



**EDITOR'S NOTE:** *This is the last hard-copy newsletter.* For more than 25 years you have been receiving notice of what's going on in the valley libraries and what your Library Friends group is doing to support those public libraries. We will not stop reaching out to keep you so informed but will, from now on, be doing so electronically.

If you wish to continue to receive periodic informational news from OVLFF you must send us your email address. To do so, log on at <https://bit.ly/ovlff-news> WE PROMISE NOT TO SHARE YOUR NAME AND/OR EMAIL WITH ANYONE OUTSIDE OF THE OVLFF ORGANIZATION.

### Reconsidering literacy in an AI world

By Rick Ginsberg, Yong Zhao | May 5, 2025

America has been obsessed with reading for decades, but the rise of artificial intelligence may make other forms of literacy just as – if not more – important.

Teachers are the education policy makers arguing that the science of reading is better or worse than other approaches. We are the education researchers diligently synthesizing and analyzing the literature about reading and conducting research about teaching reading. We are the school leaders, the school board members, and the parents worrying that third graders can't read. We are the teachers stuck in the middle of the reading wars, cultural battles, and children who need our care.

- American education has focused on reading for decades, with little effect on student performance.
- The growth of artificial intelligence creates opportunities to access information in different ways that may involve less actual reading.
- Educators need to look ahead to the types of literacy people will need in the future.

Six literacies that could become important are information access literacy, prompt engineering literacy, literacy for truth, communication literacy, ethical literacy, and the literacy mix.

[Note: a PDF copy of the full article is available by emailing [ovlff121@gmail.com](mailto:ovlff121@gmail.com) - put the words "AI Education" in the subject line]



### Little Free Libraries in the Ojai Valley – OVLFF at the forefront of building literacy

What The Friends have done, with a seminal grant from Ojai Women's Fund in 2017, is amazing! The Ojai Valley is now blessed with having 58 Little Free Libraries (LFL) located across the area- at homes, schools, businesses, and other accessible sites. The OVLFF's grant from the Ojai Women's Fund provided enough money to build LFL's at 10 sites, including all of the public schools in Ojai. From that initial point, the LFL project has been going strong with tremendous support from the community in the form of helping to stock the libraries, repairs, and of course the usage of the LFLs. Our LFL program has been recognized through an International Award from the international Little Free Library non-profit organization.

As with any outdoor physical structures, the LFLs have required repairs and modifications. Some examples of how The Friends and our community have responded:

- at Topa Topa School the original LFL proved too small for the high demand the site was incurring... The fix? OVLFF found a volunteer to pay for a new, super-sized LFL at the school.
- The pre-school called A Place to Grow was relocated to Meiners Oaks School site and the LFL went with them; the site now has the original LFL plus a new LFL at a preschooler's eye level.
- When Summit School site's LFL was not getting the same foot traffic as when originally installed, it was removed, cement post and box, and given to the Ojai Valley Women's Club. They have rehabilitated the LFL and they plan an installation in front of their clubhouse, a heavily trafficked corridor on Ojai Avenue.

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**Send us your email.**

To do so, log on at <https://bit.ly/ovlff-news>

All funds raised by *The Friends* are dedicated to support of our valley's three public libraries. Your contribution to *The Friends* is an indication of your support for public libraries.

Become an Associate Member of OVLFF through a donation today - donate at [www.ovlff.org](http://www.ovlff.org)

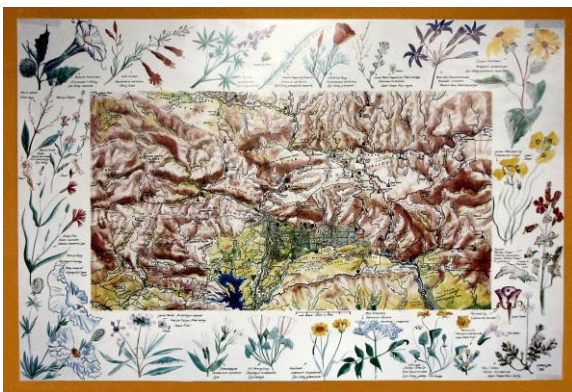
LFL continued...

- The LFL at San Antonio School was moved to Nordhoff High School when the decision was made to close the elementary school.

And our valley community! We have partnered with schools and businesses including Pixies General Store, Friend's Ranch and the Humane Society, churches and a synagogue, the County of Ventura at their community center, the Gables of Ojai care facility, MESA and many homeowners who have 'adopted' their LFL; and the Ojai Valley News donated several of their newspaper racks to be repurposed into LFLs.

The OVLFF always does a significant analysis of needs before installing an LFL. We study traffic patterns, where the "book deserts" are occurring, walkable and safe locations for families, who will provide the upkeep of the LFL going forward. The adaptability of the LFL project has shown the strength, interest, and need for free, accessible reading materials for our community regardless of income or neighborhood.

How can you help? Cull your bookshelves! Donate books to our OVLFF bookstore, Twice-Told Tales, and directly to the LFLs. And visit the LFLs using the Google map available at: <http://bit.ly/OVLFFLFL>.



