Library Innovation Lab Grantees

2019 COHORT PARTICIPANTS

City of Commerce Public Library
Project Director: Sonia Bautista, Senior Librarian

Tulare County Library System—Exeter Branch Library
Project Director: Veronica Casanova, Librarian III

Sunnyvale Public Library
Project Director: Karina Huerta, Youth Services Librarian

County of San Luis Obispo Public Libraries—Cambria Library
Project Director: Kate McMillen, Library Associate III

Placentia Library District
Project Director: Michelle Meades, Librarian

Los Angeles Public Library—Washington Irving Branch
Project Director: Krystal Messer, Adult Librarian

Mill Valley Public Library
Project Director: Andrew Murphy, Supervising Librarian

Orange County Public Libraries—Fountain Valley Branch
Project Director: Zoe Nash, Adult Services Librarian

Napa County Library
Project Director: Refugio Rivera, Library Associate

Long Beach Public Library
Project Director: Joshua Sanchez, Library Assistant

2018 COHORT PARTICIPANTS & PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS

Ropiendo Barreras/Breaking Barriers: Exploring New Ways of Engaging Immigrant Communities

Anaheim Public Library, Haskett Library and Ponderosa Joint-Use Library Branches
Project Director: Guadalupe Gomez, Library Services Manager
Anaheim Public Library serves a diverse community of over 358,000 people, including sizeable Hispanic, Asian, and Middle Eastern immigrant populations. Currently, more than 60% of city residents speak a language other than English at home. From September to December 2018, “Ropiendo Barreras / Breaking Barriers: Exploring New Ways of Engaging Immigrant Communities” will enable participants to explore different cultures, learn and work together to develop an awareness and appreciation of cultural diversity of their community, build self-confidence, and enjoy social interaction. The free public programming series will offer engaging activities for all ages, such as guest speakers (the popular Southern California radio personality Eddie “Piolin” Sotelo is scheduled to appear), family movie nights, cooking demonstrations, and hands-on arts and crafts workshops.

A Lens into Mi Vida

County of Los Angeles Public Library – Florence Branch
Project Director: Julian Zamora, Community Library Manager
The Florence library is located in an unincorporated region of southeast Los Angeles county with a large Latino immigrant population (43% of area residents were born outside the US). To enable immigrants to capture and share their experiences, and to make it possible for others to gain a glimpse into their lives, the library will seek submissions of photos from the community and develop an exhibit and public programs focused on the theme of food. A week of programs will kick-off on October 22 with an event incorporating art activities and a poetry reading as well as refreshments. Over the course of the week, professional chefs will offer cooking demonstrations and writing workshops on the theme will furnish additional content to be added to the exhibit. The program will culminate with an author visit and an open mic session for anyone who wishes to share a story. Through these means, the library hopes to provide a welcoming and safe space for all.

Every Voice, Every Story

Fresno County Public Library – Sunnyside Regional Library
Project Director: Terrance McArthur, Adult Programming Librarian
To raise awareness of the immigrant experience, strengthen family ties, and produce a collection of stories that can be shared, the “Every Voice, Every Story” project will enable residents of three rural Fresno County communities this November to record and preserve their family immigrant stories. The well-known bilingual storyteller Antonio Sacre will deliver performances at the Sunnyside, Orange Cove, and Sanger branch libraries exploring the arc of the immigrant experience, from the journey itself to the challenge of adapting to a new culture. Following each performance, audience members will be invited to record their own stories, using equipment and assistance provided by the library. In addition to providing each participant a copy of the recording, the library will seek permission to include the stories in a broadcast-quality video, which will be made available to area schools for classroom use, and house the recordings in its collection.
South Asian Programs at the Delano Branch

**Kern County Library – Delano Branch**  
**Project Director: Fahra Daredia, Branch Supervisor**

Delano has long been home to many immigrant groups, including many from South East Asia. To raise awareness and promote appreciation of the rich cultural heritage of these communities, the library will host a month-long series of engaging activities in November. In addition to a Saturday film series, “South Asian Programs at the Delano Branch” will offer two special events. A *Diwali* celebration on November 10th will feature stations where the families can sample snacks, dress up for a photo op, do some *rangoli*, listen to stories, and learn Bollywood dance moves — each family will receive a *diya* (traditional clay lamp) as a parting gift for the event. On November 17th, the library will host a colors event at the park to educate the public about the *Holi* celebration. Families will play with colored powder and dance to Bollywood music. The library hopes to make the series an annual tradition that will engage the entire community.

