CONTRA COSTA COUNTY LIBRARY COMMISSION
AGENDA ATTACHMENT 4

MEETING DATE: Thursday, May 27, 2010
AGENDA ITEM #: 10
ITEM: REPORT FROM COUNTY LIBRARIAN

RECOMMENDED ACTION:
- None
Initial Partnerships and Funding

The Pleasant Hill Library has embarked on an exciting new partnership with the City of Pleasant Hill to promote reuse, increase recycling, and assist the City in reaching its goals for diverting usable materials from landfills. With money received from the City of Pleasant Hill’s Solid Waste and Recycling Fund and through a generous donation made by the local Friends organization, a Green Zone was established in the Pleasant Hill Library offering residents a comprehensive collection of books, periodicals and audio/visual media, web resources, and educational programs for adults, teens, children, seniors, and residents who live and work in Pleasant Hill so they can learn how to protect the environment and practice green efforts such as home composting, waste reduction, and recycling.

While the majority of the 500+ books, periodicals, videos, and other materials in the Pleasant Hill Green Zone’s collection are geared towards adults, dozens of children’s titles are included in the collection. These items, branded with a special green leaf label, cover a wide range of green topics, including conservation, green building, hazardous waste disposal, and pest management. The highest circulating items in this collection are titles about composting, green careers, and making crafts with recycled materials.

Green is Growing

The Green Zone at Pleasant Hill was cited as the impetus and the model for other Green Zones in the community libraries throughout the County. After Federal Glover, District V Supervisor, visited the Green Zone at the Pleasant Hill Library, he found funding for the community libraries in Oakley, Antioch, and Pittsburg to implement green programs and collections to help adults, teens, children, seniors, businesses, and residents who live and work in East Contra Cost County do their own research and reading on environmental concepts and solutions.

That funding got the ball rolling for more money to be donated by Pittsburg Disposal, the City of Pittsburg, Pittsburg Power, and the Friends of the Pittsburg Library for a green collection, bookmarks, a banner, and outside seating at the Pittsburg library. The Delta Chapter of the Kiwanis Club donated money received from PG&E and Allied Waste and the Friends of the Antioch Library also contributed for a Green Zone at the Antioch Library. The funds from the Antioch Friends and Kiwanis Club allowed the library to purchase books, dvds, and other resources for patrons to borrow. On Earth Day this year, patrons particularly enjoyed the Green Zone as they were able to easily find materials on timely topics.

Oakley Disposal contributed funds to get the Oakley Library’s Green Zone established and
launched in January 2010. The Oakley Library currently has 62 items in the collection and an article promoting their Green Zone appeared in the Friends of the Oakley Library newsletter. The Friends of the Oakley Library have agreed to sponsor a program, or series of programs, to highlight the green collection and publicize it to Oakley residents.

In November 2009, the Orinda Library launched its Green Zone with a donation from the Friends of the Orinda Library. The collection consists of more than 400 books and DVDs on topics related to environment, sustainability and living and working “green” and includes material for all ages - adults, teens, and children. Orinda’s Green Zone also serves as an information center for the community, providing free information from local, state, and federal agencies on such topics as fuel economy, stopping junk mail, “green” building, and recycling. Since its inception, nearly half of Orinda’s Green Zone collection is checked out at any given time, demonstrating a strong community interest, the successful selection of materials that meet this demand, and awareness within the community of this important collection.

Sustainable Lafayette supporters donated funds for the Lafayette Library and Learning Center’s collection of DVDs on going green. The Lafayette Library and Learning Center which opened on November 14, 2009, has numerous green and sustainable features, including an exterior of reclaimed teak siding and the photo-voltaic panels above the surface parking lot generates approximately 8% of the building’s electrical needs.

Contra Costa County Library is leading the way in becoming the first place to turn for green resources. The momentum started at the Pleasant Hill Library continues to grow as a “Hot Topics” team of Contra Costa County Library staff is developing green-related programming, community partnerships, and online resources. By contacting local organizations and businesses that promote conservation, green technology, and ways for people to reduce their
environmental impact, staff will have a list of organizations and businesses interested in partnering with the Library for the purpose of delivering more programs for adults, teens, and children within the Green Zones.

