



January 13, 2021

Dear President Silva and Members of the Library Board,

Happy New Year to you all. Here's hoping 2021 brings some normalcy back to the world and we will be able to gather with our friends and family again and the library will be able to open our doors to the community. I hope you all had a lovely, physically distant, holiday season.

This letter is to bring you up to date on activities during the months of November and December 2020 and to provide a look forward to some of the activities, programs and plans we are working on.

**Modified Library Services Reports: (Consent Agenda).** Just a reminder that I have not included the "regular" Library Services Report in your Board Packet because we aren't collecting most of those statistics. I have included some numbers, trends, and other interesting activities/services provided to the community during the closure are included. The Expenditure Reports and Check Registers for November and December are also included.

**Main Library Update.** Just after Thanksgiving we transitioned all staff who could work from home, to again work from home and only those who needed to be in the building came in, for example the 10 bodies necessary to make Library Takeout (LTO) work. Currently some staff work at home two or three days a week and come in the other days. Those who feel comfortable coming into the building are allowed to work in the building all in separate workspaces. Face coverings are required while working unless you are in a private office or have a work space with dividers well above your head. Staff have been very good in following the rules of distancing, face coverings, cleaning the shared spaces and observing room occupancies. In November we were working on creating our limited reopening plan 3.0 which would have allowed maybe 6 members of the community into the building on the first floor only. We were thinking of putting computers, a print station and the public scanning station in the café space and LTO would continue from the front of the building, we would allow a few people in for an hour to browse then clear people out for the next group. We have considered taking appointments for those who want an hour to browse. There would be no public seating to "hang out" in the building. This plan still is a work in progress but now on hold. We were planning to implement our limited opening in mid to late December. As you know, the State and County Health Departments issued a new Stay at Home order in the early part of December. Plans for our limited opening were put aside as we considered the future of LTO with the new health order. With the more strict stay at home we considered shutting down LTO but decided to continue service at least one week under the new order to see if people were not going to request books and come out to pick them up. If so, we'd make changes accordingly. Well, during the test week, activity did not drop off and comments from the public were along the lines of, "Thank you so much for continuing to offer the books! I'll go crazy staying at home without them!" In the end, we did not change the Library Takeout schedule and business continues to be brisk. Staff works hard to complete the materials pull lists, sometimes over 500 items in the morning, to assemble the bags for public pickup later in the day. The grab bags continue to be very popular as well. Although the libraries are physically closed except for "Library Takeout" (LTO), the Library continues to offer a wide variety of online programs for all ages. The staff work hard to create these online videos and story times. It is

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very time consuming to plan, video, edit, upload, and market these online offerings. We have finally resurrected our YouTube channel for most programs and many of our story times and craft programs are views many more times after the initial month it was posted. When we used Instagram people only saw the activity for a week then it disappeared. Here is a link to Maker Monday and you'll see many of the imaginative crafts staff is offering to the children. <https://www.alamedafree.org/PROGRAMS-SERVICES/Childrens-Services/Childrens-Activities/Maker-Monday>

Staffing has been an issue with so many of our full time staffers leaving (5 of 15) for other parts of the country or taking retirement. I'm glad to say that we finally have our Senior Librarians ready to come on board. Lauren Walton was one of our part time Library Specialists and we welcomed her to our full time staff on December 21. Lauren will be the lead for collection development for all three libraries in adult services. Lauren has already started reorganizing and moving collections on the second floor. January 19 will be the start date for Rosemary Van Lare. Rosemary comes to us from the San Jose Public Library but she is an Alameda resident. Rosemary will be in charge of the two neighborhood libraries. Jenny Gillette is our third Senior Librarian who will also begin work on January 19. We are familiar with Jenny as she was an intern with us about 8 years ago. It is nice to see a young intern venture out into the working world and come back a seasoned professional. Jenny will be the lead for adult and teen programming at both the Main Library and the Neighborhood Libraries. We are very excited to have these three ladies as part of our full time library team. Also in early December we hired part time Library Specialist JoAnne Yada to assist our full time School Resource Services Liaison Andie Cultrera. Jo Ann is a teacher in the AUSD who was laid off during this school year so she is very familiar with the teachers, students, and schools. Remote learning has been difficult for the students and teachers with their school libraries closed and access to their research materials limited. Our School Resource Services program has been a lifeline for the district by offering research instruction, materials, class visits, and so much more. Last September our library joined a state-wide program called Sora which is a k-12 reading app provided by OverDrive to assist students and teacher with remote learning and eBook material access. This app not only provide the eContent from OverDrive but also allows students access to the library's entire eBook & audiobook collections and all of the digital content on our library webpage through the school's web portal without requiring a library card! I am not sure if the school district has rolled this out to the students. Library Technician interviews were held before Christmas and the second round interviews were held after Christmas. We hope to have at least two of the three positions filled by mid-January. Trina Dikitanan has been with the library part time and will become our full time computer lab Library Technician. Trina has been assisting with our web page redesign and will become our lead for the web page as well as staffing the computer lab when we reopen. The two Library Technicians for the neighborhood libraries are still undergoing reference checks so I will forgo announcing their names until they are confirmed. We are very excited to almost being fully staffed with our full time complement again. We will have to look at our part time staff too because we have lost about 8 since March.

