Difficulty has a way of shining a light on things. In the blink of an eye, all that is truly important comes into focus like never before. Times like these define us as individuals, and as a community. Together, one foot in front of the other, we’ve made our way through the last year. Now, our collective knowledge, compassion, and can-do spirit will guide this new year, as we strengthen and rebuild our lives in new and better ways.

For hundreds of thousands of Oregonians, Multnomah County Library offers hope, guidance, and a way forward. Our library is an anchor in times of difficulty, a source of answers and a place of opportunity for every person in our community. Last year, gifts to The Library Foundation impacted the lives of more than 145,000 people. As we look to the future, our library will be integral to helping the community we love get back on its feet.
THANKS TO YOUR GIFTS

Seeing ourselves in the books we read

Jael used to greet new books with little more than a shrug. The stories just didn’t interest her. Though her older brother is a veritable bookworm and her mother is an educator, Jael showed little interest in books. Her mom, Jamaique, worried about her daughter’s tepid response to books. She knew a love of reading would pave the way for her daughter’s success in school. But something just wasn’t clicking.

Until one day, Jael saw a character who looked like her. She had found herself in a book. Jael’s preschool participates in the library’s Every Child a Reader program. Each week, she brought home a special bookbag brimming with engaging, age-appropriate books. Jamaique was thankful for the constant flow of books, chosen by the library’s early literacy experts. Juggling the needs of three children and her job, she couldn’t always make time for trips to the library. This weekly rotation of exciting new books created a nightly reading routine and signaled to the entire family, “It’s time to read!”

The book that sparked Jael’s interest in reading wasn’t there by accident. Librarians selected it knowing that a love of reading is rooted in connection. Studies show that children look for themselves in books — in the physical attributes of characters and in languages, customs, and families that resemble their own. Multnomah County Library’s early literacy specialists are committed to selecting books that will help all children fall in love with reading. They search worldwide for books that represent the families, cultures, and languages in our community.

Today, Jayden loves nothing more than to pick up a book, switch out the names for those of her family, and pepper her mom with questions about the story. Seeing herself in books sparks her curiosity and interest in reading.
School Age Success

Her daughter’s first and best teacher

Ariana’s smile is contagious, a mood-lifter if ever there was one. Buzzing through the stacks with her older brother and sister, her eyes light upon the exact book she wants. Within seconds, she is perched on her mother’s lap, begging Brenda to read with her. The request warms Brenda’s heart, and she quickly acquiesces.

This seemingly simple interaction between a child and her mother belies something deeper. Brenda and her husband came to Oregon as teenagers, with neither the skills in English nor the support they needed to continue their education. The roadblocks they encountered, and their hard-won success as small-business owners, made them determined to pave a brighter future for their children.

Multnomah County Library has been an integral part of their children’s school success. Librarians offered Brenda an array of programs designed to support her children as they grew — parent education, weekly deliveries of specially-selected books, and a Summer Reading program designed to keep them engaged and learning when school was out.

Librarians reach out to families who face tough literacy risks, offering proven programs that empower parents like Brenda to take an active role in their children’s education. Parent education in five languages, Homework Help for struggling students, a successful Summer Reading program, and dozens of other programs help bridge the achievement gap for families who face daunting odds.

Brenda sees firsthand the impact the library has had on her children. They are voracious readers, and are thriving in school. As the children take turns reading to her, and to each other, Brenda is secure in knowing they have the support, and the passion for learning they need to succeed in school and in life.
THANKS TO YOUR GIFTS
THE LIBRARY FOUNDATION

When a book delivery becomes a lifeline

Multnomah County Library is a cornerstone for community, offering a lifetime of growth and learning to each of us. From a meaningful, community-wide conversation centered on a single book, to free arts and cultural programs, and home deliveries for our most vulnerable residents, our library is there for us at every age, and every stage of life.

Ethel’s love affair with Multnomah County Library spanned nearly eight decades. A New Jersey transplant, Ethel moved to Portland as a newlywed in the 1950’s. Midland Library became a home away from home for this voracious reader — a place she eagerly introduced to her children and grandchildren. Her daughter, Peggy, recalls how her mom would gather up neighborhood children in the summer and walk with them to the library.

A few years ago, age and diminished eyesight brought Ethel’s once-frequent visits to the library to a standstill. It was a huge loss for her. The inability to read books in print, or to visit the library, created a disheartening void in the life of this reading buff. Then one day, a friend told her about Library Outreach Services.

Library Outreach staff are a lifeline for those in our community who can no longer visit the library in person. Each week, the team delivers tens of thousands of print and large print books, audiobooks, and other materials to vulnerable seniors and others who cannot get to the library. For many of these individuals and their families, these weekly visits are a vital connection to the outside world.

When Ethel left us this summer, at the age of 94, she was still enjoying weekly library deliveries of audiobooks. Her daughter described it as “Christmas every week” for her mom. Peggy credits these deliveries with keeping her mother’s mind sharp and her spirit positive in the golden years of her life.

For the elderly and isolated in our community, Library Outreach Services is a lifeline, providing not only books and materials, but a human connection as well. When libraries temporarily shuttered due to the COVID-19 outbreak, library staff reached out individually to each book delivery recipient to make sure they had everything they needed to stay safe and in good health.

Learning for Life

12,700 teens and adults read and discussed There, There by Tommy Orange through Everybody Reads.

