

# Update from Friends of the Library

## Looking to the future with you



Greetings. We miss seeing you. Communicating and connecting is so important right now and we hope our regular newsletters and emails have kept you informed about the status of the San Francisco Public Library and of Friends. We write today with a positive message: **The Library is resilient; Friends is sustaining itself strategically; and the partnership is prepared for the future** with an even stronger, more responsive Library that is eager to meet any new challenges.

We are proud of the Library's role as a key partner in San Francisco's response to COVID, as well as its recent action to open air respite centers in response to the West Coast wildfires. However, we are all anxious for our libraries to reopen and provide their core operations. **As the community's advocate for Library services, we assure you that we are monitoring developments and advocating for the safe reopening and resumption of all Library services and programs when possible.**

In the meantime, our SFPL is once again proving its excellence in innovative response. The following is a summary of current Library services:

- **Materials.** *SFPL To Go*, front-door service for real books and media, is open at the Main Library and eight branches (Chinatown, Eureka Valley, Excelsior, Marina, Merced, Mission Bay, Ortega, and Visitation Valley) with more branches scheduled to open in November. *To Go* services through bookmobiles have also been dispatched to schoolyards in Bayview, Mission and Oceanview
- **eResources.** Thanks in large part to the Friends community and the Library Preservation Fund, SFPL already has the largest eCollection of books, media, and technology applications of any urban public library. Use of eResources had skyrocketed by 60%.
- **Virtual programming.** The SFPL continues to expand in priority areas of children's literacy, school support, job search, career development, technology, ESL, and literary and cultural events. Friends continues to fund the authors, artists, experts, and materials for these new and evolving programs.
- **Citywide emergency response.** SFPL staff continue to play critical roles in the City's response to COVID and wildfires, serving as emergency workers and contract tracers and opening designated branches as air respite centers when air quality reaches dangerous levels. Select branches are also opening as *Community Hubs* providing schoolchildren K-5 with access to free WIFI, meals, and emotional support while schools are physically closed.

Here are some highlights of Library activity since April:

**15,100**

participants in virtual  
Summer Stride

**23,000**

uses of Brainfuse online  
tutoring (85% increase)

**89,000**

visits by toddlers and  
parents/caretakers to I!2  
Sweet Story Times

**150**

reference and information  
calls answered every  
day

**Attendance in virtual classes:**

Tech Tuesdays - **820**

ESL classes - **601**

Job search classes - **520**

**6**

branches to serve as  
Community Hubs

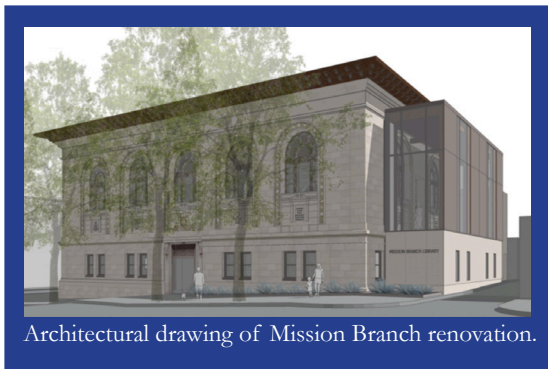
Use of eCollection and eResources - **up 57%**



## Friends Maintains its Good Health (thanks to you)

This year has presented us with complex decisions, as it has with community organizations holding fast to their missions. **We are happy to report that Friends ended its 2019–2020 fiscal year in good health, thanks to our donors who helped us meet our fundraising goals.** Sadly, we also had to implement cost-cutting measures, including closing the Fort Mason bookstore and laying off beloved staff, actions that no organization ever wants to take. We did not make these decisions lightly and share in the sadness of these losses. We are keenly aware of the challenges and economic uncertainty that lay ahead; and we are going to need your strong, ongoing financial support. Our responsibility is to advocate for you and to stay financially healthy as the caretaker for our beloved SFPL. Thank you so much for your support. We are profoundly grateful.

And what of the future of the SFPL...



**LIBRARY  
PRESERVATION FUND**  
The community powering  
its public library.

## Campaign for the Future of the Library

As many of you know, we entered 2020 unveiling our *\$10 Million Campaign for the Future of the San Francisco Public Library*. The *Campaign* called for an infusion of support through 2023 to fund furniture, fixtures, and equipment (FF&E) for the renovations of the Mission, Chinatown, and Oceanview branches; to ensure the renewal of the Library Preservation Fund (voter-mandated library funds); and to double the direct support for the SFPL to over \$2 million annually.

**We are still pursuing this campaign, albeit slightly modified.** Our adapted plan retains our ambitious commitment to doubles the direct annual support, ensures the renewal of the Library Preservation Fund in 2022, and fund the FF&E for the Mission Branch renovation (which still is on schedule). Current challenges have forced a reassessment of the timeframe for the remaining two branch projects. We will keep you informed and invite you to take part as plans unfold. Meanwhile, we can look forward with anticipation to hosting events again with you in person, including our next *Library Laureates* benefit, One City One Book, and Night of Ideas.

## The Book Program

While we weather this trying period, we look forward to planning a new future for our Book Program as well. At this time, we can only operate by selling books online and we have reopened our book donation program, contactless and by appointment through our website. **We have increased stock in our online stores and have begun to sell new books by authors featured in SFPL programs (*Fresh Prints of the SFPL*).** When we can sell books face-to-face again, we will look to you for inspiring ideas: A new bookstore? A retooled Big Book Sale? New book-loving events?

Please visit our website, which we update often, at [www.friendssfpl.org](http://www.friendssfpl.org). Please also feel free to reach out and talk to us any time about how you are feeling and about our great Library. You are not only Friend, you are Family. If you have comments, suggestions, or questions, please send them to us at [info@friendssfpl.org](mailto:info@friendssfpl.org). Please stay safe, and thank you so much.

Sincerely,



Sarah Jones, Board Chair



Marie Ciepiela, Executive Director