2020 IMPACT REPORT

675K+ Library Members
*14% increase from 2019

908,792 eLearning Uses of 32 Databases

8,187 Programs and Events Attended by 135,437 Participants

4+ million Physical & Digital Circulation

#1 Provider of Free Public Access to Wi-Fi, Hotspots and Tech Devices

15,800 AT&T Wi-Fi Hotspots Distributed to Students, Families, and the Public

500+ Employees With 21% Bilingual Workforce

69,828 Student Library Cards Issued Across 28 Local Education Agencies

“IT’S A WONDERFUL SERVICE SINCE WE CAN’T GO IN THE LIBRARY. I USE IT ONCE A MONTH.”
- Karen, SJPL Express Pickup User

TRANSFORMING LIBRARY SERVICES

When the library was compelled to close its physical locations due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, staff worked quickly to implement new ways for people to access library services and resources. An eLibrary Card was created to provide access to SJPL’s extensive online collection of digital resources. Since its launch, a total of 15,108 eLibrary cards were issued. SJPL’s Live Chat service was expanded to 7-days per week and offered in English, Spanish, Vietnamese, and Chinese, which attracted more than 18,000 live chat sessions. Staff also expanded the library’s digital collection, acquiring nearly 65,000 new digital titles with an overall 1.2 million eCheckouts, bringing SJPL’s total circulation to 4+ million. In June, SJPL launched Express Pickup to provide customers access to its physical collections in a safe and contactless way, which was utilized by 126,000+ customers. More than 8,000 programs in various languages and topics for all ages were created, attracting 130,000+ participants. A total of 1,675 volunteers contributed 30,217 hours of service at the library.
BRIDGING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

The library led the City of San José’s SJ Access initiative, designed to provide residents and students with free access to all things digital. Thanks to a public-private partnership with AT&T, along with the support of City and local education leaders, SJPL provided 12,800 free high-speed Wi-Fi hotspots to K-12 students across 32 Local Education Agencies by the start of the 2020/21 academic school-year. SJPL also made available 3,000 Wi-Fi hotspots for the public to check out, as well as computing devices for library members to participate in multilingual Digital Literacy courses. We began working with City partners to expand Wi-Fi networks to exterior spaces at nine library facilities, community centers, and parks. SJPL continued working with East Side Union High School District to provide digital access to 305,790 households in the attendance areas of eight high schools. To reach communities that lack connectivity issues, the library launched its mobile Maker(Space) Ship on a “Hotspot Tour” and provided hotspots and library memberships to residents within their neighborhoods. The Hotspot Tour visited 13 locations and distributed 166 hotspots.

INCREASING EQUITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

To boost library services to underserved communities, SJPL established new internal staff teams and strengthened existing services dedicated to these efforts. In January, the Disability Access Committee was created to audit, review, and provide recommendations for advancing equitable access to services, technology, and staff guidelines. A Racial Equity Team was also established in January, to deepen conversations and increase racial equity in library service delivery. In February, SJPL hired its first Equity & Inclusion Services Manager to oversee the library’s efforts and provide leadership and support to internal teams. The library’s Family Learning Center coordinators have developed a network of more than 20 trusted community-based organizations to provide free multicultural and inclusive programs and support services to all community members, especially immigrants, low-income households, older adults, and non-English speakers. In an effort to engage with non-English speakers, critical service information was translated into Spanish, Vietnamese, and Chinese. Staff also presented 370+ programs in languages other than English, which attracted 3,400+ participants.

HELPING THE CITY’S EMERGENCY EFFORTS

In March, when the COVID-19 Pandemic forced residents to shelter-in-place and City buildings to temporarily close, 223 library workers were activated to support and lead parts of the City’s emergency response efforts, which contributed to 58,000 hours of service. Staff assisted with the distribution of food, community and small business engagement, served on the re-opening task force, helped with public information and translations, supported the planning and documentation unit, led the City’s digital inclusion efforts, developed a comprehensive childcare plan for caregivers and service providers, established health and safety procedures, and activated Learning Pods at select library locations. Library staff also donated a total of 2,100 3D printed face shields and sewn cloth face coverings to medical workers and older adults.

SUPPORTING ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Through the City of San José’s Education and Digital Literacy Strategy, SJPL partnered with 28 Local Education Agencies to distribute the Student Library Card to nearly 70,000 K-12 students to date. The San José Educator Library Card was released in December, which provides extended checkout and renewal periods to educators, with no fines on overdue materials. In 2020, SJPL hosted 140+ virtual class visits to promote online learning services and resources, such as Tutor.com, and informed students about the library’s Virtual Homework Help program which helped 140 K-8th grade students. To engage students with hands-on learning activities, SJPL made 7,200 STEAM kits available at all library locations. Over the summer, SJPL also distributed 5,004 healthy summer lunches to local youth. Lastly, the library offered several seasonal reading and art programs, which collectively attracted 8,600+ participants of all ages.

KEEPING THE COMMUNITY INFORMED

Throughout the pandemic closure, the library’s website, newsletter, and social media platforms became the primary point of communication for many residents. The SJPL homepage was modified to provide visitors quick access to popular services, which in 2020 attracted nearly 2-million visits and 3.4+ million page views. The library’s social media connected 23,000+ followers with service updates, stories, and SJPL news. Lastly, the library utilized its electronic newsletter to connect with 106,000+ subscribers. In an effort to reach customers who lack internet access, the library worked with CivicCenter TV 26 to air weekly family programs and public service announcements (PSAs), PSAs were also aired on local television stations in English and Spanish to announce the SJ Access initiative.

“We are a family of 6. We would have slow connection or get kicked off the Wi-Fi. Now with the hotspot from the library, the connection is much better. Thank you.” - Jesse, SJ Access Hotspot User