**American Red Cross Blood Drives.** The Library continues to host our quarterly Red Cross Blood Drives. The most recent Blood Drive was yesterday, Tuesday, January 5, from noon to 5:00 p.m. There is an urgent need for blood donations to the Red Cross is very appreciative that we are able to continue to host the Blood Drives. It is too soon to know if we were at capacity yesterday but the library blood drives usually are fully booked in advance and have very few "no shows." They started two more donors right at 5:00PM so they were not done and packed up until about 6:30PM. Our next blood drive will be Tuesday, March 9.



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**National Park Service Japanese American Containment Site Grant Project.** This project is moving forward. The agreement with the archivist, Brad Shirakawa, is complete and he's jumped in with both feet! He has boxes of materials from the Buddhist Temple of Alameda (BTofA), will be picking up more material from Buena Vista United Methodist (BVUM) Church members, has been in touch with the Alameda Museum and has permission forms that he's modified from Densho. The Museum is interested in the project and has asked if they can have a link to our completed project when we are done. They have some history of various groups in Alameda but very little from communities of color. The working group agreed to give the link. The Museum has some material that we think might be relevant but not much. This is a two year grant and the working group has regular meetings scheduled monthly as a check-in for progress.

**Japantown Historical Markers.** The next meeting for this project will be on Friday, January 15. The content for the four markers will be the topic of discussion. The content needs to be decided, edited, and laid out before any fabrication can take be discussed. Now that the holidays are over, there is great hope that this project will move forward a little more quickly. All meetings with be virtual for now.

**READAlameda...** The city-wide book club has not started. There is some hope that perhaps in February this title can be used as part of Black History Month and a discussion can be started. This entire effort is the City's PIO Sarah Henry's project. The Library is only supplying the distribution of books. We understand that Books Inc. is taking the lead for this program but we have not learned any details.

**Friends of the Library.** The Friends press on. They were successful in their grant application request to the Rotary for \$500 to assist in paying for management software and defraying the expense of their Zoom membership. The virtual programs are very popular and the subjects are varied. The Art Docent programs continue and are the most popular series the Friends offer. They have branched out to actively look for authors who are willing to do talks and in the virtual environment, the authors do not have to be local, in fact they hosted a couple from NYC in November. They are currently working on organizing a panel discussion for Black History Month.

The new online book store is going well. Through their newsletter they are soliciting sponsors of the book store to raise funds, and they also sell a \$100 mystery box that they will deliver to you all wrapped up nicely and you will be acknowledged in their newsletter. Currently with the Shelter in Place order I have asked the book sale volunteers NOT to come into the library but to stay home.

The Friends were so kind as to buy lunch for the library staff on December 17. Boxed lunches from Togo's were the meal of the day and the Friends Board wrote personal holiday cards to each staff member which I attached to their chosen box lunch. I think it was very special and much appreciated by the staff.

The next Friends Board meeting will be on Monday, January 25, 2021 via Zoom at 6:30 p.m.

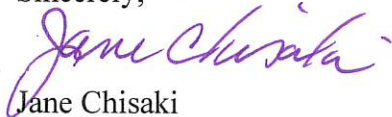
**Alameda Reads.** The Alameda Reads office has been closed since March 16. Only minimal work is being completed. The final end of year report to the State Library was submitted in November. Both Program Coordinator Barb Papik and Office Administrator Red Lustig are in the office part time, although not at the same time, to see what they can offer to the learners and tutors from a distance. Some tutor and learner teams continue to work and the book discussion groups have gone virtual. Barb and Red

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mail materials to participants so they have what they need to continue learning. Although work is moving at a slower pace, the tutor training video project with the Sacramento Public Library continues to inch forward. Due to the COVID-19 restrictions with physical distancing and face coverings, much of the filming has come to a halt. The good news is that Alameda Reads continues to offer limited programs during the shelter in place. Coordinator Barb Papik is in touch with other literacy programs around the state so she keeps abreast of new ideas to connect with her learners and tutors.

If you have any questions about the items to be considered at the Board meeting, or if you would like to discuss these or any other items, please email me at [jchisaki@alamedaca.gov](mailto:jchisaki@alamedaca.gov) or if it is not urgent, please leave me a message at 747-7747.

Sincerely,



Jane Chisaki  
Library Director