

ANNUAL  
REPORT  
**2017**





# We're Just Curious

Surveys tend to show that most people who visit libraries go there to borrow books. But increasingly, people are looking to libraries for a host of other uses as well. These include studying, doing research or just reading books, magazines and newspapers, using the computers, taking advantage of the many cultural educational and recreational programs for young children, teens and adults, holding meetings, and just chilling.

So, in keeping with the theme of this annual report, we're curious about what you use the library for.

**We invite you to take the informal survey on our website [www.wclibrary.org](http://www.wclibrary.org). Click on the "We're Just Curious" button and check off all the reasons you use our Walnut Creek libraries. There's even a place where you can tell us things we don't offer that you'd like to see at your library.**

We say we're just curious because that's a catchy phrase. But it's actually more than that. We want to know how you use the libraries and how you would like to use it in order to understand how we might be able to improve our support for these great institutions.



The fact is, very little would be happening at our libraries without the generous donations that individuals, businesses and foundations make to the Walnut Creek Library Foundation.

Local government pays the costs for our wonderful library staff and for the physical plant itself. They keep the lights on, the computers running, the floors swept, the shelves filled with books, DVDs and other materials that patrons can check out. But everything that makes our libraries really special is paid for by your generous contributions.

Without this community support, our Walnut Creek and Ygnacio Valley libraries would be little more than beautiful buildings filled with books, and librarians with hardly anything to do.

But thanks to the generosity of our donors, our libraries continue to be vibrant and vital community spaces for your imagination to run free, your ideas and aspirations to take shape, and your spirits to soar. So we hope some of the stories in this Annual Report spark your curiosity. And please go online and take the survey to help us satisfy our curiosity. Let us know what's working for you at the library and what else you might like to see.

*Peter Mann*  
President,  
Walnut Creek Library Foundation

*Susan Moon*  
Executive Director,  
Walnut Creek Library Foundation



## Valentines for Our Libraries

*"It's a happy place where we always find something wonderful to read."*

*"It invites us all into the wide world of knowledge, joy and love."*

*"I like the solitude. It is so inviting. I can sit here for hours."*

*"It's a calm and awesome place."*

These are a few of the more than 100 answers library users wrote on little heart-shaped cards last Valentine's Day when we asked them to *"Tell us what you love about your library."*

We posted the blank cards at both the Ygnacio Valley and Walnut Creek libraries. Responses, from both children and adults, were wide-ranging, reflecting the many things people look for in their libraries. Not surprisingly, books got the biggest share of praise. But many

library users cited other benefits like programs and activities, the availability of computers and DVDs. And many said they regard the library as an oasis: a place of refuge from the stresses and strains of the day.

Some people, in the true spirit of Valentine's Day, echoed the sentiment expressed by young Amy, who concluded her note by saying *"I love my librarians too!"*



*Expressions of heartfelt love for our libraries*



THE 8TH ANNUAL  
WALNUT CREEK LIBRARY FOUNDATION  
**AUTHORS  
GALA**

OUT OF THIS WORLD  
APRIL 22, 2017

**The Walnut Creek Library Foundation** took 17 prominent local authors, 90 business sponsors and auction donors, 25 individual sponsors and more than 200 guests **"Out of This World"** one Saturday night in April last year. It was our 8th annual Authors Gala: a memorable evening when the city's business, civic and cultural leaders mingle with library lovers to enjoy great food and wine, talk with a diverse group of published authors, and support the city's two libraries.

Guests stepped into the lobby of the Walnut Creek Library to find a huge rocket ship as well as lighting and décor that evoked the evening's outer space theme. They enjoyed cocktails and hors d'oeuvres, met the featured authors and bid on a spectacular array of auction items at the ground-floor

Lift-off Bash. Lucky raffle winners took home a basketball autographed by Stephen Curry and court-side seats to a Golden State Warriors home game.

Guests were then escorted to the Library's second floor where authors joined their tables for a catered dinner at what, for one special night, was transformed into the finest restaurant in Walnut Creek. "This is truly one of the best parties of the year in our city," said Gala co-chair Cindy Jordan. "Anybody and everybody comes to the Gala, and the support we get from prominent individuals and members of the business community make it a very special event and enable us to raise the funds we need to pay for programs and activities at both our libraries throughout the year."

# ONE CITY ONE BOOK

## Inspiration, Learning and Fun

One of WCLF's most popular activities each year is **One City, One Book** where residents come together over the experience of reading one book and attending related programs. In 2017, for the first time, we asked the community to choose the book.

Voters chose ***Hidden Figures*** by Margot Lee Shetterly: a gripping account of a group of African-American mathematicians who helped the Allies win World War II and went on to help NASA put astronauts into space. The choice gave us an opportunity to bring in speakers to discuss the crucial role of women during World War II and the significant contributions of African-American men and women in the Bay Area's high tech industry.

Most exciting by far though was the Family Rocket Launch program where kids were able to build and decorate model rockets, then watch as they

launched into the sky. The youngsters had a great time, prompting one little girl to exclaim, "**Wow! Everything is WOW at the library.**" Even more surprising was how much fun the grownups had—both parents and library staff. Several have requested a repeat event.

We were also proud to present eight diverse **Live! from the Library** programs in 2017 ranging from a musical presentation by the American Baroque Orchestra and a preview of a new work commissioned by the California Symphony and premiered at the Leshner Center, to discussions with authors C. W. Gortner and Kevin Smokler. Live! also examined crucial moments of the historic Lewis & Clark Expedition and held a lively discussion about the works and life of Jane Austen celebrating the 200th anniversary of her death.

