



CITY OF  
**Camarillo**  
PUBLIC LIBRARY  
**ANNUAL REPORT**  
FISCAL YEAR 2023 - 2024



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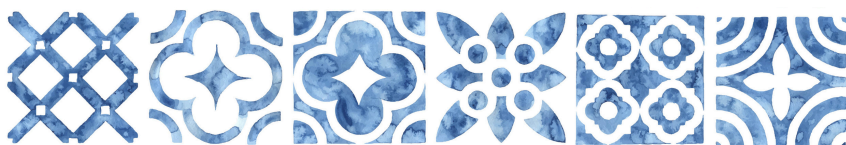
# Letter from Library Director

It's been an eventful year of dedicated service and success for the City of Camarillo Public Library. In February, City Council approved construction to remodel City Chambers in City Hall. The Library's Community Room will be used as a temporary location for City Council meetings during the remodel. Amidst these ongoing changes, Library staff continued to adapt and introduce new services and programs to enhance this vibrant city. We look back on the past year with appreciation for the community's support.

Our last Fiscal Year, the Library was one of 20 applicants to receive a \$17,325 California State Library grant to support the Cam I Am Sustainable initiative, which featured community conversations and events as part of a Sustainable Neighborhood Series. From January to June 2023, the Library hosted workshops on composting, vegetarian cooking, upcycling, food waste, water conservation and solar energy in partnership with kidSTREAM and California State University Channel Islands. Fourteen interactive workshops reached 313 participants.

To honor this incredible initiative, Camarillo Library staff contributed to a community project on sustainability by volunteering to harvest lettuce in August. Staff partnered with non-profit Food Share in Ventura County and gathered over 5,690 pounds of iceberg lettuce from a local farm to give to seniors facing hunger. It was an incredible opportunity for Library staff to meet a community need while also learning about sustainable practices.

This year, the Library launched Career Online High School (COHS), a service providing scholarships to adults looking to earn an accredited high school diploma free of charge. Seven percent of adults in Camarillo are without a high school diploma and earn \$10,000 less annually than those with one. With the help of our dedicated staff at the Adult Literacy Center and through California State Library funding, we have awarded scholarships to seven adult students who will receive support to overcome barriers and start a better chapter in their life.



Russell Fischer Business Collection (RFBC) initiated a new business education series, Jr. CEO, geared towards young teens. Nine students explored basic business skills during this five-week program, a partnership between the Library's RFBC Business Services Coordinator and the Boys & Girls Club in Camarillo. After the series, students were able to sell their handmade items at the Camarillo Christmas Parade on Saturday, December 9 and earned a total of \$1,372 through 136 transactions. Over 200 people stopped by the RFBC table to discuss the innovative and practical program.

Library staff spent months organizing its first multicultural event, Camarillo Connections, in May to coincide with the City of Camarillo's 60th Anniversary. The anniversary's theme, "Generations - From Origins Onwards," honors the City of Camarillo's beginnings, embraces all that we have become and promotes future progress. Programs for the event included an interactive Tahitian Dance, Bollywood bops, an East to West Asian classical concert and an energizing Folkórico performance. Over 400 people attended the celebration.

The Friends of the Camarillo Library generously donated \$142,000, helping fund materials, programs and services.

Thank you for your support. I am truly grateful for City leadership, Library staff and our own Camarillo community for your steadfast dedication.

**Mandy Nasr | Library Director**



“The key point we want to drive home is that Camarillo is paving the way toward a more resilient future. We are positioning ourselves to be an example for other cities and become a leader in the region.”

- Susan Santagelo, Mayor (October 17, 2023)

# City of Camarillo Library Use At A Glance



**504,465**

PHYSICAL ITEMS  
CIRCULATED



**6,290**

LIBRARY CARDS  
ISSUED



**156,334**

ELECTRONIC ITEMS  
CHECKED OUT



**235,748**

VISITS



**61,408**

REFERENCE  
QUESTIONS ASKED



**125,108**

WI-FI SESSIONS



**680,459**

LIBRARY  
WEBSITE VISITS



**32,931**

PROGRAM  
ATTENDANCE



**743**

TOTAL PROGRAMS

FISCAL YEAR 2023 - 2024

[camarillolibrary.org](http://camarillolibrary.org)

# Children Services

Throughout the year, the Library remained committed to supporting student success, extending its reach to summer. Through the California State Library's Summer Lunch Pop-Up Library Grant, the Library distributed over 850 tote bags packed with books to students from University Preparation Charter School at CSU Channel Islands, Dos Caminos Elementary School, Rancho Rosal Elementary School and the Boys & Girls Club of Camarillo during summer lunch events. This initiative not only fostered a love for reading but also built home libraries for young learners while introducing them to the wealth of resources available at the Library.

