



# Memorandum

**TO:** NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES &  
EDUCATION COMMITTEE

**FROM:** Jane Light

**SUBJECT:** Report on Library Volunteer  
Engagement Program

**DATE:** 02-17-12

Approved

Date

2-28-12

**COUNCIL DISTRICT:** City-wide

## RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Committee accept this report on the Library's Volunteer Engagement Program.

## OUTCOME

The Committee will understand the Library's Volunteer Engagement Program.

## BACKGROUND

Offering San José residents an opportunity to give back to their community through volunteerism is a Library priority. From July 1, 2011 to December 31, 2011, over 1,300 volunteers contributed an average of 4,700 hours of service per month in a variety of roles.

Library services volunteers assist with a number of library tasks such as preparing materials for programs, setting up for events, and helping to keep the Library's environment clean and welcoming. These volunteers are always willing to help with the tasks at hand.

High impact volunteers serve in leadership roles and may train and supervise other volunteers. They are adult literacy tutors, one-to-one computer mentors, trained readers to children, teachers of citizenship classes, and ESL Conversation Club facilitators. These roles match the needs of today's adult volunteers who want to use their skills and expertise to make an impact in their community.

In 2008, as one of six pilot library systems to take part in a California State Library initiative, a team of library staff and volunteers were trained by national experts on creating a volunteer engagement program for high impact volunteers. Since then, staff throughout the Library has been trained on the fundamentals of engaged volunteerism. Now, there are job descriptions for

all positions, targeted recruitment efforts, written agreements outlining the goals and desired outcomes of each position, and regular meetings between staff and volunteers to monitor progress. The Library has become more intentional about matching volunteers to a position that aligns with their interests and skills.

## ANALYSIS

Approximately 60% of library volunteers are adults and 40% are teens. Many of these teens come to their local library to fulfill community service hours required by their school. They may be part of teensReach, the library's teen advisory committee, or help with the Summer Reading Celebration or other library programs.

The majority of library volunteer hours (62%) are contributed in high impact positions. Twenty-three percent (23%) of hours are contributed to library services activities and 15% are spent in services solely conducted by teens.

An example of a high impact position is the ESL Conversation Club Coordinator, which oversees and supports the Conversation Clubs at all library locations. This position is being shared by a three-member team including a former ESL teacher, a part-time librarian at another library system, and a former ESL Conversation Club facilitator at the Berryessa branch. The team has collaborated with staff to assess the current ESL Conversation Club volunteer program, developed training for volunteer facilitators in each library, and recommended additional educational resources for the Clubs. They also recruited, interviewed, and trained ESL Club Facilitators to expand the program system wide. They plan to provide ongoing support to the facilitators and offer quarterly meetings to review best practices.

High impact volunteers have a tremendous effect on our community. From July 1, 2011 to December 31, 2011, 23 trained Readers to Children engaged over 1,500 children in important early literacy experiences. During the same period, 295 adults improved their reading and writing skills by working with 212 volunteer tutors in the Partners in Reading program. Further, over 1,000 customers improved their ability to work with computers and use online resources with the help of 39 computer mentors.

Volunteerism is promoted through the Library's website on the newly redesigned volunteer web page, [www.SJPL.org/volunteer](http://www.SJPL.org/volunteer), which receives over one thousand hits per month. The web page includes articles and videos highlighting volunteers, interactive blog postings, and a list of volunteer opportunities.

Volunteers are recruited for positions through targeted recruitment to specific groups based on the volunteer opportunity or through *VolunteerMatch*, an online recruitment website. Through a grant from the California State Library, the Library receives a Community Leader Account with *VolunteerMatch* for all of its locations. This account provides an advanced suite of tools including the ability to attach documents such as job descriptions to position postings and being able to ask questions of the applicant to assist in the screening process.

The capacity of the volunteer services program has been greatly enhanced by the Library's acquisition of volunteer management software last year. The software enables easy tracking of volunteer skills, qualifications, and trainings; schedule creation; recording of volunteer hours; creating reports on volunteer activity; and communicating with volunteers through email.

San José Public Library has become a model of a successful volunteer engagement program for other libraries. The library's volunteer coordinator serves on a statewide team developing regional peer networks of libraries that promote volunteer engagement. San José Public Library will host a regional symposium in March for these libraries. Also in March, the volunteer coordinator will be a panelist for the *Successful Engagement of High Impact Volunteers* workshop at the Public Library Association's national conference.

Just as the Library strives to meet the needs of its customers in other areas, volunteer services is meeting the needs of today's volunteers by providing challenging and rewarding opportunities. In turn, volunteers endow the Library with enhanced and increased services to better meet the needs of the community.

### **EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP**

N/A.

