Inspiration is the process of being mentally stimulated to do or feel something, especially to do something creative. And our Inspiration Stations are tabletop activities in the library that do just that.

Over the last ten months we have had intricate adult coloring pages, make your own Valentine’s, themed jigsaw puzzles, architectural Legos, blank bookmarks and postcards, and crossword puzzles, plus more! Adults find it hard to just walk past them. Children and teens find them magnetizing. Whole families have been known to sit down and color together. As an added bonus, the Inspiration Stations have made waiting for passport appointments a little more interesting.

These displays are important for exercising our cognitive functions and stimulating our brains. Fine motor skills and eye-hand coordination are put to use. Our heart rates are slowed through meditative and de-stressful activity. This February the Altadena Libraries want to show you how much they love you with a very special Inspiration Station. If you have accrued a few book fines, all you have to do is send a positive message to a friend, family member, yourself or to a complete stranger at our Inspiration Station and all will be forgiven. Located in the middle of the library you will find the perfect spot to create your message. Once finished just show it to a staff member and ask them to forgive your fines (up to $5).

Now here is the fun part! You can keep your message or give it to someone you know. Even better, you can put it inside any book in the library for someone to find in the future. We also will have a wishing jar where you can leave your message for the world at large! At the end of the month we will take all the positive messages from the Wishing Jar and make a collage for the community to view.

Special Events for Black History Month

The Altadena Libraries will be celebrating Black History Month with two special programs. The first, on February 14 from 2:00 PM to 4:00 PM is a drum circle led by Nigerian-born Onochie Chukwurah. This folklorist shares singing, dancing, drumming, history and storytelling traditions from his background. He will supply drums so the community can participate in the circle and he will bring dancers to encourage those not drumming to join in. Chukwurah and his family own and operate Rhythms of the Village in Altadena, a store reflecting their interests in the arts and crafts of their African and African American heritage.

Then on February 27 from 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM at the Main Library we will screen With One Tied Hand, a new feature-length documentary from Pacific Film Foundation (PFF). During WWII, the 92nd Division of the Buffalo Soldiers — 4,000 African Americans — liberated Tuscany, Italy from Mussolini and Hitler. One of those soldiers, Ivan J. Houston, a Los Angeles native, wrote a book on the subject called Black Warriors: The Buffalo Soldiers of WWII. That book has since inspired the film from PFF that follows Houston back to Tuscany and captures, among other moments, touching reunions with people who remember the brave soldiers who gave them back their freedom. To this day, the story of the Buffalo Soldiers is taught in Tuscan schools and yearly the Liberation of Lucca is re-enacted by locals. We are very excited to announce that Ivan Houston, the author of the book and the center character of the film, will speak at the screening. "We were freeing people and we were not entirely free. We were still second-class citizens in our own country," said Houston. His book will also be available for purchase to attendees.
From the Director

We love our Altadena Community, but it’s great to know you love us, too. This last year 85% of you voted to retain the parcel tax that helps fund us. We serve around 53,000 people up here and I’m happy to report that almost half of you have library cards. Those of you with cards checked out, (and downloaded), a whopping 208,000 books, movies, games and music. Over 10,000 of you came to 314 programs that included well-known authors, live music, plays and other cultural and educational events for all ages. There were 734,722 visits to our website and 47,000 hours of use of our computers while another 43,000 hours of our wireless Internet was accessed by you. We answered over 31,000 of your research questions and provided 1,525 literacy tutoring sessions.

Altadena Libraries are a trusted community resource and your go-to place for learning, creativity, and innovation in our community. We are dedicated to improving access to learning opportunities and social connections. We are here to be your navigators. We are eager to serve and assist and we look forward to your next visit. Altadena Libraries — bringing people + ideas together!

Branch Notes:

The Let’s Read Altadena Adult Literacy Program setup its first online tutor training program for new volunteers this January. Three new tutors have signed up to train and two have already completed the course. Our lives are so busy it can be hard to schedule classes. This tool allows anyone who wants to become a tutor to train when it is convenient for them.

If you think you might want to become a tutor, here’s what you can expect: You can take the training on a computer, tablet, or smartphone, and receive the same information you would in a classroom training. The training covers the basics of reading, comprehension, phonics, writing skills, and more. You learn by watching video demonstrations and reading the text illustrated with diagrams and pictures. You will be given two weeks to complete the training and feel free to contact our literacy department with any questions. As our pool of tutors grows, we will also be accepting new learners. If someone you know would like to improve their reading and writing, please email Edward at ewilliam@altadenalibrary.org or call the Branch at 626-798-8338.

Children had fun painting ceramic piggy banks on January 28. The children could choose a butterfly, car, train, fish, or a pony. Our next craft program will be on February 11 at 3:30. Children can celebrate Valentine’s day by creating a necklace or bracelet out of pink and red beads — some even heart shaped! Join us and make a special gift for your special Valentine.
**Children: Play and Learn Workshop and the Return of Cedar**

The Altadena Library is a Family Place Library and is pleased to once again offer our Parent/Child Workshop, a core component of Family Place Libraries. This free five-week workshop helps families with young children come together with community resource professionals to get the support and guidance they need. The Play and Learn Together workshop is a one-to-one program and will be held at the Library on Wednesdays, March 2 - March 30 at 10:30 AM. Meetings feature toys, crafts, books and play. In-person pre-registration at the library is required. Space is limited to 25 children ages 6 months to 3.5 years and their parents/caregivers. Older siblings up to age 5 may also attend.