Camarillo Public Library nurtures young minds within a welcoming environment designed to build curiosity and a lifelong passion for reading. The Children's Area serves as the focal point of our commitment, curated to offer a diverse selection of literature, engaging interactive activities and educational resources tailored to every developmental stage. This dedicated space ensures that children have access to enriching learning opportunities year-round.

Highlighting our dedication to innovative programming, Children's Services proudly hosted the highly successful Touch-a-Truck event to launch our 2024 Summer Reading Program. This event, which integrated community engagement with library outreach, featured a fascinating array of vehicles and drew over 560 attendees. The overwhelming enthusiasm from participants underscored the event's impact in connecting the community with educational and entertaining experiences.



Touch-A-Truck (June 2024)

In tandem with the Touch-a-Truck event, we organized a vibrant bookmark contest that encouraged 130 patrons to showcase their creativity. The winning designs, professionally printed and available throughout the Library, symbolize our community's collaborative spirit and engagement.

Our ongoing children's programming, including interactive storytime sessions, family gatherings and literacy-focused events, has consistently garnered enthusiastic participation. These initiatives play a pivotal role in our mission to bolster early childhood literacy and promote family bonding through shared learning experiences. One such bonding moment came with our Petting Zoo Extravaganza in August 2023. Over 350 attendees relished the opportunity to interact with adorable bunnies, baby chicks and friendly goats. The opportunity fostered a memorable educational and entertaining experience.



In partnership with First 5 Ventura County, the Library launched two biweekly bilingual Play Groups for children ages four and under, fostering early literacy development and community bonding. Additionally, the Library proudly hosted two "celebrity" storytime events, featuring Councilwoman Martita Martinez-Bravo and Councilwoman Susan Santangelo, in support of First 5 Ventura County's annual early literacy event.



As students returned to school in September, the Library expanded its services by re-opening the Esper A. Petersen Homework Center, providing essential academic support Monday through Thursday from 3 to 6 pm. Dedicated Library staff and volunteers assisted students from kindergarten to 8th grade across various subjects, supplementing their learning journey. Moreover, the Library facilitated access to Brainfuse, an online tutoring and skill-building platform, further enhancing educational opportunities for learners of all ages and levels.

**Petting Zoo Extravaganza  
(August 2023)**

The Library's commitment to enrichment continued throughout the year with various community-oriented activities. In December, the Library welcomed popular guests from the North Pole, Mr. & Mrs. Santa Claus, delighting 165 attendees with holiday classics and photo opportunities.



In January, the Library reinstated the popular PAWS for Reading program, offering twice-weekly sessions for reluctant readers aged 5-10 to enhance their literacy skills by reading to certified Therapy Dogs. Additionally, a fruitful partnership with RCMakes at Rancho Campana High School introduced 3D Printing workshops for teens and children, promoting creativity and technological literacy among young learners.

**Santa Storytime (December 2023)**



Halloween Parade  
(October 2023)



Women's History Month Children's Program  
(March 2024)

Our dedication to providing high-quality, enriching experiences for young community members remains steadfast year after year. Children's Services at Camarillo Public Library continues to innovate and adapt, ensuring that every child who walks through our doors discovers the joy of learning and power of imagination.



# Teen Services

Camarillo Public Library's Teen Advisory Board (TAB) creates fun and engaging programs for local high school students. For FY 2023-2024, they organized a murder mystery Book Convention, where attendees worked on case files, played Jeopardy and conversed with authors Sarah Lynn Scheerger and Wendy Heard. They also held their annual Great Game scavenger hunt and put on a successful *Hunger Games* Escape Room.