The Contra Costa County Library’s online Business Subject Guide includes a section on Green Business that covers topics such as “How to be Certified as a Green Business,” “Contra Costa County Green Businesses,” and “Green Resources.” A bibliography of recently added titles on “Greening Your Small Business” was added at each Green Zone location. The Green collections have proven popular with a total of 3,500 checkouts this year and usage continuing to grow.

Since December 2009, administrative staff of the Contra Costa County Library has been participating in the countywide departmental campaign, “Greening Contra Costa Together” to implement practices that sustain the environment and lower costs for the county.

**Publicity**

In celebration of Community Volunteer Day and to promote the opening of the Green Zone, volunteers were recruited to make the area designated in the Pleasant Hill Library more attractive by stenciling a leafy design to frame the walls of the collection.

A joint launch event with the City of Pleasant Hill and the Library was held on October 21, 2009.

The Contra Costa County Library’s fall 2009 News and Events e-newsletter announced the Green Zone, the Library’s electronic “Go Green” Subject Guide, and a sampling of the titles added to the Green Zone collection. The e-newsletter is distributed to over 15,000 people.

The Green Zone has been featured in several editions of the Pleasant Hill Outlook Newsletter: September-October 2009, November-December 2009, and March-April 2010.

Pleasant Hill Library staff created a “Green Zone” Subject Guide that is accessible from the Contra Costa County Library’s website. The Guide displays books available from the Green Zone’s collection and links to articles and websites on green living, including gardening tips, saving energy, and water conservation.

The Pleasant Hill Library was cited on a preeminent library blog, The Shifted Librarian, on a post featuring libraries greening communities. Among the activities of libraries around the country that were listed on the blog was Contra Costa County Library’s circulation of the Kill-a-Watt power meter kit to measure electricity use by plug-in appliances.

**Library Outreach and Programs**

The following green activities and programs occurred over the last 6 months:

- Library staff promoted the Green Zone at a farmer’s market on October 18, 2009. (Pleasant Hill Library)
- 37 people attended the workshop, “Backyard Composting” with waste consultant Todd Sutton on October 28, 2009. 35 composting kits were sold. (Pleasant Hill Library)

- 30 children and adults attended a Family Story Time on November 10, 2009, celebrating and promoting “America Recycles Day.” Participants used recycled items such as CDs, paper towel rolls, scrap paper, and bits of string and yarn, to create individual works of art, which were displayed for that month under a recycling banner. (Pleasant Hill Library)

- As part of the “Great Paperback Exchange,” held in early December 2009, 25 fifth graders brought 200 books and exchanged them with one another in the Green Zone. (Pleasant Hill Library)

- 10 teens learned to make "magic" wallets from recycled materials on December 17, 2009. (San Pablo Library)

- Library staff attended the City of Pleasant Hill’s Senior Summit on December 18, 2009 where they distributed information about the Green Zone. (Pleasant Hill Library)

- 3 workshops teaching participants to recycle objects such as t-shirts, plastic bags, and magazines were conducted on January 27, February 14, and March 24, 2010. RecycleMore, the West Contra Costa Integrated Waste Management Authority program, invited library staff to present a workshop at Richmond's Earth Day Celebration on April 17, 2010. (San Pablo)
In partnership with the Rechargeable Battery Recycling Corporation, an awareness campaign to keep toxic metals out of the air and landfills by recycling batteries was conducted throughout March 2010. People were urged to bring their dead batteries and recycle them at the Green Zone. (Pleasant Hill Library)

A composting workshop presented by the city of Antioch’s Environmental Resource Center was given on March 27, 2010. 32 people attended. A display about litter prevention by the Environmental Resource Center is on display during the month of April. (Antioch Library)

