

## Published October 25th, 2023 Moraga Library's interior remodel unveiled By Vera Kochan



The newly refurbished Moraga Library retains its cozy atmosphere. Photo Vera Kochan

When the Moraga Library temporarily closed its doors on July 29 for a 10-week refurbishing, patrons never expected the drastic changes that awaited them on the Oct. 10 reopening. Upon first entering the facility's main room, the "new look" included the removal of the front desk and its glass partition, replaced with comfortable chairs in an area now called "the library marketplace," which is meant to resemble a living room where patrons can sit and read or have a guiet conversation.

Rather than go to staff, such as Community Library Manager Rita Carrasco and Part-Time Senior Clerk Lenny Medina to check out books, most people now use the self-checkout machines.

Additional changes include new carpeting (courtesy of the town), the resetting of bookshelves to improve accessibility, ADA turnaround space of 44 inches between stacks as opposed to the old 36 inches, a new

scanner that has a flatbed and feeder (Scan EZ), replacement of exterior lights due to nesting bird activity, and new data lines which "is not that exciting, but because the carpet was being replaced it allowed us to do those updates," Carrasco explained.

The Stankus Family, in honor of their 102-year-old mother, donated a cushioned, green bench for her and others to sit and browse through books in comfort. Robert Muller, who had donated six new tables and 24 new chairs to the library, was so excited about the Oct. 10 reopening that he had marked it on his calendar. Sadly, his daughter had notified the library that a week before the reopening her almost 102-year-old father had passed away.

The Friends of the Moraga Library had contributed nearly \$90,000 toward the project through its membership dues, used book sales and private donations; and the Collection Development Department pushed to get new books on the shelves.

"We will continue to have a featured artist display on the walls behind the self-checkout, and we've also added a `puzzle swap' where you can check out a puzzle to work on at home and also bring one of yours to exchange," said Carrasco. "A lot of people have jigsaw puzzles that they bought during COVID. We've also enhanced our `teen area' with a few added touches."

The reading area by the fireplace has remained unchanged. "The one thing we had talked about from the beginning was the homey, cozy feel that the library always had," stated Carrasco. "We didn't want to lose that. All of this was really a community, town, and Friends effort to make this happen. Big thanks to the Friends - they enabled us to do so much more."

The Friends of the Moraga Library will hold its semi-annual Fall Book Sale from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 28.

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