



Library Innovation Lab Grantees

2020 COHORT PARTICIPANTS

Tony Lam, Librarian

Anaheim Public Library—Euclid Branch Library

Susan Martinez, Senior Librarian

Oakland Public Library—Eastmont Branch

Annemarie Russo, Literacy Coordinator

Marin County Free Library—Point Reyes Branch Library

Isariya Locke, Community Librarian

Fresno County Public Library

Erin Nakasone, Librarian II, Youth Services

Oceanside Public Library

Rachael (Morgan) Lazo, Adult Services Librarian

City of Santa Clarita Public Library—Old Town Newhall Library

Bobbi Luster, Branch Manager

Nevada County Community Library—Truckee Branch Library

Emily Aaronson, Adult Librarian

LAPL—Friends of the Studio City Branch Library

Nancy Reiter, Branch Manager 2

Riverside County Library System—Home Gardens Library

Lisa Carter, Adult Services Librarian

Alameda County Library System—Newark Branch Library

2019 COHORT PARTICIPANTS & PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS

A New Community—Stories That Connect Us/Una Nueva Comunidad-Las Historias que nos Conectan

County of San Luis Obispo Public Libraries—Cambria Library

Project Director: Kate McMillen, Library Associate III



Through storytelling and inclusive cultural events, this project aims to connect the entire community of Cambria. The library will offer bilingual programs to promote increased understanding of the immigrant experience and support the development of a more tolerant community. Events will include a storytelling program for young children, a virtual reality experience to enable adults to share where they grew up with their family, an author talk on education and parenting, a cultural program about Day of the Dead/*Día de los Muertos*, and a movie night event for families. A short documentary film featuring interviews and footage from library programs will preserve the stories shared by participants and provide a lasting resource for the community. Focused on family histories and “Coming to Cambria” stories, this project will create opportunities to increase awareness of what makes us unique, as well as what unites us.

My City, My Voice

City of Commerce Public Library

Project Director: Sonia Bautista, Senior Librarian

A range of programs scheduled for Fall 2019 will provide opportunities for residents to understand, empathize with, and experience how immigrants from different cultures and traditions have contributed to the social, cultural, and economic life of this city in southeast Los Angeles county. Highlights include a talk by a well-known local restaurateur and author and an evening of music and song on the theme of “home” featuring a celebrated local singer. An oral history project in collaboration with the City’s Cable department will record first-person accounts from residents about where they’re from, what they loved about their hometown/place, and what the Commerce community means to them. The interviews will be videotaped and edited and compiled into a film that will be shared with the community at the project’s culminating event in December, showcasing the diversity and richness of residents’ experiences and celebrating differences as well as commonalities.

Connecting Cultures

Los Angeles Public Library—Washington Irving Branch

Project Director: Krystal Messer, Adult Librarian

Focusing specifically on immigrants from Asian, Hispanic, and Ethiopian cultural backgrounds who make up a large portion of the diverse population surrounding the Los Angeles Public Library’s Washington Irving branch library, the library will create a series of events highlighting the culture of each through the lenses of food, dance, and history. Programs include an author visit and book discussion about Mexican American immigration history, a cooking demonstration and talk about healthy eating practices in Asian cuisines (with a produce box distribution), publication of a cookbook of recipes contributed by the community, and a traditional Ethiopian dance workshop and performance. The library hopes these programs will engage those whose culture is reflected and celebrated with these events, as well as patrons from other backgrounds, in order to strengthen connections to and promote greater empathy and understanding



within the community it serves.

Immigration Stories

Mill Valley Public Library

Project Director: Andrew Murphy, Supervising Librarian

Taking inspiration from the idea that the humanities are “how people process and document the human experience,” the library will partner with Tamalpais High School’s English Language Development program and the MultiCultural Center of Marin to record stories from members of Marin County’s immigrant population. The recordings will be archived in the collection and made available to the public through the Library’s website. Two public programs will provide opportunities for some of the participants to share their experiences in real time with the broader community, and a culminating event in December will feature Pulitzer Prize-winning author Jose Antonio Vargas, speaking about his own experience as an undocumented immigrant. Through these means, the library aims to reach widely and foster empathy for the immigrant experience within our community.

