



Library Reader

Ojai, California

Spring 2021

NEW LOGO FOR OVLFF

by Judy Oberlander

The OVLFF membership committee -- Camille Carlson-Holly, Kerry Slattery, Kris Humphries, Kara Hooper, and I -- worked together to come up with a new concept for our logo and bookmarks. We wanted something that would reflect Ojai specifically and also our mission.

Our old logo, a boy reading under a tree, has served us well, and we wanted parts of that incorporated into our new look. We decided to use *Willhouse Creative* of Ventura, and they provided us with five different renditions to review. After much discussion, we chose one that we think combines the best part of the old logo with a scene that is distinctly Ojai: a child reading under an oak tree with Ojai's iconic Chief Peak in the background.

Stickers with the new logo are available for sale in the bookstore (\$2.00) and we will also be using them as a "Thank You" for contributions and other things. The new bookmarks are in the bookstore, and we make sure that everyone who purchases a book gets at least one.

Thanks to the membership committee for working on this project. It took many meetings and much discussion, but we are very happy with the results. ☺

Community Reads and Opening Up Safely at Your Ojai Library

By Ron Solórzano,
Regional Librarian

As the situation relating to the COVID-19 pandemic continues to improve, with vaccines becoming increasingly available and California eyeing widespread reopening as early as June, the Ventura County Library has begun offering more services to members of our community. Since moving into first the Red and then Orange tiers, our branch locations—including the Ojai and Oak View libraries—have offered appointments for customers to use our public computer labs and even browse our collections on a limited basis. Masks and social distancing are still required, but for the first time in over a year the public is able to enter our facilities—and we couldn't be happier!

In other exciting news, our library's Adult Programming & Events Committee has selected our 2021 One County, One Book community reading title. This year we are featuring *Your House Will Pay* by Steph Cha. Addressing themes of race, justice, and forgiveness, *Your House Will Pay* is the story of two Southern California families grap-

pling with the far-reaching effects of a devastating, decades-old crime. Copies will be available through our libraries starting in September, with programs running through the month of October and culminating with a talk by the author. We are thrilled to be reading this fantastic book alongside our customers, families, and friends in the county, and hope you will join our discussion!

In another major development affecting the Ojai Valley libraries, the Ventura County Library and the Ojai Unified School District are partnering to bring a new, modern library facility to the campus of Meiners Oaks Elementary School! The new space will feature an updated collection and the latest technology available for both students and the general public. Once the necessary renovations have been completed we will open our doors and welcome the Meiners Oaks community into its new library. The project

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The Old Logo

Ron Solorzano from page 1

is scheduled for completion in late 2021, and in the meantime our Mobile Library is providing regular service to Meiners Oaks on Fridays. For more information on the Mobile Library, visit www.vencolibrary.org/locations/mobile-library.

We are all grateful that Ventura County has moved into the Yellow tier of service and your library staff is at this very moment preparing our facilities to once again welcome our customers inside. Library leadership continues to monitor the situation across the county and the state, and as guidelines change we

will work to respond and report any changes to our services on our website. In the meantime, our walk-up service remains available from 1-6 p.m. Monday through Friday and from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday for the Ojai Library, and from 1-6 p.m. Monday through Thursday for the Oak View Library. For more information on the status of the Ventura County Library, or to check out our eBook collections, virtual story-times, and online reading contests, visit www.vencolibrary.org. ☞

Thank you for being a supporting member of The Library Friends. Do you know of anyone who also should be supporting member of our library? Membership is an expression of both monetary and political support for public libraries.

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The Board welcomes anyone who is interested in its activities too the Board meetings, fourth Tuesday of each month- while appropriate it is a Zoom meeting; send an email to ovlff121@gmail.com for a link to the meeting

The ambiguity of extra

Rafael Heller (Editor-in-Chief, Kappan magazine)
Phi Delta Kappan - April 26, 2021

Simply put, the regular curriculum is far too small a container for all of the subjects and skills that we've come to define as essential.

Ask a random American to name some of the extracurricular activities commonly offered by the nation's public schools, and they'll rattle them off easily enough: the jazz band, gymnastics, baseball, yearbook, Future Farmers of America, the debate team, the robotics club, and on and on. But ask them why these particular activities are offered as extracurriculars, as opposed to regular classes, and they'll likely respond with a blank stare.

Sure, we all know that the rules are different for extracurricular activities — you can choose whether to participate, and you don't have to worry about tests and grades. But that doesn't answer the question:

What defines them as extracurriculars in the first place? By what logic do we assign, say, history and chemistry to the regular curriculum, while categorizing debate and robotics as extra?