## So, what's with The Library Friends?

Well, we

- Fund the afterschool Enrichment centers in the three public libraries
- Fund the Summer Reading Program in the three libraries
- Fund Preschool Storytime
- Provide discretionary funds to the three public library librarians for program support
- Provide funding for materials support for the library programs
- Provide funding for additional book purchases

and we

- Purchased, rebuilt and now provide low-cost books to the Ojai public through our Twice-Sold Tales bookstore
- Constructed and have made available to the Ojai community a meeting room in the downtown area which also provides a space for many library programs and groups
- Act as a book- recycling center through donations to Twice-Sold Tales (receiving about 300 each week!)
- Provide a meaningful volunteer opportunity to seniors and others in our community

and not to forget in

- 1980-1981 The Friends raised funds which contributed to the building of the new Ojai Library wing
- 1987 The Friends provided the funds and built the Secret Garden at the Ojai Library
- 1990 OVLFF was awarded the Award of Merit by the California State Friends of the Library for the creation of the Ojai Valley Trail Map
- 1991 OVLFF was awarded the Award of Merit by the California State Friends of the Library for the Secret Garden
- 2005 OVLFF purchased the historic Libbey Land Office and opened Twice-Sold Tales bookstore
- 2016-2017 OVLFF renovated the building, had it listed as an Ojai Historic Property and added the community meeting room
- 2017- The Friends have brought Little Free Libraries to the Ojai Valley
- 2025 The Friends brought the library statue now on Ojai Avenue to the city

Pretty impressive, huh!

No wonder this library support group is worth supporting!

Tell your friends!



# A Decade of Service and Friendship at Your Ojai Library

By Ron Solórzano, Regional Librarian

I recently passed a significant milestone working here at the Ojai Library. It was in mid- to late 2015 when I first joined the team here in town. I had been working with the Ventura County Library for nearly two years at that point, and I was excited to take on my new role. At the time, I did not know much about Ojai, but I did know one important thing: the Ojai community loved its library.

The truth of that sentiment was clear from the beginning. As I got to know the community people's eyes would light up when I told them where I worked, and I heard story after story about former librarians and how much they meant to people. There were families who told me about coming to storytime when they were kids who were now bringing their own children, and I got to know some of the library's super-users who checked out armfuls of books every week. And of course, I got to know the library's Friends.

The Ojai Valley Library Friends & Foundation took me in immediately, getting me up to speed on what was special about the Ojai Library and its programs. I learned pretty quickly that the OVLFF was itself incredibly special—a dedicated and capable group of volunteers whose efforts resulted in so much support for the library's staff and customers. It was within my first few years that the OVLFF funded the renovation of the Twice-Sold Tales bookstore, a project that also created the meeting room that is used so much today for library programs like Storytime and by the community for gatherings, classes, and events. The addition of that room alone brought so many new faces to the library, people who might not even have known we existed before but who now visited us regularly. When the bookstore reopened in its new form there seemed to be no limit to what the Friends of the Library could help us accomplish.

Over the years I worked with the OVLFF to help support collection development (books continue to be a huge part of what we do!) along with other significant projects. The OVLFF has helped us restore the unique signage that contributes to the library's character, added features like the bronze statue facing Ojai Avenue, and supported ongoing efforts to further beautify the library grounds. The OVLFF has also consistently supported the library's Enrichment Center (formerly the Homework Center), which encourages school-age children and their families to engage in fun and educational activities every week. Their support also allows us to expand our summer reading offerings and offer additional performers to make each year's program even more special.

One of the things I like to talk about most at our library is our growing Library of Things. For years our communities have asked for more special offerings to be made available through the library—tools, games, hardware, and more. Whenever I came to the OVLFF with a pitch they were excited and eager to help, and their support has been directly responsible for the creation of our Knitting Needle kits, Sewing Machine kits, Electric Leaf Blower kits, and Book Club kits. Each of these started as an idea that could not have come to be without an enthusiastic partner, and the innovation and vision I saw here in Ojai has spread

throughout our library system. Libraries in other areas of the county now lend induction cooktops, laptops and Wi-Fi hotspots, water-conservation kits, and even ghost-hunting kits, and just like Ojai's offerings are available to library users county-wide, so too are all of those items available now to our Ojai customers.

I am so proud to work in the Ojai Valley, and to have a group like the OVLFF that supports the Ojai, Meiners Oaks, and Oak View libraries. The members of the OVLFF and their board have made my time here a fun and incredibly rewarding experience. Between our library team and our Friends, I truly feel we can accomplish anything, and I am excited for what the next ten years will bring.



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### Ojai Valley Library Friends & Foundation Scholarships

Following our belief is that literacy and the pursuit of education is fundamental to an informed citizenry, the Ojai Valley Library Friends and Foundation is again offering five scholarships- two of \$2000 and four of \$1000 -to graduating seniors from an Ojai Valley high school. The scholarship is awarded to seniors who demonstrate how the Ojai public library system (Ojai, Meiners Oaks, Oak View) has enhanced their educational journey.

Applicants may be planning to attend a community college or planning to attend a four-year institution. Each applicant follows the scholarship guidelines used by Nordhoff HS and include a response to the following prompt: *Write a brief statement about how an Ojai Valley Library (Ojai, Meiners Oaks, Oak View) made a difference in your educational journey (300-500 words).*

The scholarships will be awarded in a ceremony to be held in the Twice-Sold Tales Meeting Room on May 29th. It was a difficult decision process and the board of directors of The Library Friends wish these winners and the other six worthy applicants well as they begin their next educational journey.

Congratulations to the 2026 scholarship winners:

Ben Bagley  
Jocelyn Jiminez  
Cali McDaniel  
Ariana Perez  
Vanessa Ponce  
Liliana Ponce-Nava

Any person interested in reading the submitted essays can request a copy by sending an email request to [Ovlff121@gmail.com](mailto:Ovlff121@gmail.com)