### **PUBLIC OUTREACH/INTEREST**

- Criterion 1:** Requires Council action on the use of public funds equal to \$1 million or greater. **(Required: Website Posting)**
- Criterion 2:** Adoption of a new or revised policy that may have implications for public health, safety, quality of life, or financial/economic vitality of the City. **(Required: E-mail and Website Posting)**
- Criterion 3:** Consideration of proposed changes to service delivery, programs, staffing that may have impacts to community services and have been identified by staff, Council or a Community group that requires special outreach. **(Required: E-mail, Website Posting, Community Meetings, Notice in appropriate newspapers)**

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The memo does not meet any of the criteria listed above.

### **COORDINATION**

Not applicable.

NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES & EDUCATION COMMITTEE

02-17-12

**Subject: Report on Library Volunteer Engagement Program**

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**CEQA**

Not a Project, File No. PP10-069 (a), City Organizational & Administrative Activities, Staff Reports.

/s/

Jane Light

Library Director, Library Department

For questions please contact Joan Young, Volunteer Coordinator, at (408) 808-2181.

*Report on Library Volunteer  
Engagement Program*

*March 8, 2012*

City of San José



# Volunteer Opportunities at SJPL

Over 1,300 volunteers contributed an average of 4,700 hours a month from July through December 2011.



