from the executive director
SEPTEMBER 2014

Pima County Public Library is dedicated to being closely involved with the community and its future as we provide core services and launch new initiatives for the people who live and work here. As we started the second year of the Library’s Community Impact Plan, we focused on the work that directly impacts the public and emphasizes one of our principal beliefs:

Excellence is defined locally, is attainable for any Pima County Public Library, and is dynamic in nature.

The three focus areas of the Library’s Community Impact Plan—Learn, Create, Connect—guide our staff members as we get involved in neighborhood activities and participate in what is happening throughout Pima County. We assess the impact of local and national trends, and create successful alliances and collaborations with government agencies, educational institutions, community groups, and other organizations and businesses with missions that closely align with ours. The Library not only helps to leverage ideas; we move them forward.

Because of our partnerships, we are creating sustainable programs and services that:

- Increase access and educational opportunity
- Give children a strong start in school
- Provide places where all citizens, young and old, can pursue learning in a collaborative, creative environment.

Our staff is the powerhouse behind our success. That’s because at the Pima County Public Library, we believe in what we do, and care about the community we serve.

Melinda Cervantes
Executive Director
Figure 1: View of Downtown Tucson behind the Joel D. Valdez Main Library.
Pima County Public Library is a key player in supporting economic and workforce development. This role continues to grow as the Library helps more people in the community sharpen their skills, land a job, or start their own business.

Partnerships with organizations such as Pima County One-Stop Career Centers, Literacy Connects, Pima Community College, the Arizona Department of Economic Security, the Small Business Development Center, SCORE, the Women’s Business Center of Southern Arizona, and the Veterans Business Outreach Center, as well as funding from the Arizona State Library, Archives and Public Records, allowed the Library to promote programming around self-employment as a path to self-sufficiency and financial stability.

This year, Library Program Manager Michelle Simon launched the Self-Employment and Micro-Enterprise Initiative to expand individual and experiential learning opportunities through a variety of programs. In the program we called *Mother and Daughter Entrepreneurs: A Powerful Partnership*, moms teamed up with their daughters to learn about entrepreneurial and communication skills that they can use throughout their lives. Another program—the Women’s Business Center Business Planning Course—encouraged aspiring small business owners and entrepreneurs to explore the feasibility of their business ideas and provided the support and assistance to turn that idea into an enterprise. The Library—through the Self-Employment and Micro-Enterprise Grant—was able to provide scholarships to participants with a demonstrated financial need. Within the first four months of the initiative, four participants had started their own businesses, which included a home inspection business, a second-hand clothing store, and a website design business.

Through our collaboration with the Pima County One-Stop Career Center, several libraries have become the place where job seekers can assess their skills, register with the Arizona Job Connection Portal, apply for additional services, and discover their eligibility for grant-funded services and other educational opportunities. We have developed other supportive partnerships as well. At the Murphy-Wilmot Library, Program Instructor Carmella Harmon worked with the Pima County Joint Technical Education District to have their students-in-training provide
complimentary haircuts to our Job Help customers. The students get the experience they need; meanwhile, our customers feel more confident as they prepare for their job interviews.

The Library will always be a place of discovery and learning. At the same time, we are helping Pima County grow as we expand our role as an active partner in community building, employment and job training, and economic development.

Figure 2: Nkechi Esan completed a 10-week business planning course with the help of a scholarship from the Library and started her own web design business.
Genuine motivation is the biggest driver of learning. In 2014, the Library’s Summer Reading Program—which would not be possible without our community partners, talented staff, and customers—successfully brought science into the lives of readers of all ages. Rather than focusing on reading to earn prizes, our program highlighted activities such as reflection, discovery, insight, and self-direction.

Each week from late May through July, Summer Reading participants were encouraged to do something new: choose a book of their own to take home and keep; discover different destinations in Pima County using a fun field guide to record their observations; or experiment with crystal gardens, make “flubber,” or create exploding glitter volcanos. Kids, teens, young adults, and families also attended fun events like our annual comics and manga SummerMania!! mini conventions and our Summer Reading finale celebration at the Reid Park Zoo.