During the first weeks of quarantine, library staff reached out to 1,322 elderly and isolated library patrons, answering questions and ensuring they had what they needed.

Thousands of people of all ages participated in free arts, cultural and educational programs.
Adapting to the evolving needs of our community

Nimble response keeps young readers engaged

Like nearly everything in 2020, Multnomah County Library services looked very different than in years past. But one critical element remained the same — librarians and library staff continued to offer trusted information, guidance, and inspiration to tens of thousands across our community.

Your generous support helped our library respond to the emerging needs of children and families at this time. By creating and delivering digital content, boosting the availability of online resources, making Homework Help more accessible for students, and engineering the safe delivery of books, the library supported tens of thousands of families at a very difficult time.

Librarians know that young children are especially vulnerable at this time, when stress is high for many families. When neighborhood libraries closed, early literacy experts began recording storytimes and other educational activities in seven languages and cultures. These storytimes have worked hand-in-hand with increased access to children’s e-books in multiple languages and book deliveries to some of the most vulnerable families.

As schools moved to virtual learning, the library’s Summer Reading team jumped into action, redesigning the program to engage families in a digital format. Paper versions of the gameboard were mailed to children without access to devices or reliable internet service. Staff and volunteers visited 240 sites during the summer of 2020, bringing books, game boards, and enthusiasm to families who face the toughest literacy risks.

In 2021, librarians will continue bringing life-changing programs and resources to those most likely to be affected by distance learning, social isolation, and financial hardships.
Today, Tomorrow, Always.

Many of us remember libraries from our childhood as warm places full of stories and books. We turn to our library to educate ourselves about the world. We introduce the library with pride to the children in our lives. We turn to our library to refresh our memories and expand our minds. Libraries keep us connected to the past and inspire us to imagine the future. They change our lives.

We honor those who have left lasting support for Multnomah County Library since 1995. Their planned gifts, large and small, have changed many lives.

PLANNED GIFTS 1995-2020

James Oliver Elliott
Doris English
Edna Epstein
Estelle Erickson
Gloria M. Everson
Louise B. Fies
Elmer Flagg
Karen M. Froman
Yasuiko T. Fukano
Gerald and Mary Anne Gage
The Gale Family
Annette Goldschmidt
Peryl Gottesman
Eve V. Grace
Elizabeth N. Gray
Kathleen M. Gree
Leslie Grueger
Robert A. Gruewel
Marian Hallam
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Kenneth Huffman
Joan and Theodore Hollingsworth
Meriman Holtz, Jr.
Lucie V. Howell
E. Rose Howell
Suzanne Ilkin
Ronald O. and Beverly Delong
Beverly A. James*
Nancy A. Jerome
Eileen Johnson
Patricia L. Kahler*
Marian V. Kennedy
Jo Anne Klaus
Helen Knoll
Harold and Lorraine W. Kroptizer
Lois M. Leidig
John A. Lester
Celia H. Leisman
Melinda Littlehales
Gerald Lubofsky
Pauline A. Mandel
Dorothy Marsh
Donald K. Martin
William N. Martin, Sr.
Mary B. Mason
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James McKlnlay
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Anne C. Mersereau
Rose M. Napoleon
Sally M. Nelson
Barbara van Baayer
Marie Von Behren
Virginia Caldwell
Ellen Byrnes
Kenneth and Else Butler
Virginia Caldwell
Clifford and Doris Carlson
Eva Carstensen
Edwin W. Caswell
Frank Chase
Sylvia Christenson
Mary Clancy
Margaret R. Clark
Maribeth W. Collins
William J. Collins
Barbara A. Davies
Ruth W. Davis
Ronald O. and Beverly Delong
Linda Anne Easley

*Estate gifts received from July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020.

Financials

Expenses

| Direct support of Multnomah County Library | Early literacy | 491,889 |
| School-age literacy | 477,920 |
| Learning for life | 94,062 |
| Arts, culture and humanities programming | 26,545 |
| Books and materials | 45,834 |
| Library staff development and other | 82,848 |
| Total cash and in-kind support | 1,217,898 |

| Program support to Multnomah County Library | Advocacy | 871,725 |
| Management and general | 341,743 |
| Total support for Multnomah County Library | 2,131,368 |
| Management and general | 222,120 |
| Fundraising | 85,519 |
| Total expenses | 2,439,005 |
| Change in net assets | (445,472) |
| Net assets, beginning of year | 20,059,481 |
| Net assets, end of year | 19,614,009 |

Support for the Library

$2.13 million from The Library Foundation

With clean audit opinions each year, we once again received a four-star rating from Charity Navigator for organizational efficiency.

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2020

Revenues, gains, and other support

- Contributions and grants: 1,562,381
- In-kind contributions: 214,240
- Interest and dividend income: 252,931
- Net depreciation, investments: (8,496)
- Net decrease, irrevocable planned gifts: (28,584)
- Other: 1,021
- Total revenues, gains and other support: 1,993,533

Expenses

- Direct support of Multnomah County Library: 1,217,898
- Program support to Multnomah County Library: 871,725
- Management and general: 222,120
- Fundraising: 85,519
- Total expenses: 2,439,005
- Change in net assets: (445,472)
- Net assets, beginning of year: 20,059,481
- Net assets, end of year: 19,614,009

Charity Navigator for organizational efficiency.

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Eva Kripalani, Chair
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Thank you for helping our library create strong readers for life.

Learn more at www.libraryfoundation.org