“Greening Your Small Business,” a program designed to show attendees that going green does not need to be costly or difficult for the small business owner was held on April 6, 2010. (Pleasant Hill Library)

A Household Hazardous Waste Information Booth was set up before and after story times during the month of April 2010. (Pleasant Hill Library)

An Earth Day Celebration in partnership with Sustainable Lafayette took place on April 25, 2010. (Lafayette Library)

The Allied Waste Recycle Truck visited on May 11, 2010 for a children’s programming event. (Pleasant Hill Library)

Upcoming Activities:

A workshop on Backyard Composting will be held on Tuesday, June 29, 2010. (Pleasant Hill Library)

The Contra Costa County Library will partner with Keep California Beautiful in the campaign “Got Your Bags?” This public education and outreach campaign is aimed at encouraging residents to reuse bags for shopping and to bring plastic bags back to the store for recycling. (All library locations with Green Zones)

The library is collaborating with Co-op Extension to hold "community conversations" about water. The programs will use booklets developed by The California Center for the Book in collaboration with California State Library, Water Education Foundation and National Issues Forum. The first of these programs will be for teens and held at the Martinez Library on May 18, 2010. A second program will be held at the Oakley Library on Saturday, July 24, 2010.

The Environmental Resource Center will demonstrate how to create waste free lunches just in time for back to school season on August 15, 2010. (Antioch Library)
The Board of Supervisors of
Contra Costa County, California

IN THE MATTER OF RECOGNIZING DONORS TO THE
CONTRA COSTA COUNTY LIBRARY GREEN ZONES

RESOLUTION NO. 2010/275

WHEREAS the Contra Costa County Library has created Green Zones at several libraries, which
offer books, media, web resources, and educational programs on environmental topics; and

WHEREAS these zones cover a wide range of green topics, including conservation, green building,
hazardous waste disposal, pest management, composting, green careers, and making crafts with
recycled materials; and

WHEREAS these resources are designed to help adults, teens, children, and seniors learn how to
protect the environment and practice green efforts such as home composting, waste reduction, and
recycling; and

WHEREAS many individuals, organizations, agencies, and corporations have donated the funds to
purchase these materials at a time when the library's materials budget had been reduced,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors
appreciates the generosity of and thanks the Kiwanis Club of the Delta- Antioch, Pacific Gas and
Electric Company, Friends of the Antioch Library, Allied Waste Company, Garaventa
Enterprises, Sustainable Lafayette, Oakley Disposal Company, Friends of the Oakley Library, Friends
of the Orinda Library, City of Pleasant Hill, Friends of the Pleasant Hill Library, City of Pittsburg,
Pittsburg Power Company, Pittsburg Disposal Company, and Friends of the Pittsburg Library
for donating to the Green Zones.

PASSED by a unanimous vote of the Board of Supervisors members present this 18th day of May, 2010.

JOHN GIOLA
Chair
District I Supervisor

MARY N. PIEPHO
District III Supervisor

SUSAN A. MUNIZ
District III Supervisor

FEDERAL G. HERR
District III Supervisor
To: Board of Supervisors

From: Anne Cain, Librarian

Date: May 3, 2010

Subject: Recognize donors to the Library's Green Zones and Accept the County Librarian's Green Zone report

RECOMMENDATION(S):

Recognize donors to the Library's Green Zones.

Accept the County Librarian's Green Zone report.

Action of Board On: 05/18/2010

VOTE OF SUPERVISORS

AYES [ ] NOES [ ]

ABSENT [ ] ABSTAIN [ ]

RECEIVE [ ]

Contact: Anne Cain (925) 927-3201
Anne Cain/staff/cccl
04/12/2010 11:02 AM
To All Staff
cc
Subject Fw: Library impacts

The County Administrator asked the departments for some examples of how the services we provide impact people's lives for next week's budget presentation to the Board of Supervisors. At most, they will probably just use one example from each department but I thought you all might like to see what I sent. Thank you all very much for the great job you do each and every day - it really does make a difference!