Bibliotecas Para Todos

**Oceanside Public Library, San Diego**  
**Project Director: Kris Moralez, Community Outreach Coordinator**

Through an array range of public programs including talks by nationally-known authors about the immigrant experience, book discussions, a concert, and a community art project, *Bibliotecas Para Todos/Libraries for All* aims to cultivate empathy for the immigrant experience, encourage dialogue about immigration, and help new immigrants connect to the Library and see themselves as part of the Oceanside community. Located just 60 miles north of the U.S.-Mexico border, adjacent to the Camp Pendleton US Marine Corps base, Oceanside has a large immigrant population (over 20% of its population of 170,000 were born outside of the United States) and is deeply rooted in Hispanic culture and community. The library will make special efforts to reach out to the Spanish-speaking community to inform them about the wealth of resources it offers for education and personal enrichment as well as to engage them in programming. By putting a human face on the issue of immigration, the project will also enable those who have little direct connection with immigrants to better understand and empathize with their experience and promote a more inclusive community.

Oakland MOSAIC

**Oakland Public Library**  
**Project Director: Erin Sanders, Branch Manager**

“Oakland MOSAIC” will highlight the experiences and talents of Oakland’s immigrant communities through a series of programs that will bring Oaklanders together, newcomers and old-timers alike, to share stories and learn about other cultures. Programs will take place this fall, kicking off with the Mam Cultural Festival in
September at the Chavez Branch, featuring the food, language, and textile crafts of this indigenous Mayan culture of Guatemala. In October, members of the local Korean community will share recipes and stories through Cook Me A Story at the library’s Asian branch. The series concludes with a music and storytelling program with Kabul Dreams, Afghanistan’s first rock band, who will perform on November 10 at the Main Library. Through these programs, the library aims to welcome people from specific communities for each program, (Korea, Afghanistan, or Mam communities), facilitate deeper understanding between communities, and establish the library as a place for conversation and community engagement.

**Living Traditions**

**Riverside County Library System – Glen Avon Branch**
**Project Director: Tracie Randolph, Library Manager**
“Living Traditions” will provide an opportunity for City of Jurupa Valley residents to record and share family stories and food traditions. To meet the needs of young families of Hispanic heritage, a large sector of the population in this western Riverside County community, the intergenerational program will involve parents, other caregivers, and children in a series of engaging activities in October and November. Highlights include a poetry event, an oral history interview and memory scrap book project, and the creation of a community cookbook in digital and print formats, incorporating family recipes contributed by the participants. Through these means, participants of all ages will acquire new skills, express themselves through various mediums, participate in family- and community-building activities, and explore healthy eating and lifestyle choices.

**Zine Fronteras**

**Santa Cruz Public Library**
**Project Director: Lorena Lopez, Library Assistant**
To build awareness of and empathy for immigrant members of the Santa Cruz community, and provide immigrants with opportunities to express themselves without fear in order to share the hardships and joys of their experiences, the library will conduct a series of programs this fall, focused around the creation of a new literary magazine, “Zine Fronteras”. The project will kick off in September with a short series of workshops at the Live Oak branch to encourage young people to share their immigration stories through words and images. Their work will be edited into a digital and print magazine to be published by community partner, Bookshop Santa Cruz. Copies will be provided each contributor, made available for purchase, distributed to schools, and cataloged and added to library collection for circulation. A launch reception at the library in December will provide an opportunity for the stories to be read, participants to share their experiences, and community dialog.

**Dance Around the World**

**Sutter County Library**
Project Director: Ayla Elkins, Literacy Services Coordinator

For the past 14 years, the library’s literacy program has hosted the Multicultural Women’s Dance, an event in which participants can perform a dance representative of their heritage, participate in a fashion show, learn about women’s health and community resources, enjoy traditional foods, and connect with others. Responding to growing interest in the project (last spring over 800 local women participated), the library will create a short video documentary featuring interviews with participants and exploring the significance of the event – and that of the dance and cultural traditions it showcases – to the community. A screening event at the library in November will also include speakers, a panel discussion featuring dance experts, and several performances by local dance groups. Additional events are being planned with collaborating cultural venues that will promote mutual understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity in the region.

