

## OPL's Service to the Community

*Jamie Turbak, Director of Library Services*

In early 2020, I used this space to discuss the enhancements to library service made possible by the passage of Measure D. Over the previous year, OPL had hired or promoted 174 library employees and – on April 1, 2019 – we added 226 service hours/week across the system. In December 2019, I was looking forward to this year as a more stable one in which the library could coalesce as a team and experiment with programming to find the best use of these extra service hours.

Nothing could have prepared me for what 2020 had in store. Library staff stepped into new roles to meet the community's needs over the past nine months: distributing and delivering food, conducting wellness checks with seniors by phone, packaging food at the Alameda County Community Food Bank, working at the City's Emergency Operations Center, adapting our procedures to provide safe access to OPL collections, building a digital archive through online storytimes and programs, and more.

I feel a profound sense of gratitude as I reflect on this challenging year. First, to my OPL colleagues, who

continue to provide innovative and tireless service to the City of Oakland under extremely stressful conditions. Secondly, to the Friends of the OPL and other library supporters, who have offered flexible financial support and endless encouragement. Thirdly, to library patrons throughout Oakland, who have been understanding of our challenges in reopening and quick to adapt to new processes.

I hope that 2021 brings better days, but – no matter what happens – please know that OPL will continue to provide safe and dedicated service to Oakland.



*Food Distribution at 81st Ave. Library. Photo by Doug Zimmerman*



## New for 2021: Monthly News!

The Friends of the OPL board spent countless hours in 2020 evaluating and implementing new ways to communicate with our Members and the greater Oakland community. The pace of change has been considerable and we have developed more tools to keep you informed. Beginning in January 2021, in addition to our quarterly "Off the Shelf" newsletter, we will launch a monthly newsletter that we will send via email. This e-newsletter will have highlights from the Friends of the OPL, updates on The Bookmark bookstore, and OPL news.

We will continue to share news and interesting articles on our website blog, [www.fopl.org/news](http://www.fopl.org/news), and on our social media channels (links at the bottom of this page). As a member, you will be included in the e-newsletter distribution list if we have your email address. If you know anyone who would like to receive monthly news from us, please email their information to [communications@fopl.org](mailto:communications@fopl.org). If we don't have your email address, send it to us!

Here's to a healthy and well-informed 2021!

## Connect with Friends of the OPL on Social Media



BookmarkBookstore.FOPL



FOPL\_Bookmark



FOPL\_Bookmark

## Get to Know Your Grants

Sara DuBois, OPL Coordinator, Grants & Volunteers

In August, OPL purchased 15 Chromebooks with Friends of the OPL funds to pilot a new program at West Oakland, 81st Avenue, and Martin Luther King, Jr. branch libraries: lending laptops and Wi-Fi hotspots to patrons for a period of one week. With our computer labs closed to the public, providing access to these laptops meets a critical need in the community.

The pilot program was immediately successful, and OPL staff wanted to expand it to other locations but lacked the Chromebooks to do so.

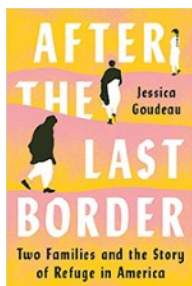
On November 18, OPL sent a request to the Friends Board President, Kathryn Sterbenc, asking the Board to approve a special, designated grant of up to \$25,000 to purchase an additional 50 Chromebooks. Within seven hours, we heard back from Kathryn: 10 Board members (75%) had already voted, and every vote was in favor of funding this project! OPL staff were pleased by the approval and touched by the enthusiastic and immediate response.

At the time of writing, OPL is awaiting delivery of these new Chromebooks. Every day, staff at Sidewalk Service sites talk with patrons who miss the access provided by our public computer labs. During nice weather, most locations set out one laptop (disinfected between patrons) for limited public use, but this does not come close to meeting the demand.

