

2025

A Year of Making a Difference with the Friends



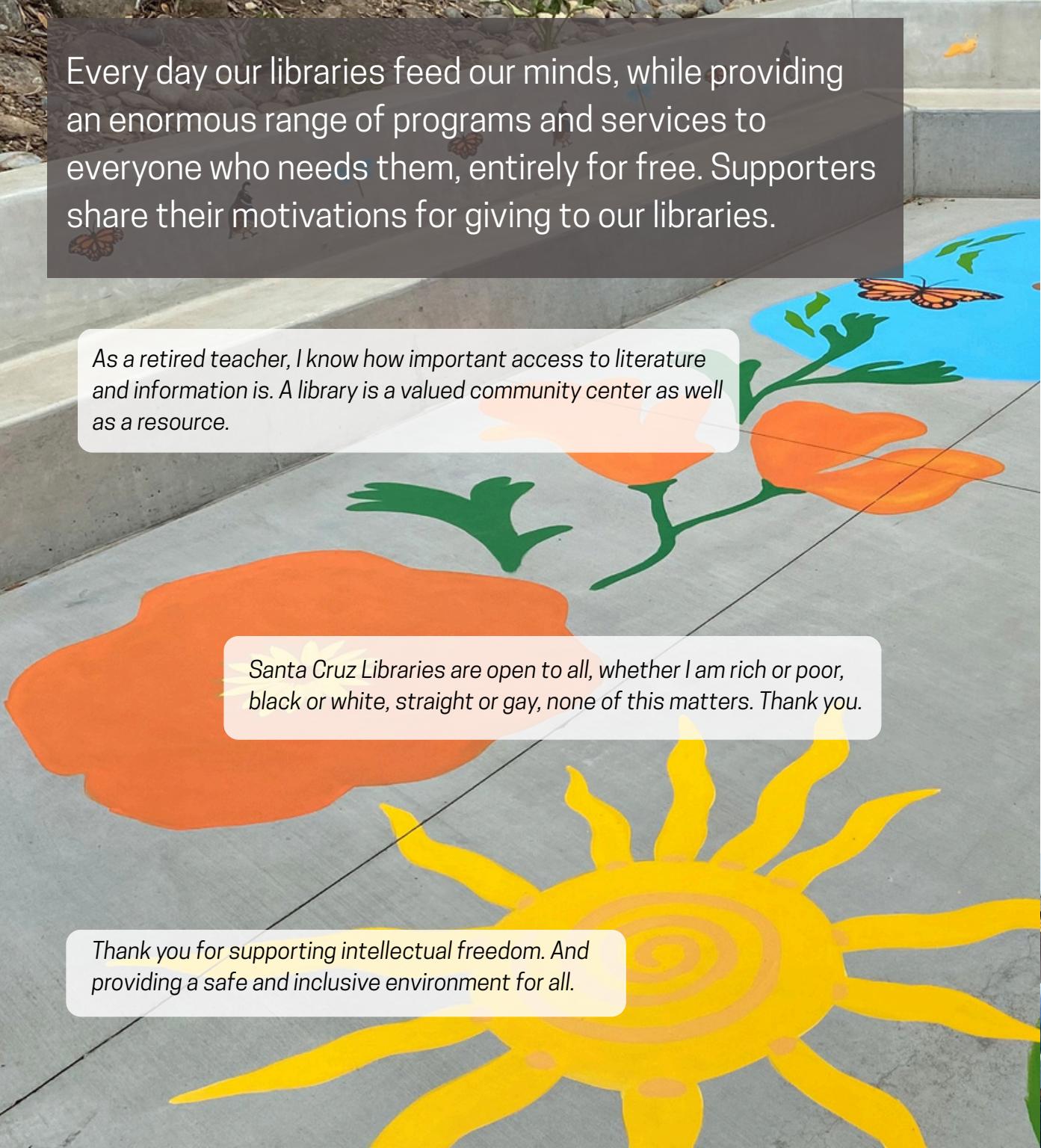
The Friends of the Santa Cruz Public Libraries are the nonprofit partner of our whole 10-branch Santa Cruz public library system. The Friends' commitment to fundraising, advocating, and volunteering for our libraries is passionate and unwavering.