This year, Teen Services partnered with RFBC and Adult Services to conduct "Pathways Beyond the Ordinary: Unconventional Job Series" in March. Each week, a different guest speaker discussed their careers and what got them there. Guests included a filmmaker, writer and producer; a teen librarian; a wildlife protection public outreach assistant and costume concept artist/key costumer.

Teen Services continues to offer a range of activities catering to every teen's interests. We host a weekly craft session, providing a platform for teens to unleash their creativity. Our Dungeons & Dragons group, meeting every other week in person or through Discord, offers a thrilling adventure for fantasy enthusiasts. During finals week, we arranged for Love on a Leash volunteers to visit, providing a much-needed break with certified therapy dogs. The Young Adult area is always stocked with board games and during our exclusive Teen Only hours, we offer a craft supplies cart and basket of stuffed animals for their enjoyment.



Pathways Beyond the Ordinary:  
Unconventional Job Series (March 2024)



Teen Advisory Board (TAB)

# Adult Services

Throughout FY 2023-2024, the Adult Services department demonstrated exceptional dedication to high-quality service by offering a diverse range of programs that resonate deeply with our community's varied interests.



We were delighted to reintroduce *Camarillo Reads: One City, One Book*, featuring renowned author Naomi Hirahara. At the Rancho Campana Performing Arts Center on September 30, Naomi engaged an audience of over 85 participants with an insightful discussion on her celebrated book, *Clark and Division*. Dr. Martita Martinez-Bravo, Camarillo Councilmember and Library Board President, introduced the event, adding a distinguished touch to the evening.



Leading up to the Camarillo Reads program, we hosted a series of Japanese American cultural events that were met with profound enthusiasm and appreciation from our patrons. These events not only celebrated the rich heritage of Japanese Americans but also served as a platform for cultural education and community engagement. Highlights included:

- **Traditional Japanese Dance Performance:** Attended by more than 70 visitors, this event brought the elegance and tradition of Japanese dance to life, captivating attendees with grace and cultural symbolism.
- **Japanese Calligraphy Demonstration:** With 20 participants, this hands-on exploration showcased intricate brushstrokes and conveyed the artistic principles behind each mark.
- **Japanese Koto Musician Performance:** Drawing 74 listeners, this performance transported attendees to Japan through evocative melodies, highlighting the emotional and cultural resonance of traditional Japanese music.
- **Sam Mihara's Presentation on "Memories of Imprisonment":** Over 80 participants witnessed a deeply personal account of experiences at the Heart Mountain internment camp, fostering reflection on history, resilience and community strength.

The significant turnout of **389 attendees across all events and programs** for *Camarillo Reads: One City, One Book* underscored their importance in building cultural understanding and appreciation within our community, reaffirming the Library's role as a hub for educational and enriching experiences and as a vibrant center for diverse educational experiences.

Our commitment to diverse, engaging experiences in FY 2023-2024 was further exemplified in the Tarot Card event, a captivating exploration of new and intriguing concepts for attendees.

The following standout programs this past year also demonstrated our dedication to fostering lifelong learning, cultural enrichment and community engagement:

- **Origami Workshop:** This hands-on workshop during Asian American Pacific-Islander Heritage Month allowed attendees to explore the intricate art of Japanese paper folding. Under expert guidance, participants learned various origami techniques, creating beautiful paper sculptures that enhanced their appreciation for this traditional craft.
- **Meditation Series:** Offering a tranquil space for community members to explore mindfulness and stress-relief techniques, this series attracted over 70 participants. Through guided sessions, attendees learned various meditation practices promoting mental well-being and relaxation, contributing to their overall health and personal growth.
- **Polynesian Dance by Ori Tahiti Ventura County:** Featuring a vibrant performance illustrating the rich cultural heritage of Polynesia, an audience of over 60 watched dancers from Ori Tahiti Ventura County perform traditional Tahitian dances. This immersive cultural experience celebrated the beauty and spirit of Polynesian traditions.



Camarillo Connections (May 2024)

These events demonstrate our ongoing efforts to provide a wide range of enriching experiences for all members of our community.