Anne Cain
County Librarian
Contra Costa County Library
1750 Oak Park Blvd
Pleasant Hill CA 94523
(925) 646-6423
acain@cccilib.org
----- Forwarded by Anne Cain/staff/cccl on 04/12/2010 10:54 AM -----

Anne Cain/staff/cccl
04/12/2010 10:48 AM
To Barbara Riveira
cc
Subject Library impacts

Barb - in response to your request for significant examples of the library's impact on people, I am sending you the following:

1. Recent examples of people using the library

[Attachment: library_impacts.doc]

2. The e-mail below, received this morning from a small business owner

3. An article over the weekend about how the library is helping people find jobs
http://www.contracostatimes.com/bay-area-news/ci_14857448?nclick_check=1

4. Several students from the adult literacy program talking about what it means to learn how to read - I can get you this on a CD as well if you need it

[Attachment: Project Second_Montego_w-ANNCR_2-17-10.mp3]

Anne Cain
County Librarian
Contra Costa County Library
1750 Oak Park Blvd
Pleasant Hill CA 94523
This message was submitted to the Library Commission.

e-mail message: This message was submitted to the Library Commission.

subject: Commission mail, A general comment about excellent services

to: ccclibcommission@ccclib.org

comments: Hello,

I just wanted to take a moment to let those at all levels of the library system know what a great job the people and the systems are doing. I am not sure I could suggest a substantial improvement and that is what I do for a living. Incredible.

I truly value the library. What makes it most beneficial is the way that you use simple technologies to help your patrons get the most out of this vast resource. This helps my small business greatly and also my very life.

I love the new website and my interactions with your staff has been excellent.

Hard to believe you improved things this year over an already excellent institution, but you did. I thank all of you.

Regards,

Name: Jeff Bennett

Email: jeff@logicalmethod.com

SpamBegone: library

Phone: 925-689-6265

v1.1
These are examples from the last month or two of the impact our libraries have on people of all ages in our communities.

Libraries help people find jobs and careers

Last month a staff member at the El Sobrante Library helped a teen format her resume, attach it to an e-mail, and compose the e-mail cover letter. The following week the teen came back asking for help printing out the time card from her new employer—she had gotten the job—her very first job!

A woman who used the Ygnacio Valley Library to plan her courses as an ESL teacher in the Adult Education program lost her job a few months ago. She told staff that she also lost her apartment and is living in a shelter. She still comes to the library each day to use the library’s resources to search for a job. She said coming to the library every day keeps her focused on getting another job and keeps her from getting depressed.

A dentist with a very successful practice in Walnut Creek told a library staff member that he was very much of a nonstudent before he began working as a student shelve at the Pleasant Hill Library many years ago. Over time, he got more interested in books and learning as a result of his exposure to library materials, and, as a result, turned himself around and worked hard and got into dental school. In fact, he continued to work at the Library while attending dental school at UOP.

Libraries help people find critical information

Last week, a very worried, elderly woman called the El Sobrante Library to request a book on ALS. Staff located a book and several helpful articles from the Health and Wellness database. When she came to pick them up, she said she was very relieved and happy that we were able to provide this service to her because her daughter had just been diagnosed with ALS.

A woman with a black eye asked staff at the Antioch Library for information on how to leave an abusive relationship. She left with a book and the phone number to the Contra Costa Crisis Center. Others have asked for information on how to get food and shelter and help with how to leave a gang, or how to get another family member to leave a gang.

A patron who uses the Bay Point Library was diagnosed with an inoperable brain tumor. When she was having radiation and chemotherapy, she regularly came to the library after leaving the hospital to get information about her disease and treatments. There are days she calls multiple times to change her computer reservation because she is not feeling well and wants to come in later and staff accommodates these requests as much as possible.