**Read to Cedar the Tail Waggin’ Tutor!**

On February 6, 2016 at 11:00 AM, eager young readers are invited to visit the library and read to their furry new friend from Therapy Dogs International. Read to Cedar and get your Reader’s Card Stamped. Receive a prize after every 5 stamps! Open to all ages and reading abilities. Cedar will visit the library the first Saturday of the month at 11:00 AM through July.

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**Teens: Game Design is Fun STEM Programming**

Back in October, two dozen teens gathered at Altadena Library to learn basic coding at a free game design workshop led by self-taught computer programmer and digital artist by Ean Moore. Ean has a passion for inspiring students to embrace STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) careers. STEM education and programming for youth is critical for preparing them for increasingly technological careers. Altadena Library sees itself as an informal education environment with an amazing opportunity to support the students by offering programs that foster interest in these fields. Ean, a fabulous instructor, seamlessly blends complex and intimidating concepts with fun in his lively, humor-filled programs. We are excited to have him back February 26 at 4 PM for his second (and definitely not last!) game design workshop. This workshop is open to teens 12-19. Registration is not required and all materials are provided.

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**Adults: The Mystery of the Disappearing Stacks**

Psst. Hey you. Yeah, you, the one reading the article. Have you been back into the book stacks recently? It’s crazy back here, right? Nothing is where it used to be. A lot of the shelves are empty. Thing seems pretty random and disjointed.

Well, hey – psst – let me tell you a secret. It’s all part of their plan. Yeah, there’s a method to the madness. They’re creating a new teen area, and to do that, they need to shift things around. They also plan to open up the stacks for more seating, so that the collection is more accessible. This is all in conjunction with a new initiative to update and rejuvenate the library’s book collection. Not only will there be more open space, but also an extra $100,000 has been allocated to the project to help replace outdated materials. So it may look disjointed now, but they’re really just gearing up for something cool.

Can’t believe it, right? I felt the same way when I first found out. Here’s what else: things are going to be moving even faster over the next few weeks. The best way to find what you need is to ask a librarian. They know where everything has moved to, temporary or otherwise. It’s hard to see how great the new collection will be when you look at it now, but listen – if we give it some time and put a little trust in the good people of the library, I think you’ll all be pleasantly surprised at the end result.

Yeah, I gotta run, too. Nice catching up with you. Have a good one.

Oh and hey – psst – see you at Second Saturday.

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Cassandra Stearns

Carrie Wilson

Ryan “Dashiel” Roy
**Babble, Blather and Buzz**

**STAFF Chooses VICKY as Employee Who Goes Above and Beyond!**

**Vicky Escobar** was nominated for the **Above and Beyond** award by many of her associates. A common theme was Vicky’s willingness to go out of her way to help and support staff whether it involves events or day-to-day operations. One staff member said “When I see her car in the parking lot when I first arrive each morning, I know I am going to have a better day and I start smiling.” We truly appreciate Vicky and all her efforts to make the Altadena Library a great place to work and visit!

**OVERHEARD IN THE STACKS**

This library is simply wonderful!

Great staff – EZPZ registration – Yay to having a library card....

Lightning fast Internet connection.

A+ Rating

— Billy Burke

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**What Are You Reading?**

**Kylann Chaney / Administrative Assistant**

I have just finished *The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up: The Japanese Art of Decluttering and Organizing* by Marie Kondo. This is a great book for anyone who wants to get organized and truly live a more simplified life free of clutter. Even if you think you are already organized, this book provides a new perspective and really helps you to reevaluate your life and your belongings. This engaging book will help you gain a new outlook on your life as a whole, not just your home and possessions! A great read for anyone who needs motivation for their upcoming Spring Cleaning.

**Ryan Roy / Public Services Director**

I am reading *The Way of Kings*, by Brandon Sanderson. This is Book One of the *Stormlight Archive* – an epic, long-distance fantasy series that tells a stylized story of Good and Evil playing out in the author’s richly-realized universe of Roshar. The book has been recommended as a family-friendly alternative to the wildly popular *Game of the Thrones* series, and with author Sanderson having amassed quite an audience with his work completing Robert Jordan’s *Wheel of Time* series, as well as his own *Mistborn* series, the foundation for a great read has already been set.

**Mindy Kittay / Director**

I just finished *The Guest Room* by Chris Bohjalian. When Kristin Chapman agrees to let her husband, Richard, host a bachelor party, she expects a certain amount of debauchery. She brings their young daughter to Manhattan for the evening, leaving her Westchester home to the men and their hired entertainment. What she does not expect is this: bacchanalian drunkenness, her husband sharing a dangerously intimate moment in the guest room, and two women stabbing and killing their Russian bodyguards before driving off into the night. It was quite good and we have an audiobook version with excellent narration.