Libraries Are for Everyone

Orange County Public Libraries—Fountain Valley Branch

Project Director: Zoe Nash, Adult Services Librarian

With this project, the library plans to share the immigrant/refugee experience through visual storytelling to promote empathy and understanding on the part of the broader community. Key target audiences are Vietnamese immigrants, Vietnamese Americans, and other immigrant populations, along with the community at large that may benefit from understanding the experiences of their immigrant and refugee neighbors. The project will include art journaling/art storytelling workshops, cultural performances, and speakers about the immigrant and refugee experience. “Art is for Everyone” will provide participants with notebooks in which they can share their stories, experiences as refugees/immigrants and their cultural traditions through art. In December, completed notebooks will be displayed at an art exhibition and opening reception at the Fountain Valley Library. Artwork will then travel and be displayed at two other libraries. The art notebooks will be added to the library’s collection and available for the community to browse.

This Is Who We Are: Creating Cultural Awareness and Diversity Within Our Community

Napa County Library, Yountville, American Canyon, and Calistoga

Project Director: Refugio Rivera, Library Associate

Napa County’s population of 139,417 is primarily Latino and Caucasian, and the two most commonly spoken languages in the county are Spanish and English. The library’s goals for this project are to provide inclusive and diverse programming that will encourage Latino immigrants to come to the library and to enable the entire community



to experience cultural diversity and increase their cultural awareness. Free programs will be provided for all ages, including family friendly events, interactive crafts, guest speakers, community story contributions, food demonstrations, and presentations on Latino history.

Pásale Paisano: Welcoming Immigrants & Spanish Speaking Communities Through Stories, Artwork, & Traditions

Tulare County Library System—Exeter Branch Library

Project Director: Veronica Casanova, Librarian III

Responding to requests from their rural, largely Mexican American community, the Tulare County Library System's Exeter Branch developed a project to deepen the connections between new and longtime residents to their cultural traditions and heritage. Events in the fall of 2019 at three branch libraries—Exeter, Farmersville, and Woodlake—include a celebration of Mexican Independence Day/*Celebración de Día de la Independencia*, an artisan *mercadito*, presentations by renowned bilingual storyteller Olga Loya, zine workshops, and hands-on arts and crafts activities related to the traditional Day of the Dead/*Día de Los Muertos* holiday. The project will seek to engage families, teens, and community partners. Programming will be conducted in Spanish and English to promote accessibility.

Cuentos Caminantes/Memories in Motion

Long Beach Public Library

Project Director: Joshua Sanchez, Community Program Technician

During October and November, the Billie Jean King Main Library in Long Beach will host weekly bilingual storytelling workshops called *Cuentacuentos Café* that empower the community to give voice to their experiences while learning the basics of storytelling. Select participants will be invited to use the library's Media Lab to capture their stories through audio, video, art, or a mixture of varying media, assisted by library staff and volunteers. Recordings will be translated into multiple languages and archived in the library's collection. Although focusing on Latinx immigrants, the primary immigrant population in the library's service area, participation is open to all. The project will conclude with the *Cuento Caminantes/Memories in Motion* event on December 7 that will showcase storytellers and their stories while providing an opportunity for sharing and dialogue about the immigrant experience in one of the nation's most diverse cities.

Arte Creativo: Come get creative with the art of Hispanic culture!

Placentia Library District, Placentia

Project Director: Michelle Meades, History Room Librarian I



Placentia Library District serves a diverse population of over 50,000 people, including a large Hispanic population. During October the Library will celebrate Hispanic Heritage by exploring the diverse, vibrant, and colorful cultures of Latin America through visual art mediums, dancing, and storytelling. Workshops and demonstrations will enable participants to learn new art mediums such as chalking, Mexican foil art, Incan knot art and more. Professional storyteller Georgette Baker will share an interactive musical storytelling adventure so that participants can experience the geography, music, cultures, legends, and languages of Latin America. Those who attend will also be able to participate in an oral history project to capture and record their stories of coming to Placentia, which will be archived at the library. Programming will be free and geared for all ages; many activities will be bilingual or offered in Spanish.

The Marigold Series

Sunnyvale Public Library, Sunnyvale

Project Director: Karina Huerta, Youth Services Librarian

Sunnyvale Public Library serves a diverse community of more than 150,000 people, with considerable large Middle Eastern and Latino immigrant populations, who share linguistic overlap and cultural similarities, like the significance of the bright yellow and orange marigold flower. In October 2019, *The Marigold Series* will consist of three programs: a Diwali Celebration and two Day of the Dead Programs, one of which will take place on the northern side of Sunnyvale, where a large portion of the Latino community resides. In addition to the programs, Sunnyvale Public Library will have informational displays throughout the month of October 2019 to celebrate and educate library users about the history and cultural traditions surrounding both holidays.

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 *Día 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.