Libraries are one of my favorite places in the world to visit. I go all the time. And they hold so much power within them, and are welcoming to everyone.

2025 Library Supporter

Libraries are a place where young people can find there is so much to learn and enjoy.

2025 Library Supporter



Every day our libraries feed our minds, while providing an enormous range of programs and services to everyone who needs them, entirely for free. Supporters share their motivations for giving to our libraries.

As a retired teacher, I know how important access to literature and information is. A library is a valued community center as well as a resource.

Santa Cruz Libraries are open to all, whether I am rich or poor, black or white, straight or gay, none of this matters. Thank you.

Thank you for supporting intellectual freedom. And providing a safe and inclusive environment for all.

Dear Friends,

Your story is likely among the many library stories of the last year. Two people became friends when they attended a class together. Someone received support for a job hunt and then landed a fantastic position. A parent felt gratitude for a program that really got their kids excited about science. A whole crowd contemplated the meaning of a book they had read.

Can we even imagine how many individual Santa Cruz Public Library stories there were in the course of the last year? We could start with the 852,176 library visits, including ten branches plus an annex, plus Juvenile Hall, and the other outreach locations, and the places where the bookmobile and the book bikes visited, plus all the things that were done remotely. Then we could consider all the people who borrowed one of the 2,146,403 items that were checked out, plus the 4,844 programs that ran, plus the list of hundreds of things you can do at our libraries. There may not be a knowable number of stories, but whatever you did in the library was entirely up to you!

Here at the Friends, we are really proud that we could help support many of the things the library has offered. This was because generous people in our community made donations. Through our role as the libraries' nonprofit partner, we gave these funds to the library for core literacy programs, collections of books and digital items, presentations, hands-on materials, equipment, and so much more.

Please join me in celebrating the impacts and highlights of 2025 with Friends of the Santa Cruz Public Libraries.

Cheers

Sarah Beck
Executive Director



Literacy Fund

In 2025 your generous donations allowed the Friends to fully fund our Library system's high quality literacy-centered programming, covering the cost of programs that focus on literacy and school readiness, provide library services for incarcerated and formerly incarcerated youth and adults, Summer Reading, and Bookmobile Outreach.

More than \$100,000 supporting library programs

Summer Reading and R.E.A.D. are important keystone library programs that promote reading and literacy over the summer months to mitigate "Summer Slide" in students and promote library engagement to all ages. R.E.A.D. is a comprehension program for students grades K-12. Students receive individual instruction from a California credentialed teacher.

In summer of 2025, SCPL hosted **901 youth programs** during June and July, among them 30 performances. Over **4,000 youth attended**, and over **3,000 adults** attended the 260 adult or all ages programs offered this summer.

"We're encouraging kids to read not just for assignments, to read what they want to read."

- Heather Norquist, Youth Programs Manager

The Summer Reading program **saw a significant 19% boost** in attendance of compared to the year prior, and was able to support new attendees with craft and art supplies, performers, and incentive prizes enabled by the Literacy Fund.



Adult summer programs provide a space to engage adult readers, model a lifelong love of reading for youth in their lives, and bring in new patrons while showcasing just how many services the library provides.

Another population served by the Literacy Fund is current and formerly incarcerated youth and adults in Santa Cruz County. Outreach at the County Correctional Facilities program delivers books to juvenile and adult carceral facilities, allowing people to maintain human connection and literacy during trying times.

"We do try to do a culminating summer reading event at the juvenile hall, where we give away free books and bring a treat. They get excited about it and it creates excitement about the library and reading that carries into the rest of the year."