The library’s early literacy programs help children and families

An 8 or 9 - year old girl recently lost her father in an accident. The Martinez Library staff found some books for her about girls who had experienced loss, as well as other stories to cheer her up. She now comes to the library regularly with her mother for programs and to find more to read. They know the staff by name and staff can see that they are like an extended family to them.
An elementary school-aged girl with a speech impediment attends the monthly origami workshop at the Martinez Library. She loves the paper-folding, and her mother says it is a great place for her to socialize and feel more comfortable with children her age.

Note received at the Pinole Library: "I love the library! The library is a place to experience another world through the various books that are offered. This place is an escape from everyday living. The books, the people, the imagination that can happen here are amazing. Also my son has autism and this is a place where he can be himself."

Libraries help families stay connected

A staff member at the Brentwood Library recently spent 15 minutes helping a patron download pictures of her new son from a CD and attach them to an email so she could send the pictures to her family overseas.

Libraries help seniors

Frank is a senior citizen who uses the Brentwood Library and relies on staff for suggestions for books on tape. He recently told a staff member that he is unable to read anymore, due to macular degeneration, but he was very grateful to library staff, because they "kept him reading."

A woman who came to a recent program at the Moraga Library featuring economist Tapan Monroe expressed her gratitude to a staff member for all the programs of interest to seniors. She said a lot of seniors can't go far to attend lectures that interest them, so she said it is of great benefit that the library offers programs right in the local community.

Libraries help teens

Library staff recently worked with a Court-Appointed Special Advocate who contacted the library by email to resolve fines from 2005 on a child's card. Now 15 and in foster care, he wants to use the library to do his homework. The teen's library card was cleared and he is back using the library.

A member of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Commission sent this email following a recent annual inspection of Juvenile Hall. "Part of our inspections is face to face private interviews with the youth in the Hall. We met with a pregnant 15 year old young lady in the girls unit. In the course of our interview with her we asked if she got to use the Library and she had nothing but praise and thanks for the opportunity to visit the Library and get books to read. She loves to read novels and told us how she looked forward to going to pick out her books. The excitement in her eyes when she talked about the library said it all. After we visited with her we went to the Boys YOTP housing unit and met with a 17 year old who again echoed the praise and enthusiasm about his trips to get books from the Library. It occurred to me the Library is one of the best investments that has been made for the kids in custody in this County's Juvenile Justice System. Not only does it provide an escape, a way to successfully pass the time but also an opportunity to learn about other places and other things. It fosters enjoyment of reading as something you can do anywhere at any time as long as you have a book."

Hardly a day goes by that the librarian at juvenile hall doesn't hear from teens that they never read a book before they came to Juvenile Hall.

Several Pinole Valley High School teens spoke to the Pinole City Council in February. They told the Council that there is no where else in town where teens can find the "treasure trove of information" available at the library.
The library provides free access to the Internet, which many of their families cannot afford, that staff are available to help them with their homework, and that the library is a safe place for local teens to hang out. One teen told the Council that library staff not only help the teens with their homework but they engage the teens in conversation and that he felt as though he had found a friend at the library.

Libraries help people new to this country

In February, a teen from Pinole Valley High spoke to the Pinole City Council about the importance of the library to her and her family. The family arrived from China about 10 years ago. They did not speak English and did not have many books. The dad brought the kids to the library regularly, taking home as many as 20 books on a wide variety of subjects. The teen, who is editor of the high school literary magazine, told the Council that she did not know what kind of a teen she would have become without the library and she enjoys seeing the progress her younger brothers are making in their education as a result of using the library at a young age.

A man at the San Ramon Library was so excited when a staff member showed him where the Chinese language collection was located. A huge smile came across his face and he literally hugged the shelf.

Tech savvy library staff and volunteers help people of all ages

The County Librarian recently received the following e-mail: “I am writing to express my appreciation of the Contra Costa Library and your employee Chris Brown at the Pleasant Hill Library in particular. He went above and beyond the customary excellent help your librarians offer. On his own initiative, he linked me to an on-line version of a government document I am using for some research, thus allowing me to work during hours the library is closed. Employees like Chris Brown make the library an extraordinary community resource.”