HELPING STUDENTS SUCCEED

The Library continues to partner with Literacy Connects and other organizations in our learning community to create innovative programming for people of all ages. Our ReadStrong program, for example, develops readers through an individualized approach where the student is the center of the reading process. Tutors work with their students to uncover their reading voices and allow them to flourish. As a result, ReadStrong students are not only reading more fluently, they enjoy reading and picking out books on their own. When they see progress on their report cards, their perceptions about themselves as readers become more positive as well.

Because of ReadStrong’s success, the Library has integrated the program’s student-focused, goal-directed, strength-based philosophy into our skill-building classes and online learning labs, and other programs that target students such as the Summer Youth Employment Program, the Regional College Ambassador Program, and Summer Reading.
Eight percent of our cardholders report that they come to the library to spend time with their child or grandchild to browse for books and attend programs.

At the same time, the Library’s traditional Storytime services and reading programs are supported by strategies and collaborations that help parents become aware of the importance of early literacy and school readiness. We know that our research-based practices help young children develop the skills they need before they learn to read.

Last year we provided community-wide training to increase early literacy through our Every Child…Ready to Read/Listos Para Leer workshops. Library staff utilizes this curriculum developed by the Public Library Association and the Association for Library Service to Children to support Storytime programs and provide workshops for caregivers.

Our library programs also give families time to bond with their child when they do hands-on activities, read, learn how to select books, and become active library users. In 2014, two of our Children’s Librarians, Jennifer Whitt and Ashley Braun, introduced Sensory-Friendly Storytimes at the Martha Cooper and Himmel Park Libraries. This unique program is designed for families with children ages 10 and under who are vulnerable to sensory overload.

Pima County Public Library is dedicated to providing good early literacy and learning experiences to as many families as we can. Preparing young children for success through the development of early language skills is something we do well.

The simple recipe of one-on-one time, caring attention, and a safe environment where it is okay to make mistakes and go slow, is very powerful to me. Fear fades away...and the student thrives.

—Maria Luna, ReadStrong Tutor
create

CONNECTING YOUTH WITH CREATIVE LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

By building a network of trained mentors and program opportunities, the Library is creating a foundation for all Pima County residents who see the Library as a community hub. Through our resources, the Library is linking people in our community to technology and opportunities in new ways.

Imagine matching teens with professional mentors who will help them to take the next step to their future careers. The Library is doing that and more.

For several years, our CreateIT programs have established pathways that support self-directed learning for youth and allow them to explore their interests outside of school. As an outgrowth of the Library’s CreateIT programs, the Learning Labs project is helping local youth connect with mentors in a variety of professions and develop valuable skills in the areas of critical thinking, presentation and public speaking, digital media, planning, communication, research, and analysis. Librarian Jennifer Nichols was awarded the 2014 David Hoyt Johnson Arts Administrator Lumie Award by the Tucson Pima Arts Council for successfully engaging a Youth Design Team (YDT) to begin planning the Library’s first Learning Lab. From 2012 to 2013, Library staff worked with community partners and the YDT to steer a $100,000 planning grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services and the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation to plan and design a community learning lab for youth by youth.

YDT members listened, got inspired by other youth and projects in the community and across the country, and brought a youth voice into the planning process. They worked with the Library for 18 months to create and share their recommendations for a dedicated youth media center that they envisioned to be located at the Joel D. Valdez Main Library. Focusing on place, people, and programs and reflecting the research that the team conducted around Pima County with their peers and mentors, these recommendations will continue to shape spaces and programs for teens in Pima County Public Libraries, setting the gold standard for programming and new initiatives.

Pima County Public Libraries will work with community organizations and experts to provide opportunities for individuals to be creative, to satisfy their needs for self-expression, to promote 21st century learning skills, and increase intergenerational exchange.

ONSITE SERVICES & PROGRAMMING ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

Creative enterprises for and with youth
Making places for innovation and networking
INNOVATING AND NETWORKING

In the third and final year of the current Community Impact Plan, the Library will be refurbishing and evaluating space at the Joel D. Valdez Main Library. Our goal is to assess how space can invite the community in to use our resources and get inspired to learn, create, innovate, and collaborate.