This year, we also focused on expanding local partnerships to better serve our community. In collaboration with the Camarillo Council on Aging, we began developing a new Senior Resources' webpage to address the needs of Camarillo seniors. The Council presented a series of senior resources covering wellness, caregiving, public benefits and legal issues for the elderly. The Camarillo Health Care District complemented these efforts with their series on legal needs, discussing fraud protection, elder abuse, caregiving and estate planning. Some notable events included:

- **Camarillo Health Speaker Events:** Attended by over 125 people, expert speakers offered valuable insights into various health topics relevant to seniors. The session included discussions on maintaining physical health, managing chronic conditions and the importance of mental well-being.
- **Camarillo Council on Aging Seminars:** With 130 attendees, these seminars offered comprehensive information on resources available to seniors. Topics covered included wellness programs, caregiving support and navigating public benefits, ensuring that elderly community members and their families are well-informed and supported.
- **Seminar on the Intersection of Disability and the Criminal Justice System:** This seminar provided crucial information on the challenges faced by individuals with disabilities within the criminal justice system. The discussion aimed to raise awareness and promote advocacy for more equitable treatment and support for disabled individuals navigating legal processes.



Additionally, Camarillo Public Library takes pride in offering a robust selection of online resources that cater to the diverse needs of our adult patrons, enhancing convenience and accessibility to valuable information and learning tools. These digital offerings underscore our commitment to lifelong learning and cultural enrichment within the community. Some specific resources available include:

- **Ancestry.com:** This genealogical research tool provides access to billions of historical records, enabling patrons to explore their family history and heritage. Ancestry.com offers valuable insights into genealogy, allowing users to build family trees and connect with their roots.
- **Consumer Reports:** Known for its unbiased reviews and product ratings, Consumer Reports helps patrons make informed purchasing decisions. This site offers comprehensive evaluations and comparisons of various products and services, empowering consumers with reliable information.
- **Coursera:** A leading platform for online courses from universities and institutions worldwide, Coursera offers a wide range of subjects, from arts and humanities to technology and business. Patrons can access courses taught by experts and earn certificates to enhance their skills and knowledge.
- **Data Axle:** Reference Solutions: Formerly known as Reference USA, this database provides detailed information on businesses and consumers across the United States. It aids patrons in conducting market research, identifying potential business opportunities and gathering data for personal or professional use.
- **Gale Legalforms:** This resource offers a comprehensive collection of legal forms and documents covering various topics such as wills, leases and contracts. Gale Legalforms provides patrons with templates and guidance for creating legally binding documents efficiently.
- **Kanopy:** A streaming service offering a diverse selection of films, documentaries and educational videos, Kanopy enriches patrons' cultural and educational experiences with critically acclaimed films and educational content to support lifelong learning and entertainment.

These resources not only expand access to information but also support patrons in personal development, academic pursuits and professional growth. Adult services remain a cornerstone of our Library's mission, highlighting the importance of continuous learning and enrichment for adults in our community. The steady use of our Library by adults reaffirms our vital role in supporting lifelong learning and providing a welcoming space for intellectual and cultural growth.



Camarillo Reads: One City,  
One Book with Library  
Director Mandy Nasr, LS&S  
Vice President of Operations  
Heidi Dolamore, Library  
Board President Dr. Martita  
Martinez-Bravo  
(September 2024)



# Adult Literacy Center

The Adult Literacy Center works with adult learners to build and develop English reading, writing and speaking skills. Learners are paired with volunteer tutors to meet regularly and create goals. Together these one-on-one pairs work towards completing high school diploma equivalency tests, citizenship applications and vocational training.

During FY 2023-2024, 58 pairs of learners and tutors dedicated a total of 3,575 hours to improving adult literacy and English as Second Language (ESL) skills.

The Adult Literacy Center hosts four Conversation Groups a week. Three are in-person and one takes place via Zoom for a total of 230 meetings throughout the year. We had 908 participants from around the world practicing their listening and speaking skills with the support of 316 volunteer tutors and Adult Literacy Staff.

With the support of the State Library of California, the Camarillo Public Library began offering scholarships to Career Online High School (COHS) in August 2023. We currently have seven adult learners earning their high school diploma and a credentialed career certificate - one adult learner is in the process of earning her scholarship. COHS is fully accredited by Cognia (formerly AdvancED), meaning that COHS is recognized nationally as a quality school system that delivers an accredited high school diploma.