No doubt, it has a lot to do with how important we consider each subject area to be. Some subjects (reading, writing, math, the social studies, and the sciences) play such essential roles in preparing young people for college, careers, and civic life that we'd be crazy not to include them in the regular curriculum. Few of us would say the same about jazz and gymnastics.

However, many of us would argue that when it comes to preparing students for civic life, the study of debate is, in fact, just as

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Ventura County Library welcomes customers back into buildings

By Nancy Schram,
Ventura County Library Director

Since April 7, 2021, the Ventura County Library System libraries, including libraries in the cities of Ojai, Ventura, Port Hueneme, and Fillmore, have welcomed the public back for limited indoor services including browsing and checkout of collections and computer use. Customers have up to 50 minutes per day to conduct activities in the library. Since summer of 2020, customers have also been able to place holds for library materials online and pick them up when ready just outside the front doors of the libraries. Throughout the pandemic, the library system has worked closely with public health officials and within state guidelines for libraries to provide safe library services and programs. The library continues to provide numerous online programs and resources, but also has plans to implement some in-person programs again as early as this summer. When the state reopens, public seating and tables will be made available again for study and reading, and time limits for library use per day eliminated.

To find out more about the Ventura County Library, please visit us online at www.vencolibrary.org. ☞

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important as the study of history. And when it comes to college and career readiness, hasn't the study of robotics become just as important as the study of chemistry? Never mind that activities such as theater productions, sports teams, and service organizations help students build skills in teamwork, leadership, and organization that are every bit as important as the academic skills they build in the regular curriculum.

In short, importance is a judgment call — which means that the shape of the curriculum has always been a source of conflict. We can't include everything, so we argue about what to put in and take out, and we end up excluding subjects that many of us judge to be just as important as those that have made the cut.

For decades, K-12 education has managed to stumble along despite its inconsistencies. If a handful of important subjects have been relegated to the extracurriculum, then so be it. Today, however, we seem to be moving toward a point where it simply no longer makes sense to differentiate the curriculum and the extracurriculum in terms of their relative importance.

As the contributors to this month's Kappan point out, our public schools are in the midst of a major reevaluation of what truly matters to the children and communities they serve. While nobody denies

the value of reading, writing, and the rest of the “core” curriculum, greater and greater numbers of us have come to argue that we must give equal priority to social-emotional learning, health and fitness, career exploration, youth development, and other goals that we've long neglected.

Simply put, the regular curriculum is far too small a container for all of the subjects and skills that we've come to define as essential. If we have no choice but to divide those subjects and skills into different containers, then let's dispense with the labels regular and extra. Perhaps it would be better to describe them as co-curriculums, for instance, signaling that while they may differ in some ways — such as the amount of choice, autonomy, and creativity they afford, the extent to which we treat the subject matter as fixed or open, and the amount of time we devote to them — they have equally valuable contributions to make to students' overall development.

[Ed. Note: Our library is now open- that's where all aspects of the extracurriculum can be found!] ☞

Digital platforms aren't mere tools — they're complex environments

By Antero Garcia and T. Philip Nichols
Phi Delta Kapp - February 22, 2021

Educators should understand how platforms such as Zoom, Google Meet, ClassDojo, and others influence teaching and learning.

Long before a global pandemic pushed schools toward emergency online instruction, a significant amount of teaching and learning was already, in a sense, “virtual.” Over the last decade, instruction, whether face-to-face or online, has increasingly come to be facilitated by platforms — in effect, digital spaces where users engage in social or economic exchanges (Gillespie, 2010).

Today's most familiar and widely used digital platforms are multipurpose giants such as Amazon, Facebook, and Google, but the term also applies to more niche resources, such as the platforms teachers use to support different facets of their work, from classroom management (Google Classroom, ClassDojo) to communicating with families (SeeSaw, TalkingPoints); monitoring school devices (Securely, GoGuardian); offering supplemental instruction (Khan Academy), and helping students create their own content (Voicethread, Prezi, Padlet).

When we shift our perspective from digital tools to platform ecologies, we will become ever more aware of how devices and apps shape our perceptions of and experiences with the world around us. As such, they are ripe for reflection and examination. This is especially true in schools, where teaching, learning, and professional development increasingly depend on platform technologies — something the COVID-19 pandemic has both made visible and accelerated.

The questions we might ask about these technologies do not invite easy answers or one-size-fits-all solutions. Thinking about the social uses, design decisions, and material resources that animate platforms is complicated. However, we suggest that bringing these questions into schools and classrooms offers a rich starting point for inquiry, both for educators as they make instructional decisions and for their students who are learning to understand the world.