Celebrate Mixteco Culture

Ventura County Public Library
Project Director: Yvonne Tello, Literacy & Outreach Assistant

Based at a small branch library in El Rio, an unincorporated community adjacent to the city of Oxnard, this project aims to engage some of the 20,000 Mixtecs now living in Ventura County, in order to promote their use of the library and the resources it offers, as well as to make others in the community more aware of the rich history and culture of this indigenous immigrant group. A series of family-friendly programs at the Albert A. Solis library in September and October will lead up to a festival at the end of month, which will include performances, food vendors, speakers and presenters, and children’s activities – focused on the traditions surrounding observance of Dia de los Muertos/Day of the Dead. Project partners include a local radio station, First Five, a Mixtec community organization, and CSU Channel Islands students and faculty, who will collaborate with the community to create a mural commemorating Mixtec culture in the library.

Immigrant Experience Through the Arts

Watsonville Public Library
Project Director: Alicia Martinez, Senior Librarian

Many immigrant groups have contributed to shaping Watsonville, now celebrating the 150th anniversary of its founding. To commemorate the Central Coast city’s immigrant history, and foster awareness of the struggles of discrimination, exploitation, migration, and civil rights that immigrants have experienced in the past and today, the library will offer a four-part series of programs this fall. A series of murals will be designed by a local artist, incorporating community input and painted by volunteers; an art installation will be created that depicts each cultural group’s contribution to Watsonville’s agricultural heritage; a series of “Lightning Talks” will be offered by community members who are experts on topics such as the farm worker experience, local history, migration to Watsonville, art and education; and the cuisines of the city’s
diverse cultural groups will be celebrated through programs enabling residents to share food, recipes, and stories. Through all these activities, the library aims to connect residents, reinforce social ties, and promote productive collaborations between community partners.

**Culture for the Senses**

**Whittier Public Library**  
**Project Director: Jacqueline Sanchez, Librarian**  
Whittier Library plans to celebrate Hispanic heritage, the cultural background of 70% of current residents, through a series of programs this fall that will engage the entire community, including recent arrivals. “Culture for the Senses” will bring prominent Latino artists, educators and entertainers including Lalo Garcia, Trio Ellas, and Ofelia Esparza to the community to speak about their connection to the immigrant experience. Other activities will include the installation of a large art altar in the Children’s Department and an excursion to the LA County Natural History Museum’s to view its collection of Latin American artifacts. Through these programs, the library hopes to engage a new and underserved audience of Spanish-speaking immigrants, as well as promote appreciation of the richness and beauty of Hispanic culture and traditions, and increase awareness of the value of diversity on the part of the whole community.

**2018 LIBRARY INNOVATION LAB MENTORS**

**Michelle Gordon**  
Supervising Librarian for the WoW! (Without Walls) Department, Fresno County Public Library (2017 Cohort Alumna)

**Joy Whatley**  
City Librarian, Chula Vista Public Library (2017 Cohort Alumna)

**2017 COHORT PARTICIPANTS & PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS**

**One Mile**

**Chula Vista Library**  
**Project Director: Joy Whatley, Senior Librarian**  
*One Mile* created opportunities for Chula Vista community members to “walk a mile in someone else’s shoes” and experience the immigrant journey through film, stories, speakers, and virtual reality. Goals were to enable community members comprehend the makeup of our community’s culture and appreciate and celebrate differences in local cultural traditions and customs. Through the project, the library hopes to build additional capacity to work with immigrants in this border community. Partnerships with KPBS and New Americans Museum have enriched the project.

**East County Reads: An Immigrant’s Journey**
Contra Costa County Library
Project Director: Liz Fuller, Senior Community Library Manager, Brentwood and Antioch Library
The communities of Antioch, Brentwood and Oakley will participate in a joint read of the book *The Distance Between Us* by immigrant author Reyna Grande, the first time a regional community read will be offered in East Contra Costa County. A community-wide read gives people the opportunity to read about something, discuss it with one another, and share an experience that may be similar to their own experience or vastly different. Bilingual programming conducted in partnership with local schools, churches, and community organizations will give immigrants an opportunity to share their stories, enable the broader community to better understand the challenges facing immigrants today, and foster awareness of the library as safe space where all are welcome.