*If you are curious about what interesting topic is coming next at our libraries, visit our website [www.wclibrary.org](http://www.wclibrary.org) any time.*



*Captivated by the paper rocket launches*



*NPS Deputy Superintendent Sue Fritzke spoke about "Women on the Home Front"*



*Gwen and Ed Regalia*

**“You can tell a lot  
about a city by  
looking at its library.”**

*Prospective Walnut Creek resident, taking  
pictures of the downtown Library to send  
his wife.*

# Community Commitment to our Libraries

**If you are ever curious about the beginnings and the progression of our modern day Walnut Creek, there is a wonderful source of information—**

**Gwen Regalia.** This former school board and City Council member and Mayor has been involved and at the center of the action in our area for over 50 years. And her recall is amazing.

Gwen and her husband Ed moved to Walnut Creek in 1958; she was teaching 4th grade at the time but soon after began raising a family that would include three sons and one daughter and eventually eight grandchildren. Ed was also a founding member of the Walnut Creek Library Foundation.

When recently asked about their long-standing commitment to our libraries, Gwen surprised us by starting with a history lesson about our community. For instance, did you know that Contra Costa was one of the original 27 counties

when California became a state in 1850? In those early years of statehood, the Walnut Creek Women’s Club did everything—PTA, Boosters organizations, and operated a library of sorts. Around 1900 the Women’s Club completed the application and won a Carnegie Grant to help build our first public library. Then they went on to raise funds to complete the property purchase where that library would be built.

In the 1950s the city bought property for a “new” library which opened in 1961. Civic Park would come later. At that time, there were 10,000 people in Walnut Creek. The current city population is over 70,000 and that doesn’t count neighboring communities who make regular use of Walnut Creek facilities and infrastructure.

The 1961 library was built using concrete pull-up construction (think barn raising) and by the end of the 20th Century was



*Walnut Creek Library groundbreaking on May 25, 2008*



*Southeast view of the library construction in July 2009*

out of space and out of date in more ways than one. If a new volume was purchased, another would literally have to be removed from the facility. There was nowhere to put it. Nothing about it was ADA compliant and because of the way it was built, expansion was out of the question.

From their own experience and utilizing a thorough community study, the City Council knew a new library was way 'past due' and told the City Manager, "Find the

money." Of course, with many viewpoints involved and a political process to be honored, it wasn't nearly that simple but eventually a consensus was reached and the dollar search began.

WCLF played a significant part in raising the money to build our new downtown library, pledging \$5M from our constituency to make sure it happened. Gwen and Ed were a significant part of that donor group. But after much labor helping the city to decide to build a new

library, it was, as Gwen told Ed, "time to put our money where our mouth is."

After so many years of hard work and true dedication to a community they loved, how could they not? As Gwen observed, **"a library is just too important to any civilization"** to not enjoy the support of those who belong to that society. Obviously, the Walnut Creek Library Foundation agrees.

# What's Up at Ygnacio Valley Library?



*"Bubble Guy" performs at Ygnacio Valley Library*



*AWE stations inspire learning for ages 2-8*

**Walnut Creek is fortunate to have two public libraries**, one downtown adjacent to Civic Park, the other on Oak Grove Road off Ygnacio Valley in the city's burgeoning north side. WCLF is making significant impacts at both. In a recent conversation with **Michael Beller**, first branch librarian dedicated solely to the Ygnacio Valley library, he highlighted the work WCLF is doing to help upgrade "YV" library and create excitement with both patrons and staff.

He cited a recent program with the "Bubble Guy" who uses playful techniques to introduce kids to the wonders of science. The program had "spill-over attendance" of children and parents who were just as excited as their kids. The Bubble Guy even put Michael completely inside a bubble where he "felt he was looking looking at the world through a glass rainbow."

WCLF support has also enabled "YV" to add two AWE Stations—early literacy

computers designed to inspire an enthusiasm for learning. They are targeted to ages 2-8 and feature fun, interactive and engaging content with over 4,000 localized learning activities.

In addition, three height-adjustable desks have been installed through WCLF support. These sleek and modern devices easily adjust for patrons who use wheelchairs or who prefer or need to stand while they work, as well as all elevations in between.

Michael says he has additional plans for upgrading and modernizing YV and welcomes the Foundation's continuing support.



2017 BY THE NUMBERS  
 **LIBRARY  
 FAST FACTS**

**108,059**  
 WIFI CONNECTIONS

**2,000** NEW LIBRARY  
 CARDS ISSUED

**3,087** VISITS TO BAY AREA MUSEUMS  
 USING THE LIBRARY'S  
 DISCOVER & GO PROGRAM

VISITS TO THE  
 LIBRARIES **565,832**

**898** FREE PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN,  
 TEENS AND ADULTS

BOOKS, CDs AND DVDs  
 CHECKED OUT **653,098**

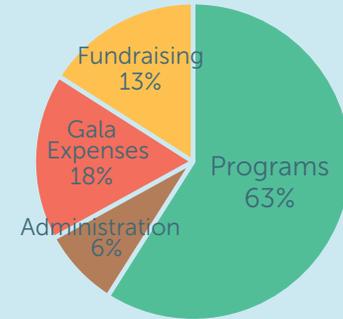
**85,884** COMPUTER  
 SESSIONS

**1,321** CONFERENCE AND STUDY  
 ROOM BOOKINGS

Don't forget to complete  
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 or at our libraries!

**100%**

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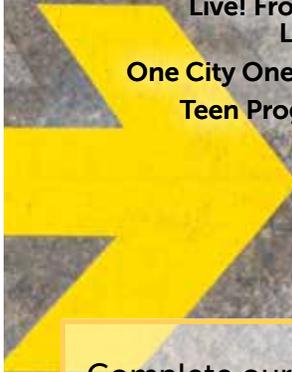
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