

Multnomah County Library
Library Outreach Services Overview
January 2009

Library Outreach Services Mission:

To provide library services to Multnomah County residents underserved by traditional library means, including older adults, new immigrants, people with disabilities, adult learners, institutionalized people, and homeless people.

To anticipate the needs of these rapidly-changing groups and engage our patrons with appropriate library services and programs.

For homebound patrons:

- We provide library materials and services to homebound individuals, with delivery either by mail or in person.
- Those who use a few items at a time receive their books and movies by mail. We send a bag of new items whenever they return the bag so that patrons have a continuous stream of materials.
- Those patrons who read many books in a two-month period have their items delivered in crates, by our driver.

For care centers, assisted living facilities, adult care homes, and psychiatric units:

- We select and deliver a collection of large print and regular print books, magazines, paperbacks, and audiobooks every other month. These are unbarcoded materials, for the most part.
- We also provide BiFolkal kits, themed collections of music, slides, objects, and activities that are used in groups to aid memory.

For people in retirement homes:

- An Outreach Specialist and a driver bring book carts filled with large print, movies, paperbacks, regular print and audiobooks into the lobby of each retirement home once a month. Patrons return their materials and select new ones from the carts. We call this “lobby service”.
- The Outreach Specialist provides readers’ advisory service, takes reserves, request and reference questions for further research. We also keep our patrons informed about all of the library’s services.
- Lobby service happens on the same day at the same time every month. It is an event that retirement home residents and their staffs look forward to and count on each month.
- Lobby service replaced the Bookmobile in 1997. It is still referred to almost universally as “the Bookmobile”, or sometimes the “Book Wagon”, even though it is not a bookmobile.

For adults in midlife:

- The library is a partner with Life by Design NW (www.lifebydesignnw.org) in a grant from Atlantic Philanthropies, to provide programming, classes and other library services to baby boomers seeking enrichment, civic engagement, employment and information. Atlantic Philanthropies funds a halftime position to implement programs and bring the Life by Design NW initiative to the library.

For adults and children in homeless shelters, transitional housing and domestic violence shelters:

- Volunteers deliver collections of paperbacks, hardbacks, magazines, large print, audiobooks, movies and jigsaw puzzles to the shelters once a month.
- Delivery to shelters is a special volunteer project of the Portland Soroptomist Club.
- The shelter program replaced the Old Town Reading Room, which operated from 1988 to 1997.
- Young readers in MCL's Summer Reading Program have the option of choosing to have \$1 donated to books for children in shelters in lieu of getting a small prize for their summer reading. LOS buys books for children in shelters with this money, which ranges from \$2000 to \$2500 per year.

For inmates of Multnomah County jails:

- A Library Outreach Specialist selects books for each of the living units in the county jails. Recreational reading is geared to inmate literacy, language, and reading interests. Informational reading includes recovery, jobs, life skills, domestic violence and other practical subjects.
- *Moving On*, a booklet of useful phone numbers, is given to each inmate. *Moving On* is also used by Sheriff's officers on the beat, and by community organizations such as Portland Community College.
- Some inmates participate in book discussion groups, led by the jails coordinator, volunteers or guest facilitators.
- Books Without Barriers is a 3-session early literacy program for inmates who are parents. They learn about brain development, the importance of early literacy, and how to choose and present books that are appropriate to the ages of their child. The jails coordinator makes DVDs of the parent reading a book, and the book and DVD are presented to their children. A Spanish version of the program is in the offing (Summer 2007).
- The current jail service grew from LSTA grants of \$128,500 in 2002 and \$118,409 in 2003.
- Funding for the library staffer who serves the jails now comes from the Sheriff's Office budget.

For patients in nursing homes and Alzheimer's units:

- LOS coordinates the Visiting Voices program, in which we recruit and train volunteer readers and match them up with a facility where they read to small groups of patients every week.

For book clubs in retirement homes:

- LOS chooses titles and background material and facilitator training for 20 large print reading groups at retirement homes, funded by the Friends of the Library.