In addition to implementing the Youth Design Team’s redesigned space in the downtown library, we are launching a space that will serve as an incubator for career exploration, small businesses, nonprofits, freelancers, and artists in our community. The Library’s Small Business and Entrepreneurship team will test programs—lean startup methodologies, business feasibility counseling, and crowdfunding, for example—to see if they are what entrepreneurs need and want. The space will give us the flexibility to move furniture to accommodate different programs and events and adapt to the different ways people work together, share information, and learn from each other. As part of our contribution to Tucson’s Downtown Innovation District, several members of our staff, including our Entrepreneurship & Innovation Services Librarian Lisa Bunker, will oversee the programs planned in the Library’s redesigned space.

Understanding the importance of social connectivity and its potential for sparking innovation and engaging the public, the Library staff already uses social media, community outreach events, and email tools to let our community know about the Library’s activities and programs. Our continuing objective is to educate our partners and the community about how the Library can support efforts in collaborative work, real world learning, workforce development, and launching the next big idea.

Kids have a lot of things that they want to do, that they want to achieve, and that they want to express. – Pima County Teen

Figure 6: The Learning Labs Youth Design Team learned skills including digital media, research, and public speaking.

Figure 7: The Library supports collaborative work and real world learning.
Pima County Public Libraries create environments in which people of all ages and from all backgrounds feel they have a voice in decisions that affect their lives. The Library provides opportunities for people to explore, become informed, and use digital content, and to feel self-directed in an atmosphere of increased technology and digitization.

ONSITE SERVICES & PROGRAMMING ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

Offline, on the ground, and on wheels
Online, we’re here!
Community engagement and conversations

Pima County Public Library has initiated some outstanding services and developed programs through partnerships related to community assets, sustainability, and access.

For the second consecutive year, Pima County Public Library was recognized by the Urban Libraries Council for being a 2014 Top Innovator when Santa Rosa Library was honored for its Santa Rosa Snacks afterschool program. Library Associate Caitlin Burns, who initiated the program in partnership with the Southern Arizona Community Food Bank and the Pima County Health Department, explained why she would like to see the program turn into something more. “If kids start coming to the library for snacks, they just might end up staying for the books, the storytimes, and the tutoring sessions, too!”

In fact, Santa Rosa Library’s close connections to the neighboring schools and their successful partnership with the National OASIS Institutes Active Generations program allowed the library to host the CATCH Healthy Habits program, an intergenerational approach to introduce kids not only to healthy eating, but also to healthy physical activity. Now, three other libraries are planning to start afterschool snack programs in the coming year.

Pima County Public Library continues to provide resources in other unexpected ways by expanding our successful Seed Library, Library Nurse, and Bookbike programs.

Our Seed Library team breathed new life and a new sense of community connection on the Jacomé Plaza in front of the Joel D. Valdez Main Library. During monthly plaza planter work parties, volunteers come together to weed, replant, and turn soil in the planters on the plaza, providing some tender loving care.

Last year, the Library Nurse program was honored as a 2013 Urban Libraries Council Top Innovator in the Health, Wellness, and Public Safety category. The program continues to increase the impact and reach of community services to those who have significant social needs. This year, the Library’s Public Health Nurses provided
blood pressure screenings, flu shots, and health information to homeless veterans with no medical benefits. Because of our connections to the Pima County Health Department, the Library served as an access point to the Health Marketplace’s first open enrollment. The County’s Health Department and the Pima County Employee Wellness Program also worked with the Library’s Community Health Assessment Taskforce to offer training, health assessments, and wellness programs at multiple libraries. During an interview for an article, Librarian on the Move Karen Greene said that one of her dreams is “world domination by Bookbike.” That dream just might come true. In fiscal year 2014–15 the Pima County Public Library’s Bookbike program will grow from one to three bikes courtesy of a generous sponsor who spied the lone Bookbike at the 2014 Tucson Festival of Books. Our fleet of bikes will continue to give away free books in English and Spanish, library cards, bike maps, literacy information, and reading glasses, and provide a place for people to gather together in their neighborhoods.