A woman with developmental disabilities was so excited when staff at the Antioch Library showed her how to send an e-mail that she gave library staff all "high fives." She reported to staff every time she came in that she had to check her email, because she was so proud that she was doing something that everyone else does. The woman knew that at the library she would be treated with respect and that she had the right to use the library, look for books and ask for information without fear of reproach.

A couple who appeared to be in their 80s recently attended a Basic Internet Skills workshop at the Dougherty Station Library. They told staff they learned so much and now they knew how to fill out government forms online, and said that they are expected to know this. They had never been to the library before and hung out for a long time after the class just walking around realizing how many resources that would now be able to use.

Note received at the Pinole Library: “I realize as time goes by I am getting older. My skills have not improved since I've been out of school in the 70s, since we live in the computer world I felt intimidated by this new age, people, places, and things pass me by. So I had to start to find out where I fit in, to learn, I found out about a computer tutor, here at the library. I come every Wednesday at 6:30 and meet up with my tutor. It's been 3 weeks and I can see the change in my typing and confidence. Learning to me is fun and it is a need. I am so grateful that the Pinole Library is here. thank you! --just somebody who wants to learn.”

Libraries teach adults how to read

Excerpts from two stories written by Martha for collections of Project Second Chance student writings.

"I am Martha, and I can't read"
By Martha S.

This was the first time I ever said openly to anyone that I could not read. I knew it was time to put behind me a lifetime of frustration, humiliation, embarrassment, shame, labels of “dumb” and “retarded” and being powerless. Often I was at the mercy of others because I did not know what I was signing or agreeing to because I could not read for myself...

That all changed the day I heard ...someone...on TV telling his story of being unable to read...he said, “call your local library.”

I made that call the next day to the Antioch Library. Karin, the Tutor/Learner Coordinator for Project Second Chance returned my call and set a date for an interview with me. She treated me with respect and dignity and made me feel comfortable. I was no longer embarrassed or ashamed...

I was nervous and overwhelmed the day I met my tutor. I was finally going to learn how to read! Learning is a joy now and I am relaxed, comfortable and pleased with where I am in my life. I regret the ignorance of people in my life, but I have left their insults behind. Everything I am learning from my tutor is taking root in my heart. The time and effort we are investing in my learning to read is such a joy and privilege. Every new word I learn increases my confidence and self-esteem. I am very proud of myself. Sometimes it is difficult and I’m not sure how I am going to overcome a hard lesson, but my tutor always finds a way. Learning to “blend” sounds into words was very difficult for me, but my tutor found a bridge and walked me across.

Thanks to all the help and support from Karin, my tutor, Roberta, and all the wonderful people in Project Second Chance I now have the tools and confidence to move forward...It was like a miracle that changed my life. Now I want to inspire and encourage others to take the step and make that phone call to their local library and have the courage to ask for help.

By: Martha S.

A letter to Project Second Chance:

About two years ago I came into this program and was welcomed, embraced and treated with respect by Karin and was paired with a great tutor.

I didn’t think it was possible for me to learn how to read but I had the desire.

In the past, I felt humiliated and embarrassed because friends, co-workers and associates would make unkind remarks. I have cast out those negative things in my life and will not allow anyone to treat me like that again.

Last year I wrote a sad letter, but not this year. One year later I am so inspired, full of hope, joy, prosperity, inspiration, empowered, thankful, skillful, refreshed, independent, thrilled, stronger, happy, delighted, amazed, optimistic and full of pride...

I was unaware of how hard PSC fights for the Marthas of the world. If no one has thanked you before, let me thank you know. In my prayers, I thank God for this program and all the courageous tutors. It's extraordinary that you give up your time and volunteer for us...

The things I'm able to do now would not be possible if PSC was not here for me.
Libraries becoming makeshift employment centers

By Hannah Dreier
Contra Costa Times
Posted: 04/11/2010 12:00:00 AM PDT
Updated: 04/11/2010 05:38:01 PM PDT

Alicia Cherry has been out of work for eight months, but the Oakley resident's job search was the last thing on her mind when she logged on to the Oakley library Web site to find reading programs for her young son.