Adult Literacy Conversation Group





One COHS learner wanted to go to college to be a nurse. Before she discovered our program, she invested her time and financial resources to attend another online high school, only to graduate without an accredited high school diploma and to not be accepted into nursing school with the diploma she had. She is thrilled to have another chance to try again, without cost, to pursue her nursing degree.

We see how our learners grow with the speaking, reading and writing skills they have developed with the help of their tutors and the Conversation Groups. Elias came to the program in April 2023 wanting to improve his reading and writing skills. He earned a scholarship to COHS and is on his way to obtaining his diploma. Elle, who spoke no English a year ago, is currently studying for the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language). In February 2024, four of our learners entered the Writer2Writer contest held by CLLS (California Library Literacy Services). Another ESL learner went by herself to the DMV and renewed her license, without the help of a translator. A local mom has gained confidence with her English-speaking skills and is helping in her child's classroom, feeling more comfortable socializing with other parents.

|                                 |                                   |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>58</b>                       | <b>3,575</b>                      |
| PAIRS OF LEARNERS<br>AND TUTORS | HOURS SPENT<br>IMPROVING LITERACY |



# Russell Fischer Business Collection



Operating within the Camarillo Public Library, the RFBC is embedded in the Camarillo business community and encompassing entrepreneurial ecosystem. The RFBC offers opportunities for professional help, personal finance management and small business development. These opportunities are presented through special events and a curated collection of top business resources.

Maegan Profeta, the Business Services Coordinator, carried on the traditional focus of services provided by the RFBC for FY 2023-2024. She also directed attention to key themes including career help for all ages, women in the workplace and entrepreneurship and financial literacy for young people.

Our Author Talk with Samara Bay included the author and speech coach delivering a captivating reading from her book, *Permission to Speak*. She engaged the audience, encouraging several patrons to share their personal experiences with public speaking and using their voices. Bay's presentation attracted a diverse group of attendees and many patrons expressed their appreciation for its value regarding public speaking and professional growth. One gentleman in particular stood out as a volunteer at the Library and talked about how much the book inspired him to work on his fear of public speaking.



Permission to Speak with Author Samara Bay (July 2023)



*Jr. CEO* was a five-week business course designed for tweens to introduce the fundamentals of business, financial literacy and entrepreneurship. The culminating event for the course featured *Jr. Entrepreneur* students utilizing their newfound knowledge and selling handmade items, from beaded jewelry, bath bombs, ornaments, crocheted stuffed animals and even a gym shoe cleaning service, at a booth for Camarillo's Santa's Village. The group generated an impressive \$1,372 through 136 transactions, and the Business Services Coordinator was happy to engage with over 200 people eager to learn more about the program. Community members expressed delight and some inquired about enrolling their children in the next *Jr. CEO* session. Through this program, the RFBC successfully addressed a community desire and provided young people with the opportunity to develop essential business skills.

The RFBC was once again excited for the opportunity to participate in the City of Camarillo Job Fair in June 2024. The Business Services Coordinator engaged with 55 attendees, informing them about the RFBC's special collection, programs and services. Jobseekers were interested in further enhancing their résumé and interview skills and set up appointments with the Library's Business Services Coordinator for additional assistance.



## Other Notable Programs:

- Dear Cammie
- Business Writing: Mini Workshop
- Stock Market Boot Camp Series
- CyberSecurity for Small Businesses
- Get Your Small Business Online
- Professional Digital Headshots
- Pop-Up Résumé Reviews
- Professional Intentions: Meditation and Tea
- Career Workshop Series
- Reading Not Required: A Seat at the Table