Library staff members have increased volunteer opportunities and collaborations with the Pima County Bike and Pedestrian Program Ambassadors and Pima Council on Aging (PCOA) to build our Books on Wheels program. Ambassadors are now pedaling books to homebound residents in key neighborhoods, and PCOA volunteers are delivering books through their Neighbors Care program.

We are proud to be able to reach beyond our doors to create an impact that is felt throughout the community.
GETTING IN LINE BY GETTING ONLINE

A few years ago Library Services Manager Jen Maney and Assistant Library Manager Helene Woodhams used Library Services and Technology Act funding from the Arizona State Library to launch an online interactive map of books that are about Arizona or set in Arizona. Now, the Arizona State Library, Archives and Public Records has taken our Reading Arizona, a Map of the Literary Landscape project in new directions. Reading Arizona will soon offer Arizona-related eBooks and other materials through the state library’s website and eventually through local libraries in the state. According to State Librarian Joan Clark, “Reading Arizona will launch content about Arizona that is relevant to Arizonans, so it makes sense to invite authors to share how they interpret the landscape.”

To create more exceptional online experiences, the Library continues to integrate and expand digital content for our patrons. We are also developing a new website with the firm BiblioCommons. When the website launches at the end of 2014, visitors will enjoy a library catalog that is fully integrated with the website, and customers can create book lists, share reviews, and use natural language to search for materials in our collection.
ENGAGING OUR COMMUNITY

There is something to do at a Pima County Public Library almost every day.

Each year we ask local artists and educators to show us their talents. Ultimately, the library patrons who attend our programs get to decide who becomes a library presenter. We host more than 200 different presenters throughout the year, with programs that range from live animal exhibits to puppet shows, and from yoga zones to juggling or nature journaling. The Library is also introducing extended volunteer opportunities at the Oro Valley Public Library and the Joyner-Green Valley Library through a partnership with the American Association of Retired People. AARP’s Life Reimagined program provides a personalized guidance system that empowers people to see what possibilities are available in their future.

In addition, we are proud to be able to reach beyond our doors to create an impact that is felt throughout the community.

Our annual Job Connectors Meetup brought together more than 60 people representing 24 community organizations. Attendees interacted with employers and gained vital information about how to properly prepare their participants for the workplace. United States Magistrate Charles Pyle introduced the Second Chance Initiative video and provided a community vision for helping people with criminal backgrounds or other barriers to employment. During the event, Primavera, the Community Partnership of Southern Arizona, and Old Pueblo Community Services worked with library staff to facilitate the creation of a resource kit that job connectors could begin using immediately.
This year Pima County Public Library received a Library Services and Technology Act grant to do a project with the strategic market research firm OrangeBoy. We researched our customers’ behaviors in each of our 27 libraries and what they look to the Library to provide. These results will allow staff to map out the Library’s plans, institute service efficiencies, better allocate resources, and provide the programs best suited for each library’s unique demographics. We will also use this information to guide us in furthering the Library’s goals that are related to our customers.

The Library’s efforts in these areas have already begun.

Because libraries tend to be centrally located within neighborhoods, and as the physical collection moves online... the library will become a gathering place designed with the inhabitants, not so much the content, in mind.

- Pima County Public Library’s “Community Commons” Scenario Planning Team
Pima County Public Library fosters many partnerships with government, businesses, educational institutions, and community organizations to address needs, start important conversations, and produce valuable, sustainable results. Our next Community Impact Plan will be developed so that we can keep moving forward in implementing easy-to-use and more efficient technological solutions, enhancing our spaces to be more welcoming, and making additional efforts to raise awareness of our services throughout the Pima County region.

In the coming year, the Library’s digital collection will continue to grow to enhance the customer’s online experience. The additional services that we recently launched include Freading, an eBook service that offers eBooks with no holds and no waiting. We also have IndieFlix, a free online streaming service that provides unlimited access to thousands of award-winning films, shorts, and documentaries from independent filmmakers and film festivals worldwide.

- Patrons can now pay their fines and fees online.
- New digital devices purchased with state library funds allow library staff to help customers with their devices and provide better hands-on media design and app classes for youth.
- Library Services and Technology Act funding will help us to build an app to promote family literacy programs, caregiver training, and programming around books, music, and activities.

going forward