For speakers of languages other than English:

- LOS provides Russian language newspapers for patrons at several lobbies.
- We provide Spanish language books, graphic novels and magazines to shelters.
- We provide inmates with materials in Spanish, Russian, Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese.
- Talk Time groups are held at various branches for new English speakers to practice their English in an informal atmosphere.
- Citizenship classes are taught at branch libraries, in 6-week series, by volunteers and staff.

LOS Patrons and Circulation by Program, FY 07

Program	Description	Patrons x frequency	Locations	Frequency	Circulation	Delivered by
Lobby services	Readers advisory, books, and movies at retirement homes	1495	30	Monthly	35,000	OS and driver
Van delivery	Books, magazines, tapes, puzzles, delivered to patrons' homes	3114 (100 individuals, 3014 in groups)	75 individuals, 67 facilities	Bimonthly	24,191	Driver
Books by mail	Books, movies, CDs and DVDs delivered to patrons' homes	250	250	Continuous	15,000	US Postal Service
Shelter Program	Books, magazines, and puzzles delivered to shelters	2500	40	Monthly	22,000	Soroptimists and other volunteers
Jails program	Paperbacks delivered to corrections facilities	3,000	2	Monthly	36,000	Jails staff, 2 volunteers
Visiting Voices	Volunteers read to groups at nursing homes	1850	18	Weekly		18 volunteers
Large Print Book Clubs	Large print books and info for groups	200	20	Monthly		volunteers

Notes on statistics:

For services where we circulate items to individual patrons (lobby, van service to individuals, mail service), we count the number of active patrons.

For those services where people participate or listen (book clubs, Visiting Voices), we count the number of participants.

For those services where we leave deposit collections (van service to groups, jail service, shelter program), we count the number of potential patrons in the facility

.Library Outreach Services Staff

- Eric Barker, driver. Famous for his Hawaiian shirts and his motto “Let’s go out and make some people happy!”
- Karen Dimond, page. Karen is the last word on our collection, and keeps everything in perfect order.
- Melissa Madenski, Adult Literacy Coordinator. Melissa oversees Talk Time and citizenship classes, and is developing new initiatives with community literacy providers, as well as providing expertise and support to library staff in the area of adult literacy.
- Bess Piñon, Life by Design NW coordinator. Bess oversees our partnership with Life by Design NW, which provides classes, workshops and other opportunities for adults in midlife.
- Tom Newsom, Clerk. Tom is the latest expert on movies in Library Outreach, and takes care of circulation, phones and book lists.
- Jane Salisbury, Supervisor. Jane oversees LOS programs and operations.

Our Outreach Specialists all interview and screen patrons for our services, and assign new patrons to the appropriate delivery method. They select materials to take to the lobby service, and provide in-person service at the lobbies. They place holds and create customized collections to go by van or mail to individuals and groups.

- Geoff Brunk coordinates our shelter program, and provides lobby service. Geoff is fluent in Mandarin Chinese.
- Liz Jordan coordinates the large print book clubs, and provides lobby service.
- Jere White coordinates the Visiting Voices program and provides lobby service.
- Carol Cook is the jails coordinator, and provides library service, including book groups and Books Without Barriers to the county jails.

LOS Volunteers

LOS has around forty regular volunteers. Our volunteers read to groups in nursing homes every week in our Visiting Voices program, deliver boxes of library materials to the shelters once a month, help out in the lobbies of retirement homes at the monthly library service, process books for our jail service, facilitate Talk Time groups and teach citizenship classes. They are indispensable to delivering our services.

LOS Collection

The Library Outreach collection is selected and arranged for efficiency in choosing books to take or send to our readers, and is housed in the Library Administration building. We have about 20,000 cataloged items; about 10,000 of them are large print.

The cataloged items go to our lobby, van, and mail patrons. We have an uncataloged collection of discards and paperbacks covering about the same range of interest as the cataloged collection. These we send to those patrons and facilities that cannot keep track of circulating books.

