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Lafayette Library & Learning Center engages readers in new ways



Photo provided

Lafayette Librarian Rob Tygett speaks at the April 24 city council meeting.

By Lou Fancher

For some people, every week is public library week, but with National Library Week arriving this year April 23-29, the city council on April 24 welcomed Lafayette Librarian Rob Tygett, who highlighted the Contra Costa Public Library system's achievements and strategic planning for the coming years.

Tygett emphasized the many ways readers are engaging in new ways, such as eBook checkouts (which have seen an 8% uptick between 2021 and 2022) as well as Brainfuse, a free online career job hunting assistance program, and Pressreader, a digital resource that offers access to thousands of newspapers, periodicals and magazines from over 120 countries in

more than 60 languages in one app.

In-person programming at Lafayette's downtown library restarted full steam in July 2022, with 1,398 programs that brought over 54,000 people to the facility. The library also participated in Contra Costa County Library's "Lunch at the Library" program that operates at seven locations and last year provided 5,640 grab-and-go meals and 2,852 food and produce boxes to close the nutritional gap kids experience during summer months.

Tygett said the most popular books from 2021-22 based on checkout rates were Mo Willems' "The Thank you Book" (early reader), Jeff Kinney's cant-keep-them-on-the-shelves "Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Deep End" (middle reader), "Shadow and Bone," by Leigh Bardugo (teen

reader) and for adults, "The Lincoln Highway" by Amor Towles.

The Contra Costa Library system of which the LLC is a part has also joined hundreds of other libraries across the country, including 11 in California alone, to sign the United Libraries Council's Declaration of Democracy.

The ULC's statement reads: "Democracy is under siege throughout the world and close to home. Daily, we witness assaults on basic freedoms and human rights we've long cherished as books are banned, programs and events are canceled, disinformation and misinformation spread unchecked and racism is institutionalized. As cornerstones of democracy, it is incumbent upon libraries to stand up against all efforts to impede the democratic process and limit the full participation in civic life." It goes on to state a commitment to supporting legislation that affirms the freedom of all people to access library materials with diverse points of view and to oppose legislation that seeks to restrict access.

Speaking specifically about programs at the Lafayette library that bring patrons in, Tygett mentioned four weekly story times, with two of those events offered bilingually in Spanish and Mandarin, Outdoor Explorer events that are hosted county-wide and attract as many as 150 participants, a six-week Mandarin language class that will start in June, and educational programming such as technology assistance, homework help and 3D printing workshops. Other assets include Kanopy (online films), Rosetta Stone language programs, audio books, e-readers on loan, WOW (Wonders of

the World) cultural presentations and Sweet Thursdays author talks presented through a partnership with the Friends of the Library.

New equipment and opportunities arriving soon or already up and running at the library include 8-unit charging bays for mobile devices, an AWE language learning station for kids, and The Student Wellness Summer and Winter Program (SWELL), which is a partnership of the Lafayette Library & Learning Center Foundation (LLLCF), the city of Lafayette and the LLC. Activities will be located outside of the library throughout the summer and during winter and spring breaks and are available to all students grade 6-12. Tygett said the SWELL center staff will "work with

students (when they are) out of school who are looking for place to hang out." The design and purpose of SWELL is intended to address the emotional, social, and creative interests of teens in a fun, welcoming, and participatory atmosphere.

The council thanked Tygett for the update, with Vice Mayor Gina Dawson calling the Lafayette Library "a real asset" and Council Member Wei-Tai Kwok expressing appreciation for programs offered to the community during and while "coming out of" the pandemic.

For a list of programs visit www.lllcf.org/program-calendar and www.lllcf.org/special-events

Annual Senior Car Rally planned for May 19



SENIOR CAR RALLY '23

Acalanes High School seniors will once again be expressing their school pride prior to their upcoming graduation in decorated cars during the annual Senior Car Rally '23 at 5 p.m. May 19 on Mt. Diablo

Boulevard in Lafayette, from Oakwood to McDonalds and back. Community members are encouraged to cheer the seniors on from the sidewalks along the route. - J. Wake

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