in the Ever-Changing World

When the Los Angeles Public Library had to close its doors in March, it quickly transformed with enhanced digital services. “The pandemic has challenged all of us to think and act differently,” said City Librarian John F. Szabo. “We’ve met this challenge by expanding beyond the traditional role of a library,” said City Librarian John F. Szabo. “The Library’s website was soon rebranded as ‘Library at Home’ to showcase all of the digital collections and educational resources for families to use while children were home from school. Online borrowing increased by 6 percent, and sign-ups for e-library cards tripled.”

Szabo credits the Library staff for taking the challenges posed by the COVID-19 crisis. “Through their efforts, we’ve transitioned from being a system of 73 Libraries to focusing our attention on our role as provider of vital online services—services that help people navigate this very difficult time,” he explained.

Beyond offering a wide slate of online resources for immediate needs, the Los Angeles Public Library has also stepped up to preserve the history of these unprecedented times. “In good times and in challenging times, libraries are entrusted with stories, and today is no different,” said Szabo. “To document this moment and provide Angelenos with a window on this time, we created the Sadie at Home Archive.”

As part of this archival project, Angelenos were invited to submit photos, writings, and mementos of their experience during the pandemic, which the Library is digitizing for its special collections. “The response has been tremendous,” and Angelenos are eager to contribute—knowing that this moment and their experiences are being preserved.”

Here’s a snapshot of the myriad ways the Los Angeles Public Library has continued to evolve since March to meet the needs of our communities.

Staff in Central Library’s Octavia Lab makeovers repurposed 3-D printers and created more than 1,700 face shields for healthcare workers at eight hospital areas.

More than 500 staff volunteers at city Disaster Service Workers and assisted at shelter sites, served as contact tracer, and helped seniors get meals and services.

Storytimes, author talks, performances, and discussions, and the entire Summer Reading Challenge were moved online.

The New Americans Initiative made citizenship classes accessible via Zoom.

The Career Online High School graduated its 410th student in the program’s history, and doubled enrollment to 240 students.

New Street Fleet outreach vehicles launched in April, and have partnered with city departments, city council districts, and community organizations to provide over 2,000 books and 1,000 library cards to vulnerable Angelenos through mobile distribution, drop off, and pick up events.

Once it was safe for staff and the public, the very popular Library To Go program was launched to offer curbside pickup of materials at 16 Libraries city-wide.

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Since March, the Library has swiftly improved its virtual platforms to provide even greater accessibility to ideas and information across all audiences. Librarians have been tirelessly working to help patrons navigate digital resources. As Senior Librarian Tim Princenthal told the Los Angeles Times about working the Library’s Infowork desk from her home: “For my department it’s been very important that we’re able to really listen to people and reassure them that the things that they’re familiar with at the library, like having accounts, are available now in the form of e-books, and that the things that they use to do like coming into the library to read the newspaper, they can now do that through their computer.”

In addition to maintaining everyday service, librarians have also created “Safe at Home” photo archives to document the experiences of Angelenos during this historical moment of the pandemic. Of course, one of the most exciting moments of the recovery process this summer was when the LAPL opened 20 new branches across the city. The Los Angeles Public Library has remained a steady comfort to our communities through this period of change. The free digital resources provided by the Library to millions of Angelenos have proven to be more critical and in-demand than ever. Making a gift to the Library Foundation before December 31 will help keep the Library RESILIENT throughout this pandemic; help families recover with free educational and professional services; and REBUILD the Library of the 21st century with equitable access to free digital resources for everyone.

Make an impact this year and support the Los Angeles Public Library with a year-end gift!
Visit LFLA.org/Give by December 31 to have your gift MATCHED by Wendy Smith and Barry Meyer up to $45,000!
Call 213.228.6242 to make your gift over the phone.
Mail your gift to:
Library Foundation of Los Angeles
630 W 5th Street, Los Angeles, CA 90071

By the Los Angeles Public Library, TLC cultivates future leaders across Los Angeles by empowering teens to explore social issues in their community. Under the guidance of Young Adult (YA) librarians at their neighborhood libraries, teens work together to increase their awareness and understanding of issues, and then put forth problem-solving ideas for action.

With support from the Library Foundation and the Los Angeles Public Library, TLC cultivates future leaders across Los Angeles by empowering teens to address social issues in their community. Under the guidance of Young Adult (YA) librarians at their neighborhood libraries, teens work together to increase their awareness and understanding of issues, and then put forth problem-solving ideas for action.

This spring, six projects launched out of six neighborhood branches to take on a range of issues from fighting environmental events to promoting cross-cultural understanding. Teens at the Palisades Branch Library created the “Propelled” project to address the rise in mental health issues among adolescents. These teens created a magazine filled with thought-provoking articles and artwork to de-stigmatize common mental health conditions. They also advocated for a California state bill that would allow mental health days to be an excusable school absence by participating in letter-writing campaigns and calling their state representatives. [TLC-Leading Change] taught me to call senators, organize events, and speak up for what I believe in instead of complaining about the problems that plague our society. It made me feel hopeful for the future and confident in the willpower of my generation,” said Lily, a high school senior who took part in the project.

Jessica Levy, the YA Librarian who oversees the Palisades project, witnessed how the teens learned what they were learning about mental health issues to include the new context of the pandemic: “In addition to empowering themselves with information and research, I watched the teens learn new skills, like civic engagement and how state-legislative laws worked,” said Levy. “As we transitioned to working over a socially-distanced platform, we looked for new ways to give our project meaning and connect with each other. We will be taking these lessons into the fall as the teen council explores more ways to advocate and socially engage on issues that matter to them.”