- Jesse Silva, Outreach Manager

The Literacy Fund is critical to maintaining numerous programs that the library holds year round, and in 2025 those programs served under-resourced populations and brought patrons into the library like never before. Every contribution counts and enables the library to provide vital services.

Friends at the Branches

In 2025, the Friends of the Santa Cruz Public Libraries proudly celebrated the dedication and creativity of our branch chapters. Through tireless volunteer efforts, generous fundraising, and deep community partnerships, these chapters strengthened local libraries, expanded access to resources, and enriched lives—demonstrating the powerful impact of Friends working together for literacy, learning, and connection.



Friends volunteered over 16,000 hours in support of our library system in 2025

Boulder Creek Library Friends created family-friendly events and participated in First Fridays Boulder Creek providing outreach to reach out to community members who might not be familiar with all the library offers.

Felton Library Friends hosted the CZU Fire 5th Anniversary, many art displays, and funded enhancements to the library such as a children's microscope, ping pong tables and environmental collection materials. Volunteer presenters offered 13 Community-led Learning programs, including bookbinding, fall planting, mushroom identification and birds of the San Lorenzo Valley.

Aptos Library Friends led the beloved annual Our Community Reads project, collaborating with Friends throughout the county. Volunteers hosted art and history exhibits and saw the completion of a whimsical Sensory Path on the Children's Room patio.

Branciforte Library Friends celebrated their 1st year by expressing gratitude for support from the community and the chapter's dedicated volunteers. The team co-sponsored eight programs, two art exhibits, and five book sales.

Throughout the system, Friends covered the cost of library programs, film licensing fees, expert presenters, hands-on materials, additions to the book and digital collections, and lendable special equipment like telescopes. Friends advocated for our libraries at myriad public meetings and events, partnered to deliver programs like Our Community Reads and The CZU Fire 5th Anniversary.



Capitola Library Friends saw a long-awaited solar energy array and battery storage project for the Capitola Library come to fruition. Thanks to their dedicated fundraising, the project is on schedule and soon to realize energy savings.

Scotts Valley Library Friends hosted successful book sales, art exhibits, author talks and, with a local high school senior, launched an exciting Girls Who Code program dedicated to teaching girls not only the language and skills of coding, but about learning teamwork and the drive to succeed.

La Selva Beach Library Friends celebrated the 75th Anniversary of the branch with the Estrellas de Esperanza dance troupe who performed on the patio. A Books and Brews festival featured arts and crafts, book sale, kids' Story Hour, bake sale, live music, food trucks, craft beers, and more!

Garfield Park Library Friends launched a sold-out play fundraiser, *Murder in the Library: Final Checkout*. The team began Writers Over 55 and the Westside Author Series, featuring local authors, memoirists, and poets, including their own debut readings.



Thanks to community generosity, in 2025 the Friends reached 87% of our \$3 Million goal for the Downtown Library Capital Campaign.



Friends kicked off the public phase of the capital campaign with the Meet Me at the New Downtown Library Festival.

Every capital campaign gift in 2025, beginning April 1 was matched with the help of a generous \$400,000 grant from the Monterey Peninsula Foundation.



Downtown Branch Library Capital Campaign

Thanks to community support, our Santa Cruz Public Libraries have completed upgrades or replacement at nine of our ten branches within just the past ten years. Now we're about to complete the final and largest upgrade in our entire Library system: the main branch in downtown Santa Cruz.

