



County of SLO  
Public Libraries  
SLOLibrary.org



2023-2024

COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO PUBLIC LIBRARIES

# Annual Update



# Our Values

Literacy • Value • Discovery

*We inspire imaginations.*

*We value community.*

*We provide value to the community.*

*We are expert guides.*

*We are accessible.*



# Our Mission

To connect the community to knowledge, culture,  
and creativity through exceptional service.



County of SLO  
Public Libraries

**Christopher  
Barnickel**

Director

**Aracelli  
Astorga**

Deputy Director

# Storytime

we inspire imaginations



**11,000+**  
families  
attended

Our storytimes inspired imaginations, giggles, and wiggles, and helped children get ready for kindergarten.

## A lot like preschool

Learning in a storytime setting teaches listening skills, socialization skills, and kindergarten concepts.

And our librarians weren't just reading: They were pointing out colors, shapes, letters, and numbers. They read rhyming and repeating books that encouraged emerging readers.

**26,250+**  
minutes  
spent learning



## Learning in Spanish and English

This year, we expanded our bilingual storytimes to four locations. Oceano, San Luis Obispo, Atascadero, and San Miguel libraries sparked library joy in an inclusive environment for all families.



**2,500+**  
stories  
enjoyed

*An annual family literacy month initiative will launch in 2024-2025.*



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# The Literacy Connection

we are expert guides



*My tutor helped me with a presentation for work. When it was time to do it, I just felt more comfortable. I did great.*

In our first year offering literacy services, The Literacy Connection expertly connected 76 adult learners with 58 volunteer tutors.

## Reaching those who need help most

Our jail volunteer helped 27 English learners communicate and advocate for themselves. TLC also forged a community partnership with Lucia Mar School District's Migrant Education Support to help support families.

## Building resilience

Learners increased their fluency, participated in their children's learning, felt a sense of belonging and hope, and increased their earning potential.

One learner passed her CBEST exam. Another saw an increase in her photography business sales. A parent successfully navigated the preschool enrollment process. Another cherished reading library books with her son. Support systems and friendships formed through TLC's three weekly English conversation groups at San Luis Obispo and Nipomo libraries.

*A Spanish literacy and Basic ESL class for migrant farmworkers launches in 2024-2025.*

**617**  
Learning  
hours at  
County Jail



**\$80,000**  
of volunteer  
hours  
contributed



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# Summer at the Library

we value community



*My kids picked out more books than normal and spent time reading them. The program helped one of my kids to finish her books.*

*I'd fallen out of reading for pleasure, but the summer reading program got me back into it!*

*I also started eating healthier since I would also pick up a cookbook every time I went to the library!*

## 5709 Summer readers

Participants of all ages tracked and rated books they read over the summer, some trekking across the county to libraries in communities they'd never visited before. Kids and teens earned books and book bags, and took spins on prize wheels at all 14 locations.

Kids and teens at summer camps got to participate, too: Our partnerships with the Sheriff's Youth Camp, YMCA, Boys & Girls Club, and school lunch distribution sites connected hundreds in lower-income areas to library services.

Summer Reading participation increased 12% from last summer. Summer readers borrowed 28% more items than the previous summer.

## 170 Events

Critters ruled: Reptile Ron's spectacular show was a major hit with SLO County readers, attracting more than 1000 people of all ages to our libraries for surprise, delight, and hands-on science.

*We aim to connect even more readers to books and learning in Summer 2025.*



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# Reaching Out

we are accessible

**10,000+**  
Readers  
engaged



To make our services more accessible and inclusive, our Outreach Department rolled our big, blue Branch Out van all over the County to reach people who experience barriers getting books and library services.

## Incarcerated teens & adults

10 library staff members made monthly visits to county jail and juvenile hall to bring reading materials to grateful residents.

## Older adults

Library by Mail delivered books, DVDs, and other goodies to seniors with limited mobility. Regular stops at senior living communities also allowed readers to request deliveries.

## Summer readers

Partnering with the Sheriff's Youth Camps, YMCA, and Boys & Girls Club, and school lunch distribution sites gave us a chance to bring library services to hundreds of kids, tweens, and teens in unincorporated and lower-income areas.

*Additional regular Branch Out stops are planned for 2024-2025.*

**2,700+**  
Books  
distributed at  
County Jail



**1500+**  
Items  
delivered  
by mail

*I can no longer drive. My friend raved about receiving an envelope of books by mail, so now I'm signed up, too!*



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# Our Members

we provide value to the community

**542,000**  
Library visits



**1.5**  
million  
Items  
browsed

**345,000+**  
Newsletters  
opened

**2 million+**

*So grateful that we have  
such a great library system  
in SLO County and we get to  
make choices on what we  
want to read...Thank you!!*

## Borrow instead of buy

With a library card, members discovered and sampled new ideas, new authors and subjects, tried new things, and learned new skills--all at no cost. Our fine-free policy promoted equity: Our members don't have to choose between using the library and paying an electricity bill.

While we offered both a self-service and a full-service experience, "shopping" online at [SLOLibrary.org](https://SLOLibrary.org) provided a convenient way for members to request items for pickup at their favorite library.

## Power users

Library members requested and borrowed hundreds of thousands of bestsellers, blockbusters, and more, including thousands of board games, parks passes, tools, and more through our expanding Library of Things collection.

Our members engaged with reading recommendations, surveys, and events updates through our monthly newsletters and social media posts, and gave us important feedback.

*A new tool lending library will launch at MakerSpace SLO for 2024-2025.*



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# Foundation & Friends

*Thank you for your continued support!*



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SLO COUNTY LIBRARY  
 FOUNDATION

[Friends of the Arroyo Grande Library](#)

[Friends of the Atascadero Library](#)

[Friends of the Cambria Library](#)

[Friends of the Cayucos Library](#)

[Friends of the Creston Library](#)

[Friends of the Los Osos Library](#)

[Friends of the Morro Bay Library](#)

[Friends of the Nipomo Library](#)

[Friends of the Oceano Library](#)

[Friends of the Santa Margarita Library](#)

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