The Chromebooks will be set up and registered shortly after delivery, and we hope that the new lending program will be available at 10-12 locations early in the New Year.

For more information, please contact Grants Coordinator Sara DuBois at [sdubois@oaklandlibrary.org](mailto:sdubois@oaklandlibrary.org) or (510) 238-6572.

## Friends of the OPL Book Recommendation



Recommended by Valerie Villanueva

**AFTER THE LAST BORDER**  
Jessica Goudeau

A compassionate story of two journeys, told from the alternating perspectives of two refugee women and their families.

Available for [sidewalk pickup](#).

## 2020 Bookmark Highlights

2020 was a wild year but also very productive. Here are the highlights:

- We launched our Virtual Bookstore in June and have expanded categories and updated photos periodically since then ([www.fopl.org/virtual-bookstore](http://www.fopl.org/virtual-bookstore))
- We set up a storefront for new books at [bookshop.org](http://bookshop.org) - FOPL receives 100% of the profit price of each book purchased through our site ([bookshop.org/shop/theBookmarkBookstore](http://bookshop.org/shop/theBookmarkBookstore))
- We continued to take your donations of books, jigsaw puzzles, DVDs and CDs intermittently throughout the year -- thanks to your generosity, we've had to pause the donations and catch up a couple of times, and will be doing this again beginning February 1.
- We distributed more than 1,200 free books to community organizations, specifically the Prisoners Literacy Project, Community Education Partnership, Operation HomeBase (homeless services), and a free book kiosk located at the Jack London Square Amtrak Station.

Thank you for all of your support!

## OPL Happenings

Find more events at [www.oaklandlibrary.org/events](http://www.oaklandlibrary.org/events)

### Getting Certified with the City of Oakland

Tuesday, January 26 | 6:30 - 7:30pm

This program will help business owners understand the process they need to go through to do work for the city of Oakland. Join Ernestine Nettles, Contract Compliance Officer Assistant, and other staff from the Department of Workplace and Employment Standards for step-by-step instructions on getting certified with the City.

### Migrating Birds

Tuesday, February 9 | 6:30 - 7:30pm

Every other month, the Oakland library hosts a fun and engaging talk about local natural history, presented by the East Bay Regional Park District. In February, we'll learn about Migrating Birds with naturalist Constance Taylor.

### February Programs

Dates and Times TBD, go to [www.oaklandlibrary.org/events](http://www.oaklandlibrary.org/events) for updates!

In February, the group of librarians who introduced Black Culturefest at Main last year will be back this year with weekly virtual programs during Black History Month. AAMLO is also planning some great programming.

## Thank you to departing board members Gen Katz and Sheila McCormick

At the November 2020 meeting, the Friends of OPL Board and the OPL Library Director Jamie Turbak recognized the service of two board members who completed their service to the Friends. We wish Gen and Sheila well deserved "retirements." They will be missed!



Gen Katz

Gen Katz joined the board in 1998 and made her mark with her passion for bringing together library supporters from every branch in Oakland. She was instrumental in establishing the Branch Friends Task Force in 2010 – out of which grew the Branch Friends Network -- to facilitate communication and to provide support to Branch Friends groups throughout Oakland. Gen was a tireless advocate for library ballot measures in 2004,

2006, and 2018. Her enthusiasm and passion are her enduring contributions.

Sheila McCormick, a long-time Friends member and Bookmark customer, joined the board in 2012. Sheila served as the "Off the Shelf" Newsletter Editor from 2014-2018. She will continue to be an active member of three specialized library Friends groups: the Friends of Lakeview Library, the Friends of the Oakland History Center, and the (new!) Friends of Main. She is also a dedicated photographer, who has captured and posted to social media countless images of Bookmark Bookstore merchandise that helps to promote the store and reach online customers.



Sheila McCormick

## Giving Tuesday 2020

Thank you for another successful Giving Tuesday! We appreciate your engagement and participation. Thank you for thinking of the Friends of the OPL in your Giving Tuesday generosity.

