



LIBRARY DIRECTOR'S REPORT

- **Library Renovation Project:** The project continues in the planning and evaluation stage. IDS is preparing a cost document to assist city and library staff identify ranked budget priorities. Along with the expected HVAC replacements, other significant costs include seismic retrofitting and ADA compliance renovations to the public restrooms and means of travel. All first-floor library stacks (bookshelves) may also need to be replaced – this will depend on whether it is more cost-effective to modify existing stacks or purchase new ones.
- **Grants:** The library applied for the California State Library “Play for All” grant on Wednesday, March 6. The goal of the grant is to ensure children have equitable opportunities to play. The library applied for approximately \$20k in grant funds to revitalize the library's preschool area with new, engaging furniture and play structures, including wall manipulatives and interactive tech, using feedback from partners and parents. This project aims to create a memorable, exciting play space for low-income, minority families and caregivers with children aged 0-6 supported by enhanced play experiences in popular children's storytime programs. Award announcements will be made in May, and if awarded, the project will begin in late June or early July 2024.
- **Library Website:** An updated city and library website is nearing completion for a debut in April 2024. The library site will not differ significantly from its current version, as the new site is based on transferring existing library pages' data. The aim of the new site will be to improve the user experience by removing redundant and old information.
- **Collection Budget Plans:** Initial review and adjustments to the 2024/2025 library collections budgets are underway. Current plans include decreasing funds spent on low-use databases, primarily from Ebsco, to fund print collections and a book lease contract with Baker & Taylor. A substantial investment in adult nonfiction will update and enhance this collection. Other significant budget transfers will benefit Spanish-language collection building across all age groups; Children's budgets will also increase by nearly double this year's expenditures. Possible cuts will impact Hoopla as the cost/per use is steep, and its use has been less than that of the other popular digital platform, Libby by Overdrive.





ADULT SERVICES HIGHLIGHTS



- The **2nd Saturday Concert** Series brightened the early days of February, welcoming the talented Kevin James O'Brien to the stage on the 10th. From 3:00 to 4:30 pm, an enthusiastic crowd of **40 attendees** was serenaded with a rich tapestry of music spanned decades. Kevin, who received his first guitar at the tender age of ten, has been a fixture in the music scene from San Diego to Ventura, performing over 200 gigs yearly. His versatile performances include a wide range of hit songs, from the classic rock anthems of yesteryears to the catchy tunes of contemporary pop, with a sprinkle of country vibes for good measure. This event was not just a concert but a journey through the musical ages, led by a seasoned artist whose passion for music knows no bounds.
- On February 22, from 6:00 to 7:00 pm, the Escondido Public Library hosted a captivating session that offered a glimpse into its storied past and that of its surrounding neighborhood, drawing in **14 attendees**. This enlightening presentation delved into the **library's history** and neighboring structures. Attendees were treated to a collection of historical photographs, including those of the Carnegie Library and various historic homes and buildings in the area. This event was a testament to Escondido's enduring legacy and architectural heritage, engaging community members in a meaningful exploration of their local history.
- Capping off the month, on February 24, the Escondido Public Library led a group of **40 attendees** on a fascinating **walking tour through its historic neighborhood** from 11:00 am to 12:30 pm. This excursion offered a unique opportunity to step back in time and appreciate the historic buildings that define the area's character. The emphasis on architectural heritage and the stories embedded within these structures gave participants a deeper understanding and appreciation for the rich tapestry of history surrounding them. This engaging and informative tour highlighted the beauty and significance of the library's neighborhood and fostered a sense of community and connection among those who participated.





PIONEER ROOM HIGHLIGHTS

- In February, the Pioneer Room served **34 patrons**. On February 22, the Pioneer Room hosted John Archer's presentation on historic Escondido and those who attended the Walking Tour of the Escondido Historic Neighborhood Homes. After the walking tour, Pioneer Room staff provided a tour of the archives to 5 patrons interested in knowing more about the Pioneer Room's archival collections.
- The Pioneer Room also welcomed Skylar to our Pioneer Room Volunteers! Skylar joins Leandra, Leslie, Debbie, Karen, Jennifer, Sarah, and Beth. This amazing group has been hard at work digitizing historic photographs of Escondido from the Times-Advocate photograph collection.

YOUTH SERVICES HIGHLIGHTS



- **Lunar New Year – Year of the Dragon**
The Three Treasures Cultural Arts Society enthralled audiences with a mesmerizing lion dance performance, accompanied by enlightening explanations of the dance's symbolism and a captivating kung fu demonstration. **144 attendees** enjoyed the lion dance performance.
- **African Drum & Dance Ensemble**
In honor of Black History Month, the library hosted an African Drum & Dance Ensemble performance by Chazz and Teresa. Attendees of all ages were invited to participate in an interactive program, immersing themselves in African heritage rhythms, songs, and stories. With **85 enthusiastic participants**, Chazz and Teresa's infectious energy and engaging presentation ensured an unforgettable experience, underscoring the library's commitment to celebrating cultural diversity and fostering community engagement.