At the Eagle Rock Branch Library, teens were inspired by the upcoming election season. They researched the history of voting and voter protection in the United States and designed the project, “Teens are AWESOME (Advocates Working Elections Scrutinizing Opinions Motivating Electorates).” They recorded Census PDA’s and also petitioned the Los Angeles Public Library to add a link to voter registration information on the Library’s website. “Voting and knowing when and how to vote was really an important aspect of being a citizen in the United States, but it became even more important with the start of the Covid-19 pandemic.” said Edmund, Eagle Rock Branch Teen Council President and TLC participant. “I am proud of the Eagle Rock Branch Teens for tackling the topic of voting and voter rights. They were already an empathetic, intelligent, and socially conscious group, but it was heartening to see them research the topic and become passionate about systemic racism and the negative impact it has on voter rights up to the present day,” said Patrice Fox, YA Librarian III at the Eagle Rock Branch.

“The Los Angeles Public Library continues its unwavering commitment to serving our communities through these unprecedented times. With your support, we are able to help the Library remain RESILIENT in times of crisis, help individuals and families RECOVER from the hardships presented by the pandemic, and provide the literary and educational resources to REBUILD our world from home. We’d like to share a snapshot of how your support empowers the Los Angeles Public Library to thrive, and how you can make an impact with a year-end gift.”

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“Young Adults are still an issue. 50 years on from the Voting Rights Act...” said Edmund, who will continue, along with his fellow group members, to stay connected to the issue well beyond the end of their project.
On September 26, supporters of the Los Angeles Public Library and the Library Foundation of Los Angeles came together virtually for the biennial gala which raises critical funds that provide educational opportunities, enable outlets for creativity, and put books in the hands of those who need them most. As guests near and far raised a glass from home, they heard from Alan Cohen, Haliee Berry, George Hamilton, John Lithgow, Sigourney Weaver, and other guests about how the power of literature continues to transform lives. The pinnacle of the festivities was the presentation of the 2020 Light of Learning Award to Library Foundation supporter Marna Schnabel, as well as the 2020 Literary Award to Poet Laureate Billy Collins. Though the event has passed, we spoke to each of the honorees about their inspiring work on behalf of libraries and literacy.

How have your connections to Los Angeles inspired your philanthropy?

Schnabel: I’ve lived in Los Angeles my whole life. I’m a fifth-generation Californian on both sides of my family. My mother’s maiden name is Van Ness, which is very synonymous with San Francisco, and my father’s name is Del Mar, which relates to Southern California. I’m a very California person, so I feel honored to participate in something that is so fundamental to our state. I’ve been involved with numerous programs that ground people in the Los Angeles community.

How do you see the Los Angeles Public Library as an essential part of our city?

Schnabel: From educational programs for kids that enhance what they get at school to teaching English as a second language, there are many things that the Library does for the community. The fact that it has 72 branches [plus Central Library] means it’s in everybody’s neighborhood.

[In addition], right now when kids are attending school online, the Library becomes a huge resource. Where can these kids turn when they need to write a paper? Where are they going to get their research? The Library does [an incredible] job of that because they support [numerous] programs that ground people in LA’s neighborhoods.

What does receiving this award mean to you?

Schnabel: I’ve been involved with The Library Council for a long time and the community support is so great. It feels good to be honored for a job that you love doing.

What first led to your work with the Library Foundation and The Council?

Schnabel: There are support groups that I’m involved with that have to do with children and education. [Enjoy] being supportive [in these causes]. Having eight grandchildren who all live close to you, I pay attention to these issues. I remember going to a local library when I was a child. When I became Poet Laureate I was an employee of the Library of Congress. I have spent time in the Library of Congress at any time—three or four in the early 1980s when I was a systems engineer in Los Angeles. Among her numerous adventures and accomplishments, she lived in Helsinki in the late 1980s during the time that her husband, Bob, served as U.S. Ambassador to Finland, and in Brussels in the early 2000s when her husband served as Ambassador to the E.U. We spoke to Schnabel about her personal legacy as a devoted mother to three children and eight grandchildren, and how her passion for California history fuels her philanthropy.

Marna Schnabel’s Long-Standing L.A. Legacy

A native Angeleno, Marna Schnabel has been an advocate for many local organizations throughout the city: Serving as Patron Chair for The Council’s Literary Awards both in 2017 and 2019, she has been involved with the Library Foundation for many years. She participates with the International Medical Corps Leadership Council and serves on the USC Book School of Fine Arts and Design Board of Councilors, and the USC Irvine and Young Academy Board of Councilors. Schnabel holds degrees in both accounting and architecture from USC. She was one of the first trailblazing women hired by IBM as a systems engineer in Los Angeles. Among her numerous adventures and accomplishments, she lived in Helsinki in the late 1980s during the time that her husband, Bob, served as U.S. Ambassador to Finland, and in Brussels in the early 2000s when her husband served as Ambassador to the E.U. We spoke to Schnabel about her personal legacy as a devoted mother to three children and eight grandchildren, and how her passion for California history fuels her philanthropy.

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Library Foundation of Los Angeles

The Library Store

Objets d'art
Fill your space with beauty — whether it's artistic food, items that celebrate California, or the next stylish statement for your wall or wardrobe. The digital shop is always open, with a $5 flat rate for shipping in the continental U.S. Proceeds from all sales support the Los Angeles Public Library, and Library Foundation Members receive discounts on all purchases.

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