Her attention was piqued, though, when she saw a listing for a library job-hunting workshop. She decided to check it out.

At the evening event last week, Cherry learned how to use library resources to find job-training sites, unemployment benefits, job listings and career counseling books.

Cherry, who previously saw the library primarily as a resource for children's books, said she was overwhelmed but excited.

"It's a lot of information," she said. "I'm going to explore it."

With unemployment numbers in many parts of Contra Costa County holding steady in the double digits, people are increasingly turning to public libraries to help them in their job searches. The library's job search Web site will most likely show a 25 percent increase in usage this year, according to county librarian Anne Cain.

The library has responded to the increased demand with an eight-person job search task team, which coordinates workshops like the one Cherry attended. The team hosts about five workshops each month, each typically drawing about 15 people, according to library business specialist Valerie Zito, who tracks workshop attendance.

"We're trying to create programs countywide for job seekers and post them," Zito said.

"People come from all over the county if they like the program."

The Oakley workshop attracted only three people. Librarian Liz Fuller speculated that attendance might have been higher had she invited an outside speaker.

According to county librarians, the most common resource sought by job seekers is computer time. The Internet has become essential to conducting a job search: Many job postings appear exclusively online, and some employers accept only electronic applications.

According to a recent American Library Association study, almost two-thirds of library patrons ranked job-seeking services among the most crucial online services libraries offer, up from 44 percent two years ago.

Fuller said she often finds herself helping patrons with basic computer literacy. At last week's workshop, she directed patrons to free e-mail servers like Gmail.com and Yahoo.com.
Almost three-fourths of public libraries provide the only source of free access to computers and the Internet in their communities, according to the library association.

In addition to hosting workshops, libraries are purchasing advice books to help patrons with their job searches. The Oakley library recently added a section of books about starting a business.

"It's not just looking for jobs — it's learning to do what you need to do to be competitive in a highly competitive work market," Cain said of the library program. "It's learning to do interviews; to present resumes in a way that will get you hired."

The library does not track those who tap its programs, but anecdotal evidence suggests that at least some patrons are reaping direct benefits.

El Sobrante librarian Elizabeth Weiss recently helped a teenage girl who was looking for her first job to format her resume and write a cover letter. Within a week, the newly hired teenager was back, this time asking Weiss to help her print out a timesheet.

Weiss is rolling with her new role as a career counselor.

"The job of the librarian always changes, and that's one of the things that makes it fun," she said. "Whatever the community needs, that's what we want to do."

The new emphasis on job programs comes amid a broader surge in demand for libraries' free goods and services that is typical during recessions. County circulation jumped almost 10 percent between 2008 and 2009, according to Cain.

But while recessions drive up library usage, they do not help library funding. The county library system has had to cut almost $4 million from its budget over the past three fiscal years, Cain said.

While the county administration supports the job task team, it has not given any additional money for the program. Cain, however, is confident that the library will be able to continue to serve job seekers despite ongoing budget cuts. She noted that even during the Great Depression, not a single library closed.

"It was true in that time just as it is now — people were discovering what they could find that could be of real value and help to them at their public library," she said.

**upcoming Job WORKSHOPS**

- **Walnut Creek:** "Financial Survival Strategies & Tactics Review." Event is hosted by career transitions specialist J.P. McDermott from 3-4 p.m. Thursday at Ygnacio Valley Library, 2661 Oak Grove Road.
- **Concord:** "Roadmap to a Winning Resume." Learn how to make your resume stand out from 7-8:30 p.m. April 22 at Concord Library, 2900 Salvio St.
- **Pleasant Hill:** "Jump Start Your Writing Skills and Creativity." Learn 10 writing techniques to make your resumes and cover letters come alive from 3-4 p.m. April 28 at Pleasant Hill Library, 1750 Oak Park Blvd.