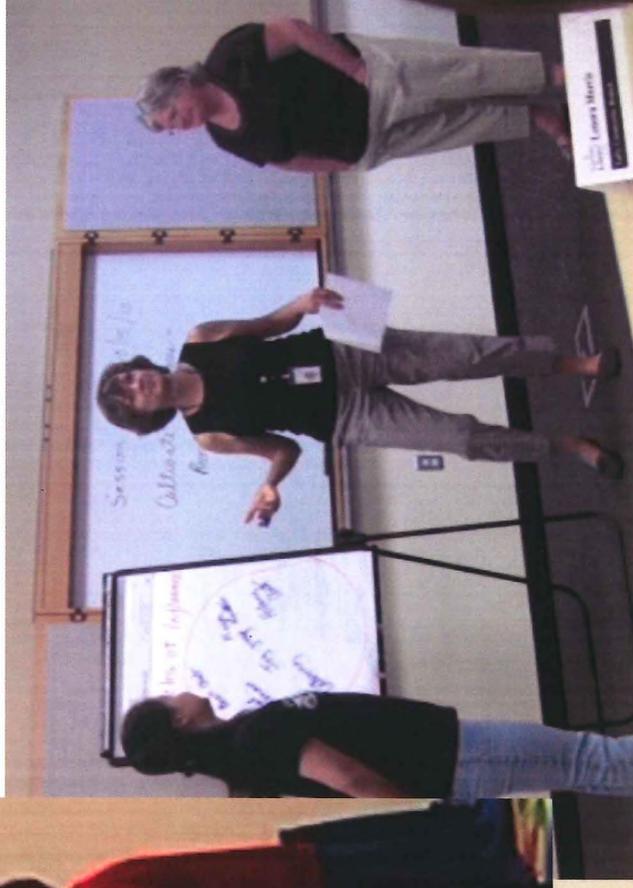
Library Services



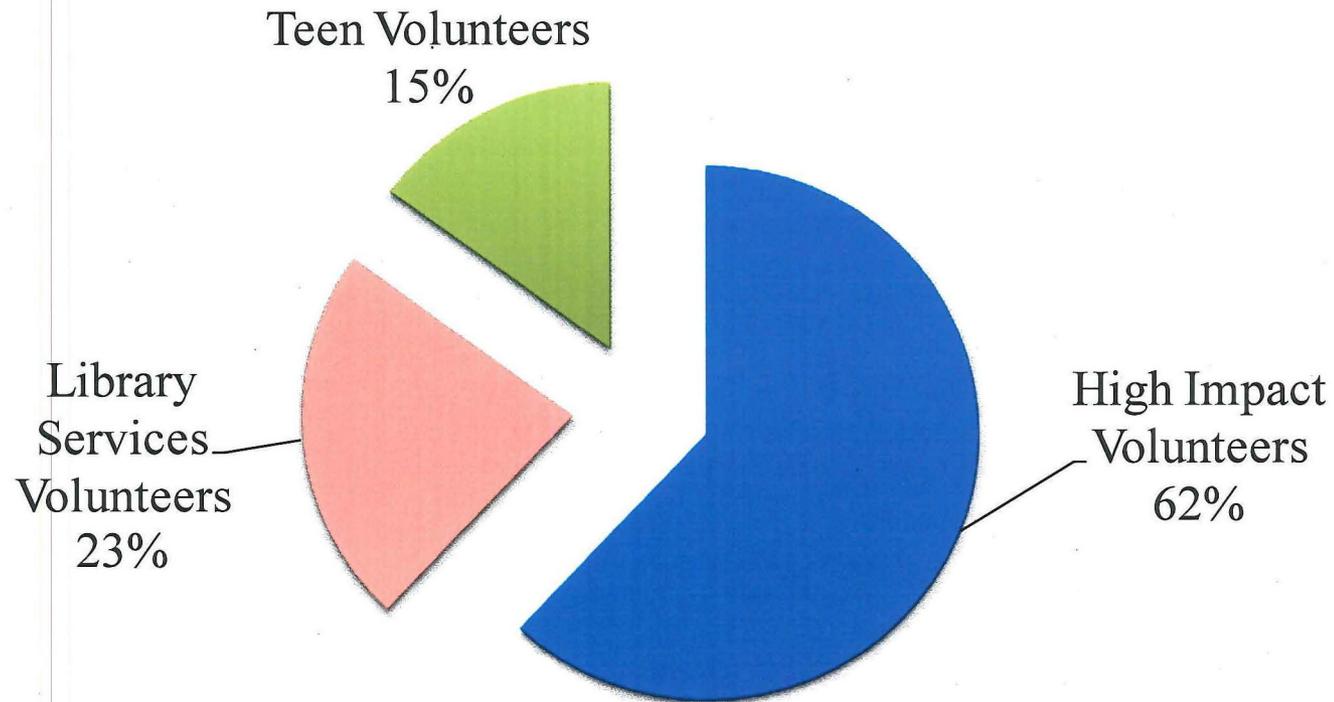
High Impact

# Volunteer Engagement

- Training with national experts
- In-house training
- Implementation of best practices



# Library Volunteer Hours



# ESL Conversation Club



# Community Impact July – December 2011



1,500 children received early literacy experiences from 23 *Reading to Children* volunteers.

295 adult learners improved reading and writing skills with 212 *Partners in Reading* tutors.



Over 1,000 customers worked with 40 instructors to improve their computer and online skills.



# Volunteer Promotion



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## Welcome to Volunteer Services

Volunteering at the library is a great way to use your talents, provide valuable service to the community, learn new skills and meet great people. Our current opportunities are listed on the right. Just click on the link to learn more about the position.

### Volunteer-led Conversation Clubs Enhance Library Services



Every Tuesday afternoon, a culturally rich group of individuals meets at the Joyce Ellington Branch Library to practice their English conversation skills. San José Public Library (SJPL) offers several ESL Conversation Clubs at various locations throughout the system. At the club, led by volunteer Liz Hanrahan, conversation topics range from current events to sports to cultural traditions, and lively discussion fills the room.

Liz, who has been facilitating the club since April, says, "I get to learn about different cultures—Korean, Japanese, and Chinese—while sharing what I know about American culture."

Jenny Lee, from South Korea, enjoys the opportunity to speak English with a native speaker and learn idioms common to American English. "Learning English and learning about American culture is very important to us," states Jenny.

In addition to the educational value of learning English, conversation clubs provide a social function as well. Members of the Joyce Ellington group have taken field trips together to local museums and even a major league baseball game!

SJPL is expanding the number of its volunteer-led Conversation Clubs. If you are interested in facilitating a club, please click here to learn more. The library provides training and support to Conversation Club facilitators. Experience in the field of English language learning or working with non-English speakers is desirable.

### Volunteer News

#### Volunteer Math Tutor



Meet Urvi Gupta. Urvi provides free math tutoring to kids in grades K-2 every Saturday at the Berryessa Branch Library. Her program, *OneInMath* has parents and kids excited about learning Math.

Urvi is a sophomore at the Harker school. She loves to volunteer, read, play volleyball and soccer, hang out with friends, and play the violin. She is part of the Journalism program at her school writing for the school website and the yearbook. She plays on her school's volleyball team and was a starter for Varsity this year.

She was inspired to start OneInMath by her dad, who used to give her math problems every day when she was younger to help her build a strong math foundation. This

### Volunteer Opportunities

- Change a Life - Give the Gift of Reading
- Computer Coach / Instructor at Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library
- Make a difference in someone's life!!! Become our Head Computer Coach at the King Library
- Shelf Reader, Merchandiser, and Tidier at Edenvale Branch Library
- Homework Coach at Edenvale Branch Library

[More Volunteer Opportunities at San Jose Public Library](#)

If you don't see what you're looking for here, other volunteer opportunities in your community can be found on [californialibraries.volunteermatch.org](http://californialibraries.volunteermatch.org).



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## Scholastic Supervisor at Almaden Branch Library

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**San José Public Library - Almaden Branch Library**  
★★★★★ 1 REVIEWS

Help local school children and foster their ability to succeed in school. Oversee study room activities to ensure a safe, welcoming environment for fun and learning.

Assist with administrative tasks as needed.

You must be able to volunteer on Thursdays at 3:30-5:30 PM during the school year.

If you are interested in this position, please contact Lindsay at [sj\\_homeworkcenter@gmail.com](mailto:sj_homeworkcenter@gmail.com).

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### Details

WHEN: It's flexible! We'll work with your schedule.


Playa Del Rey



2011 National Medal for Library Service  
Presented to the  
San Jose Public Library

