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Library's Sunday Hours Successful

By Sophie Braccini

Last September the Moraga library began opening on Sundays and book lovers are taking advantage of the extra time. The Sunday hours, from 1 to 5 p.m., are funded mostly by the Friends of the Moraga Library, a volunteer group that raises money for library programs through the sale of donated books and private donations.

"I come here with my grandmother and we read together," said a young Moraga resident as she sat with her grandmother on a recent Sunday. "I come here for a change of scenery," said a studious Saint Mary's student who was working from her laptop. In the children's section, young patrons were reading while their parents browsed the adult shelves, and older residents were reading magazines in the lounge.

"We do not run activities on Sundays," said the librarian in charge. "The people who work here on Sundays are part-time employees ... it's never the regular staff."

Even though Moraga's regular librarian, Diane McDonnell, does not come in on Sundays she derives great pride in the success of the Sunday hours. "The average number of patrons on Sundays is 201, with 290 items checked out," said McDonnell. "It's very convenient for residents who have little time during the week; it's a peaceful place to gather and a warm destination on a winter afternoon."

Rodger Lum, who is a member of Friends of the Moraga Library and also represents Moraga on the Contra Costa Library Commission, updated the Town Council on the success of Sunday hours at its Jan. 8 meeting. "We've received comments from patrons about how much they appreciate the Sunday hours," said Lum, who added that they particularly focus on "research services as well as circulation services." Lum thanked the Town Council for its support and added that the Friends of the Moraga Library will approach the Town Council again in the next budget cycle for continuing funding.

The town contributes to the library's Sunday hours by paying for the utilities, about \$4,500 per year, while the Friends of the Moraga Library pay the staff salaries of \$25,000.

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