# Friends of the Camarillo Library

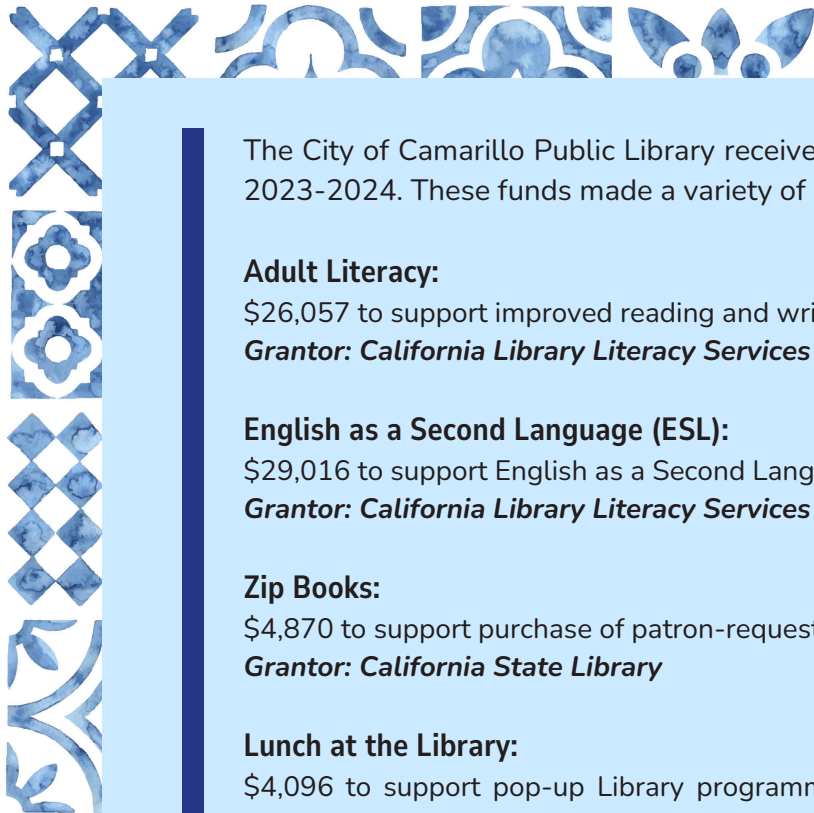


The Friends of the Camarillo Library generously donated \$142,000 in FY 2023-2024, supporting book and material purchases, programs and services. The Friends raise funds through the Friends Bookstore, Community Giving Programs and Friends Tours, including local trips to theater performances, museums, wineries and gardens. The Friends, who are always looking for new members, believe that when the Library thrives, the community thrives. If you are interested in joining, please email [membership@friendshipcamarillolibrary.org](mailto:membership@friendshipcamarillolibrary.org). The commitment and service of the Friends is truly astonishing and deeply appreciated.



Friends of the Camarillo Public  
Library (December 2023)

# Special Projects and Additional Funding



The City of Camarillo Public Library received more than \$189,000 in grants during FY 2023-2024. These funds made a variety of special projects and purchases possible.

## **Adult Literacy:**

\$26,057 to support improved reading and writing skills for adults.

**Grantor:** *California Library Literacy Services*

## **English as a Second Language (ESL):**

\$29,016 to support English as a Second Language conversation.

**Grantor:** *California Library Literacy Services*

## **Zip Books:**

\$4,870 to support purchase of patron-requested books.

**Grantor:** *California State Library*

## **Lunch at the Library:**

\$4,096 to support pop-up Library programming. Youth Services staff distributed books and promoted Library resources to students attending summer lunch programs in the Pleasant Valley School District and at the Boys & Girls Club of Camarillo.

**Grantor:** *California State Library*

## **Workforce Development Platforms: Coursera, GetSetUp, LinkedIn Learning, Northstar & Skillshare:**

Digital platforms designed to help Californians and their communities recover from the pandemic. These digital platforms offer resources for workforce development and recovery, test prep, career change, small business startup, digital skill building, soft skills, certifications and more.

Estimated value: \$125,000

**Grantor:** *California State Library*

## **PressReader:**

Two-year subscription that allows patrons to read national and international newspapers (Los Angeles Times, USA Today, Daily Mail) and magazines (Forbes, Newsweek, Vogue) without a paywall.

**Grantor:** *Southern California Library Cooperative (SCLC)*

## **Parks Pass:**

Circulating park passes allow the holder's vehicle and all occupants to enter any of California's 200+ State Parks free of charge.

**Grantor:** *California State Library in partnership with California State Parks*



Beach Cooler made available with Parks Pass Grant