### Giving

We honor and celebrate these special contributions to the Friends of the Oakland Public Library:

- In appreciation of **Erica Siskind**, Children's Librarian at Rockridge Branch, from the Saper Family
- In honor of **Kathy Matteis** from Lauren Matteis
- In memory of **Tina Wong** from Steven Wong
- In memory of **Patricia Louise Dombink** from Patricia Day
- In memory of **Susan Freeman** from The Book Club
- In honor of **Sue Pon** from Lawrence Joe
- In memory of **Jean Christie** from the East Bay Genealogical Society

#### The Friends of the OPL receives major gift from The John Wagers Trust

"John Wagers came into the world in the middle of one pandemic and departed during another. In between, throughout his many years in Rockridge, he lived for, supported, and advocated for every environmental and social justice issue that grabbed his attention."

- *The Rockridge News*, September 2020, excerpt of article by Jo Ellis

John Wagers made provisions for gifts to about two dozen charities including Doctors Without Borders, Planned Parenthood, the ACLU, and Oakland Parks and Recreation Foundation. The Friends of OPL is honored to be among the beneficiaries of Mr. Wagers' generosity.

Connect with OPL Advocates, a Coalition of Groups that Love Our Libraries!



OPL Advocates



opladvocates



OPLadvocates



721 Washington Street  
Oakland, California 94607  
Forwarding services requested

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Organization  
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Oakland, CA  
Permit #4544

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## Friends of the OPL Board Members

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- ✦ M.C. Abbott
- ✦ Ynez Arce, *Vice President, Newsletter Co-Editor*
- ✦ Stephen Cole
- ✦ Michael Dalton
- ✦ Elizabeth Falkner
- ✦ Corey Hatcher
- ✦ Pooneh Koohyar
- ✦ Ronile Lahti
- ✦ Charu Mehra, *Newsletter Co-Editor*
- ✦ Sanam Nassirpour
- ✦ Rebecca Pfiffner
- ✦ Kathryn Sterbenc, *President*
- ✦ Valerie Villanueva, *Secretary*
- ✦ Julie Waldman, *Co-Treasurer*
- ✦ Winifred Walters, *Co-Treasurer*

**Our mission** is to advance the role of the Oakland Public Library as a vital community resource and as an institution critical to the culture, education, and welfare of our diverse community.

The Friends of the Oakland Public Library is the only organization that provides support to all Oakland Public Libraries.

In addition to that great feeling that comes with supporting the library, members receive our quarterly newsletter that includes a special feature highlighting grants to the library.

The Bookmark Bookstore operates on volunteer power and is a community resource for anyone who loves books. The Bookmark has been in Oakland since 1992. Proceeds benefit the Oakland Public Library. Members receive a discount on purchases.

We welcome your feedback & comments:  
[info@fopl.org](mailto:info@fopl.org)

If the date on your mailing label is **12-01-2020**  
or earlier, **PLEASE RENEW TODAY!**

### **Your support has never been more critical:**

Your annual member dues help fund grants to the Oakland Public Library. **In the last 10 years**, Friends of the OPL granted over **\$2M** for library programs and projects.

More ways to support Friends of the OPL:

- Invite a friend to become a member
- Leave a legacy by naming Friends of the OPL as a beneficiary in your estate plan
- Donate gently used books to the Bookmark Bookstore
- Volunteer! [www.oaklandlibrary.org/volunteer](http://www.oaklandlibrary.org/volunteer)
- Shop online at [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com) and Amazon will donate 0.5% of your eligible purchase when you select Friends of the Oakland Public Library.

**Thank you!**

**To learn more about Friends of the Oakland Public Library, visit [www.fopl.org](http://www.fopl.org)**

The Friends of the Oakland Public Library is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit.  
Our tax ID is 94-2553734. All contributions are tax deductible.