[Ed Note: excerpted from a larger article; an electronic copy of the full article is available by emailing ovlff121@gmail.com with “Digital” in the subject line]

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Expanding the boundaries of learning

by Thomas Hatch

A world of learning possibilities exists outside schools, but bringing them into schools makes them subject to those schools' structures and constraints.

A “digital poetry machine” displays students' poems on a wall and posts them to Twitter. An enormous mechanical, solar-powered “flipbook” reveals animated images when a crank is turned. A giant graphing calculator uses lightboxes to display algebraic functions - These large-scale installations were designed and built by students, teachers, and artists working with the Beam Center, a non-profit collective in Brooklyn, New York, that helps young people pursue creative projects that merge art and engineering. Meanwhile, staff at Atlantic Impact, a small organization based in Detroit, Michigan, have been taking students on excursions to their surrounding neighborhoods and destinations abroad. And in Singapore, a variety of government agencies, businesses, cultural institutions, and community groups have created interdisciplinary learning programs as part of a government-supported strategy to shift the entire educational system toward a more student-centered and holistic approach to teaching and learning.

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Library Youth Services Update

Becky Rowe, Youth Librarian, Ojai Library
Sharon Dykstra, Branch Manager, Oak View Library

The youth services library staff across the county continue to work hard presenting a variety of virtual programming and reading challenges for kids, creating STEAM Kits for branch pick-up, curating children's book lists from the library's catalog and planning ahead for upcoming events for a fun-filled summer.

Speaking of summer, Ventura County Library launches its Reading Colors Your World summer reading program on June 1, 2021. Themed activities include take-home STEAM Kits and challenges, participation in the library's online reading and activity log (register at vencolibrary.beanstack.org), Storytime, and an online presentation by the Ojai Raptor Center.

This year Ventura County Library is giving away six Nintendo Switch Grand Prizes in addition to smaller prize drawings throughout the summer. Once a child has read and logged 500 minutes, they may visit their local branch to choose a free new book to add to their home libraries. In the meantime, please be sure to visit the Mobile Library at the Meiners Oaks Elementary School on Fridays from 1:30 – 3:30 PM which includes an outdoor socially distant in person Storytime with Ms. Becky (Ojai Youth Librarian) at 2 PM! Hours are due to change in the middle of June so please check the website for updated times.

We look forward to seeing you all there and back at the branches one day soon!

Check out our children's section of the library's website at www.vencolibrary.org or call your local branch to find out more. ☞

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Each of these efforts reflects the growing interest, both in the United States and overseas, in the learning that takes place outside of conventional school settings. To an extent, such programs provide an escape from the usual classroom routines, immersing young people in the sorts of engaging and personally meaningful projects that schools rarely offer (Bell et al., 2009; Mehta & Fine, 2019; Rogoff et al., 2016). In my latest book, I argue that while these kinds of teaching and learning tend to be defined as "extracurricular," they can play a central role in the larger effort to transform K-12 education for the better (Hatch, Corson, & van den Berg, 2021).

[Ed. Note: a copy of the full article is available in the PDF format- send a request to ovlff121@gmail.com with "Expanding Boundaries" in the subject line.]

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America's inescapable crisis: Student homelessness

The housing crisis that affects students across the United States requires a coordinated response among those serving young people and families.

Student homelessness has been on the rise nationally, with 15% growth over the last three years, bringing the total number of homeless students to more than 1.5 million (National Center for Homeless Education, 2020). As dire as the national situation is, though, it's even worse in certain states and for certain student populations. California, for example, has seen a 48% growth in student homelessness over the last decade (Bishop, Camargo Gonzalez, & Rivera, 2020). And because of the COVID-19 pandemic,

Joseph Bishop, Lorena Camargo Gonzalez, and Edwin Rivera
Phi-Delta Kappan - March 22, 2021

which has caused unemployment rates to rise sharply in almost every state (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2021), the numbers will likely continue to grow significantly in the coming months.

California's population, as in many other states, is profoundly stratified — economically, socially, and racially (Bohn & Danielson, 2016) — which contributes substantially to the difficulties of serving students experiencing homelessness and highlights the fact that student homelessness is the result of many broken factors in our society. As such, we need solutions that address the whole system that leads families into homelessness.

Education is largely a state and local responsibility, but the federal government has an essential role to play in helping states support those affected by housing instability. Congress can establish a standard, comprehensive definition for student homelessness to improve the identification of young people who need support. However, a common definition is just a start. Federal resources have to follow the needs of a growing crisis.

[Ed. Note: this article is excerpted from a larger research report. A copy of the larger article is available in PDF format- contact ovlff121@gmail.com and put "Student Homelessness" in the subject line.] ↻