



Our mission is to support the Redwood City Public Library in cultivating literacy, life-long learning, and community connections.

A Message from the Redwood City Public Library Director

During these unprecedented times of public health crisis and sheltering in place, people's lives have changed in countless ways, from children learning at home, to the closure of small businesses, to the strain on our healthcare system. As routines have been disrupted, people have realized what is important to them. On Sunday, March 15, the last day Redwood City libraries were open before the shelter-at-home order, it was simultaneously heartwarming and heartbreaking to see lines of people waiting their turn to enter the Downtown and Redwood Shores Libraries. At the mid-afternoon peak, people were waiting 45 minutes to get books and other library materials for their families "one last time" before the libraries would be closed for an unknown period. This community loves its libraries, and we are incredibly grateful for that love.

As we made the difficult decision to reduce library services, one of the huge worries we heard from the education community, the business community, and our most vulnerable residents was the loss of wifi access. One million people per year log into our wireless networks at the four libraries, and in the fall of 2017, with support from the Redwood City Library Foundation (RCLF), the Library launched a program called **Bridging the Digital Divide** to allow home checkout of hotspots (personal wifi devices) to support residents with limited or no connectivity at home. We have over 100 devices available for three-week loans, and for the last couple of years each device was consistently checked out again almost as soon as it was returned.

Please Support Our Community!

RCLF needs your help to raise **\$60,000** toward purchasing additional hotspot devices for immediate use. Donate today on RCLF's website (www.rclfdn.org) and make a big difference in our community!

The temporary loss of wifi in our public spaces brought into sharp relief how great this need is, so we have ordered an additional 100 hotspots to help meet community demand. The devices themselves are not terribly expensive, but each one carries a monthly data plan, so the cost to purchase a hotspot and support it for a year is about \$600 per device. While we are still raising funds for exciting new initiatives like the future **Makerspace in the Library** and enhancements to the **Redwood Shores Library Interpretive Center**, the need to improve access to the internet for students, including those with special needs and low-income residents, is profound and immediate. Your support for our Bridging the Digital Divide initiative truly changes people's lives. Thank you very much, and take good care.

Sincerely,

Derek Wolfram
Library Director

When the new hotspots are available, residents will be able to check them out at the Downtown Library and/or Fair Oaks Library (to be determined). These and other hotspots currently checked out will have a due date of June 30.

WI-FI HOTSPOT DEVICES Available With Your Help!



Provides reliable wireless Internet access for homework.

Many, Many Thanks

RCLF is proud to partner with Bothin Foundation and Saga Foundation in supporting the Makerspace in the Library program. *Thank you for your generous grants!*

Bothin Foundation: \$30,000

Bothin Foundation has been a long-time partner since 2017, helping RCLF to address the most pressing needs of the community, such as youth development, bridging the digital divide, and assisting families who need it most.

SAGA Foundation: \$40,000

SAGA Foundation, based in Menlo Park, is a private, independent, grant-making organization that partners with RCLF in helping underserved youth, providing safe spaces and development opportunities.

Board Member Profile: President John Blake

John Blake has been a member of the RCLF board since 2004 and has served as its president at least three times, once for several years. Born in San Francisco, he spent his childhood from ages 3 through 12 in Colorado, before his family moved back to California. John's earliest memories include prowling libraries in search of adventure and heroes, and this youthful pastime has ripened into his current appreciation of libraries.

After graduating from the University of Colorado, John attended law school at Santa Clara University and has practiced real estate law in the Bay Area since 1977, now at his own firm, John H. Blake, Esq.

John has always seen libraries as vital organs of their communities and uses professional libraries to provide the raw material for his day job. He joined the Foundation Board believing that libraries increasingly serve an educational function, providing access to technology and information and filling a gap left by government and other institutions. He sees libraries as temples of civilization, where we preserve and practice what is best in literature, art, and history and, more recently, assure universal access to these treasures by promoting literacy.