Our shelter service collection consists of paperbacks purchased from the general fund, along with donations from Title Wave and branches, advance copies from Selections, undeliverable magazines from local stores and the Post Office, and books weeded from the library’s collection. We buy Spanish language fiction for the shelters. We buy

Spanish and English non-fiction, with special concentration in the areas of careers, addictions, mental health, and parenting. We also buy books for children and teens in Spanish and English.

About a third of our patrons are inmates in Multnomah County jails. They are almost all young men between 18 and 25 years old. Many are non-readers or have rudimentary reading skills. Some speak languages other than English including Spanish, Russian, Vietnamese, Chinese and Korean. We are only allowed to provide paperbacks for the jails. The collection includes life skills, literacy, addiction, recovery and mental health non-fiction, as well as fiction designed to appeal to people 18 years old and up.

Our cataloged items are selected and bought by selections out of the general library book budget. We usually have \$40,000 per year to buy paperbacks for LOS, non-fiction, Spanish, and children's books for the shelters, and non-fiction and non-English books for the jails. In addition, the shelter program usually receives \$2000-2500 from Youth Services Summer Reading program to buy books for children in shelters.

LOS Truck

We use the LOS truck for lobby service and home deliveries. It is on the road almost every day. In FY 02 we designed and bought a new cube van with a 10' cargo box and a hydraulic lift, at a cost of \$29,000. Its expected useful life is 10 years.

LOS Budget

The LOS budget is similar to the rest of the library: most of the funds pay for staff. But we are different from other community service agencies in several ways. We pay the County motor pool for gas and service on our truck. We pay the US Postal Service for a merchandise return account for some of our mail delivery. We receive a transfer payment of \$35,000 yearly from the Inmate Welfare Fund of the Sheriff's Office every year in January.

How LOS policies differ from neighborhood libraries

To accommodate county residents who are homebound, or have other barriers to consider, we have different circulation policies and procedures from the rest of the system.

- Holds – Up to 40 holds are allowed.
- Circulation periods
 - Books by Mail - 6 weeks
 - Lobby Service - 1 month
 - Van Service - 2 months
- Fines and charges – All fines are waived. We bill for lost items.
- Cards – Some LOS patrons have two library cards, a regular one and their LOS card, which we keep in our possession and use when we bring Lobby Service.

Community response to LOS

LOS brings library service to some of the most vulnerable citizens in the county and provides a connection with the larger community. One of our Books by Mail patrons recently said, "I just love this service. Every time the books come it's just like Christmas, opening the bags and seeing what I have. It's amazing how close you people come to choosing exactly the same books I would have chosen, could I get to the library on my own".

A recent letter from an LOS patron reads, in part: "I've been an avid reader and frequent library user all my life. Nine years ago I suffered a brain aneurysm and subsequent brain surgery. After the surgery, my cognitive skills were unaffected, but my motor skills were damaged...I was unable to visit the library on my own. But, I discovered Library Outreach Services. Because of that wonderful service, I am now able to pursue my life-long habit of reading. Thank you so much!"

Talk Time participants credit the library with helping them become confident and feel at home in their new country, as one of them says: "A year ago I would not have been able to fill out the application, do the interview and get my new job. Thanks to Talk Time, I did."

The education coordinator at one of the youth shelters we serve writes: "I can't thank you enough for providing this service to us. It has helped so many students improve their reading over the last couple of years. It has also helped me make good reading recommendations to my students. I sing MCL's praises whenever I can."

In a "Books Without Barriers" class at the jail, an inmate expressed that the only time he had read a book all the way through was while he was in jail. One of the "Harry Potter" films had been released, his son had seen the movie, so he read the book so that they would have something to talk about. Another participant wrote: "These classes helped me because I did not know how the brain works on the children's when the parents read to the children...I really want to thank you for helping me understand how important reading to my children is."

A corrections counselor says: "I am a dormitory officer. The books help considerably. Any books are an asset, but having the addition of these educational books is great. Having quiet inmates helps my job, and reading these books sure can't hurt my clientele."

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