Immigratitude

Cupertino Library/Santa Clara County Library
Project Director: Roslyn Donald, Supervising Librarian, Adult & Teen Services
Storytelling workshops facilitated by the well-regarded multicultural performing arts partner Eth-no-tek will be offered to immigrant families in the area (focusing on local Indian and Chinese immigrants to Silicon Valley) in order to improve intergenerational communication as well as to increase understanding of the commonalities as well as differences of the immigrant experience. The project, the need for which emerged during a thorough community research effort, will help the library break down silos between adult and teen programming and expand its programming options.

Story Jam

Fresno County Library
Project Director: Michelle Gordon, Community Librarian
On October 21, the library will host a large scale open-mic Moth-type story event in downtown Fresno, where a dozen immigrants, recruited and prepared through a preliminary process conducted in partnership with local educational and advocacy organizations, will share personal stories about racism, prejudice and overcoming obstacles or the hardships of immigrating to California. The project aims to provide an opportunity for the entire community to come together and share stories. Through this program, the library hopes to increase empathy for the story tellers, help people to understand the experience of immigrants, and create or reinforce social bonds in the community.

Let’s Celebrate You!

Irvine University Park Library/Orange County Public Library
Project Director: Zhen (Tracy) Li, Senior Branch Manager
The library will host a weekly series of cultural events in fall 2017 geared for all ages
centered on the cultural traditions of some of the most populous immigrant groups in the community (Chinese, Japanese, Persian/Iranian, Indian, and Russian). Though these programs, the library hopes the community as a whole as well as members of various immigrant groups will learn more about one another's cultures and traditions, and consequently develop understanding and empathy for the experiences of others as well as deepened appreciation of their own heritage.

**The South Los Angeles Families Academy**

**Vernon-Washington Branch, Los Angeles Public Library**  
**Project Director: Yago Cura, Community Librarian**  
Over the course of two months, the library will conduct a series of 2-hour lunchtime educational programs, lectures, and workshops designed to empower parents in South Los Angeles that incorporates humanities experiences into a holistic framework that will enhance literacy skills, promote civic engagement, and enhance mental and physical health. Spanish language and bilingual programming (in response to community demographics) will be designed and delivered in partnership with other public agencies and nonprofit organizations. Providing free meals and child care (or family-friendly activities) will be additional incentives for participants.

**Global Citizens: One World, Many Stories**

**Monterey Park Bruggemeyer Library**  
**Project Director: Cindy Costales, Senior Librarian, Adult Services**  
An array of programs designed to engage adult patrons in this ethnically diverse community, where over half the residents are foreign-born, will expand participation in the library's annual adult summer reading program and build bridges between new and established residents by encouraging the participation of new immigrants. The 10-week summer library program included family history conversations, art, music, poetry, a book club, reading for prizes, and more, and spark interest in a traveling exhibit, “Herstory: Chinese American Women, 165 Years of Struggle and Success,” aiming to encourage and inspire new immigrants as well as to increase historical understanding of the challenges past generations have faced.

**Immigrant Families Connect**

**Arcade Branch, Sacramento Public Library**  
**Project Director: Cathy Crosthwaite, Programming and Partnership Coordinator**  
Designed in response to needs identified through community research, the goal of this project is to provide a safe and accessible space for parents and children to gather in a community where many immigrants and refugees, primarily from Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran and several regions of Russia, are settling. Connections will be promoted through collaborative art-making activities that will enable the families to express their thoughts about and reactions to shared immigration experiences. Each program will
end with a theme-based story time followed by playgroup. Connections between the participants will be facilitated by the presence of translators.

City Heights Photo Scavenger Hunt

Weingart/City Heights Branch, San Diego Public Library
Project Director: Jennifer Geran, Branch Manager
This hands-on humanities project will offer a series of photography workshops led by a community arts partner organization, the Aja Project, to enable participating immigrant families to document their daily life using the categories: Art and Architecture, Business, Fashion, Food, Faith, Language, Nature, Fun, and Home. The photos will be published in a book, with copies free for the participants and available for check out in the library, and exhibited at the library, located in a neighborhood long known as a destination for new immigrants.

Lotería

Eastside Branch, Santa Barbara Public Library
Project Director: Jody Thomas, Programming and Civic Engagement Librarian
The project aims to engage more immigrants in this Latino neighborhood and make the library a more welcoming place by offering an array of programs built around the popular Mexican game. The library purchased sets of the game, dedicate time for game-playing, and offer related programs, including poetry readings and writing workshops, storytelling sessions, a scholar talk on Latino history in Santa Barbara, and a chalk art “card-making” activity geared for teens.