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**Call for Latino Artists!**

In anticipation of our Cultural Arts Festival on May 14, we are issuing a **CALL FOR ARTISTS**! We want to showcase 30 or more Latino Artists and Craftspeople who would like to display and sell their work at the **Main Library from 1 PM to dark**. The booth fee is $25 and you must provide your own table/tent/display. There is no other fee or commission to participate. We expect to have over 500 visitors on that day and will be advertising the event heavily. This is also Second Saturday and that means we will have live music, drink, and food starting at 6:30pm. If you are interested, contact Mindy Kittay at mkittay@altadenalibrary.org.
Hot Titles! For Black History Month

**ADULT**

**Between the World and Me / Ta-Nehisi Coates**
In this 2015 National Book Award for Nonfiction, Atlantic senior writer Coates offers this memoir as a letter to his teenage son about the feelings, symbolism, and realities associated with being black in the United States. Coates recapitulates the American history of violence against black people and the incommensurate policing of black youth.

**The Covenant with Black America -- Ten Years Later / Tavis Smiley**
In 2006, Tavis Smiley teamed up with other leaders in the Black community to create a national plan of action to address the ten most crucial issues facing African Americans. The Covenant with Black America, a #1 New York Times bestseller, ran the gamut from health care to criminal justice, affordable housing to education, voting rights to racial divides. But a decade later, Black men still fall to police bullets and brutality, Black women still die from preventable diseases, Black children still struggle to get a high quality education. In this new edition, Smiley calls for a renewal of The Covenant. While life for far too many African Americans remains a struggle, the great freedom fighter Frederick Douglass was right, "If there is no struggle, there is no progress."

**And Still I Rise: Black America Since MLK: An Illustrated Chronology / Henry Louis Gates**
This illustrated chronology details the most salient events of the last half century in African American history, from the climactic moments of the civil rights movement -- the assassinations of Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, Jr., and the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 -- and the once unimaginable, and now nearly complete, two-term presidency of Barack H. Obama. This is Gates' guide to his PBS series by the same name.

**CHILDREN**

**Ain't Nothing but a Man: My Quest to Find the Real John Henry / Scott Reynolds Nelson with Marc Aronson**
Who was the real John Henry? The story of this legendary African-American figure has come down to us in so many songs, stories, and plays, that the facts are often lost. Historian Scott Nelson brings John Henry alive for young readers in his personal quest for the true story of the man behind the myth.

**TEEN**

**Flygirl / Sherri L. Smith**
All Ida Mae Jones wants to do is fly. Her daddy was a pilot, and years after his death she feels closest to him when she's in the air. But as a young black woman in 1940s Louisiana, she knows the sky is off limits to her, until America enters World War II, and the Army forms the WASP-Women Air Force Service Pilots. Ida has a chance to fulfill her dream if she's willing to use her light skin to pass as a white girl.

Laureen A. McCoy, Cassandra Stearns & Carrie Wilson

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**Gong Hey Fat Choy!**

Celebrate the year of the monkey with us! Chinese New Year starts on February 7 and continues through February 13. For this occasion, patrons will get to pick from a list of Chinese proverbs and Andrew, literacy learner and volunteer calligrapher, will handwrite the phrase in Chinese on a red scroll for patrons to take home. Choose from proverbs promoting health, love, luck, or fortune! Whether you choose "be happy and carry laughter all the time" or "things will happen as you wish," you can take your fortune and luck with you on a beautifully written red scroll. This event will take place at the Main Library on February 10 from 3 PM to 5 PM (or while supplies last) and is free of charge.
No Guilt Book Club: Murder and Mayhem!

The No Guilt Book club non-fiction selection for February is *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil: a Savannah Story* by John Berendt. Shots rang out in Savannah’s grandest mansion in the misty, early morning hours of May 2, 1981. Was it murder or self-defense? For nearly a decade, the shooting and its aftermath reverberated throughout this hauntingly beautiful city. Berendt’s sharply observed, suspenseful, and witty narrative reads like a thoroughly engrossing novel.

Our fiction choice is *The Orphan Masters Son: a Novel* by Adam Johnson, winner of the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction. In North Korea, Pak Jun Do is the haunted son of a lost mother and an influential father who runs a work camp for orphans. Superiors in the state soon recognize the boy’s loyalty and keen instincts. Considering himself “a humble citizen of the greatest nation in the world,” Jun Do rises in the ranks. Driven to the absolute limit of what any human being could endure, he boldly takes on the treacherous role of rival to Kim Jong Il in an attempt to save the woman he loves. The Club meets the 2nd Tuesday of the month from 7:00 PM to 8:00 PM at the Main Library.

Saturday, February 27 from 1 PM to 3 PM is the first meeting of our new book club: From Page to Table. If you have more cookbooks than shelf space, then you might be perfect for this group. The idea is simple. Choose a recipe from one of your cookbooks (or one of ours), prepare and share! We will be meeting and eating in the Community Room. Bon appetit!