In the Bay Area in particular, to the most fortunate, wealthier residents, the library is a convenience, one of many places they could get a book, music, or other material. For other, less affluent members of the community, the library provides basic necessities — tutors for family literacy, help for students to succeed in school, and computers and wifi hotspots for community use. John believes that libraries are “evolving into more than a place that houses books, and becoming a vital organ of their local community and the global community.” He leads the Foundation in supporting the Redwood City Library in this role.

John lives in Redwood City with his wife Daisy, who brings added value and support to the Foundation. They have two sons and four grandsons. He has been an AYSO and CYSA soccer referee for more than 30 years—and in his spare time, he practices Tai Chi, reads, and occasionally enjoys fly fishing. We are lucky to have him as president of the RCLF board!



John at Taal Lake in the Philippines

RCLF's Unsung Hero of 2019

RCLF was proud to nominate **Ms. Kelsey Dubois** as our 2019 Unsung Hero. Kelsey joined the Library Foundation's board of directors in December 2016 and has contributed her significant skills and talents to the library and community ever since.

As the External Communications Manager, Kelsey was a key member of the Foundation's rebranding effort, after which she implemented the committee's recommendations by creating the Foundation's new website and managing their marketing and outreach materials. Kelsey was also a committee member for the Foundation's STEAM Fest on the Square, which grew to be one of the Bay Area's largest Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math events.



Kelsey and her husband Blake Griffin in Bruges, Belgium

Kelsey is also a member of the Library Foundation's Governance Committee, which has been instrumental in making strategic and policy decisions that have set the board on a strong trajectory for the future.

Kelsey holds a master's degree in Naval Architecture and Marine Engineering from the University of Michigan and is Senior Electromechanical Engineer at San Carlos-based company, Dishcraft Robotics. Thank you, Kelsey, for touching all our lives with your talent, energy, professionalism, and hard work. Redwood City is a better place because of you!

\$25,000 Grant Supports Digital Divide Program



Premia Capital, a real estate development company in Redwood City, has awarded a \$25,000 grant to RCLF. Founded in 2009, it remains 100% privately owned. Michael Halow, company CEO, believes his legacy should be to lead by example and work hard to make the community better for all its residents. Mike focuses on helping kids and lower income residents, and believes that supporting RCLF's Bridging the Digital Divide program, along with local sports, contributes to the mental and physical well-being of our community.

He said “I am inspired by the many amazing and selfless people in the Redwood City community, including the true champions that serve on the Library Foundation Board and those on-site day to day. They work hard to bring this community together and make it a better place. I take my kids to the Redwood City Public Library all the time and I see how much it means to them and to many of us in many different ways. Thank you, Redwood City Library, you are *crushing it* — keep doing your thing, and let's keep pushing each other to make RWC the best town in America!! Way more to do.” The Foundation is grateful for Premia Capital's generous support.

Many thanks to our generous donors!

The following individuals, groups, and businesses contributed between January 1 and December 31, 2019.

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thank you,
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Our Current Programs & Initiatives

Your gifts promote literacy and building community
for all ages through these programs:

Bridging the Digital Divide

Funds new computers for the Downtown Library Teen Center and supports data & annual software licenses for laptops & hotspot devices.

Interpretive Center Upgrades - Redwood Shores Library

Funds updates & improvements to the center, allowing children to learn about the SF Bay and its wetlands through interactive displays & games.

Makerspace

Help us fund a space in the Downtown Library for patrons to "make things" using computers, printers, audio/video, and traditional arts & crafts supplies.

Free Books for Families

Provides free childrens' books in both Spanish and English to encourage reading at home.

Career Online High School in the Library

Allows adult learners to earn a high school diploma and career certificate in Redwood City's Downtown Library.

April 23 is National Library Giving Day

Show your support for the Redwood City Public Library by donating to the Redwood City Library Foundation on our website!

www.rclfdn.org

Redwood City Library Foundation
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www.rclfdn.org • (650) 780-7045

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