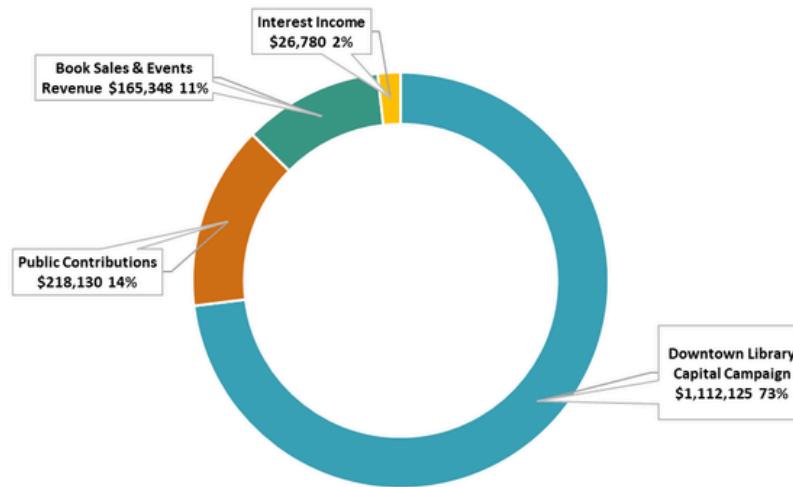
This will be a landmark civic investment - a stunning resource serving people of all ages and interests, and a major asset for our entire downtown. Also, as the hub for the entire Library system, it will continue to support the thriving collections and programs at all the other branches.



2025

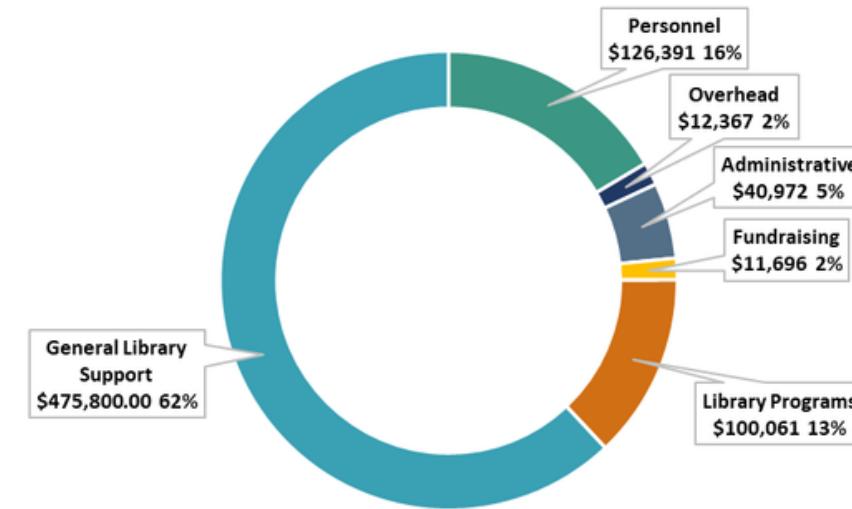
January 1 - December 31, 2025

Income



In 2025, the Friends received 920 individual donations in support of our library system

Impactful Spending



Assets and Liabilities

Downtown Library Capital Campaign	\$ 1,515,031
Unrestricted Funds	\$ 265,095
Operating Reserve Equity	\$ 30,000
Long Term Restricted Funds	\$ 382,597
Branch Support Funds	\$ 549,402
Investments	\$ 139,519
Capital Projects Funds	\$ 221,423
Liabilities	\$ 1,756
Total for Equity	\$ 3,103,067
Total for Liabilities and Equity	\$ 3,104,824

Generous donations allowed the Friends to fully fund our Library system's high quality literacy-centered programming, covering the cost of programs that focus on literacy and school readiness, provide library services for incarcerated and formerly incarcerated youth and adults, Summer Reading, and Bookmobile Outreach. Capitola Library Friends saw a long-awaited solar energy array and battery storage project for the Capitola Library come to fruition. Throughout the system, Friends covered the cost of library programs, film licensing fees, expert presenters, hands-on materials, additions to the book and digital collections, and lendable special equipment like telescopes. Friends advocated for our libraries at myriad public meetings and events, partnered to deliver programs like Our Community Reads and The CZU Fire 5th Anniversary.

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Downtown Library Capital Campaign

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Thank you to the photographers who have contributed to this report; Sean McLean, Rocio Salvatierra, Jim Bourne, and Mary Andersen

