



## SPRING 2026 NEWS

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**Board of Directors of the Foundation  
Celebrating 30 years of Solano  
Literacy Program at the 25<sup>th</sup> Silver  
Jubilee Authors Luncheon at the  
Sunrise Banquet Hall in Vacaville, CA**



**HOLIDAY GATHERING REPORT:**  
**Communications Committee Chair,**  
**Kimberly Villaber**



**“Libraries Raised Me — Now, I Give Back”**

By Kimberly M. Villaber, Board Member, SCLF

On December 10, 2025, the Solano County Library Foundation Board came together at CaliCraft Brewery in Fairfield, CA for an

evening filled with warmth, camaraderie, and holiday joy. Set against the brewery’s relaxed and welcoming backdrop, Board members shared craft beers, cocktails, and comforting pub fare while enjoying the chance to connect outside the usual rhythm of Board responsibilities.

SCLF Board member *Satinder Vasudeva* thoughtfully organized a series of festive activities, including a lively gift exchange and a cheerful round of Christmas song charades, which sparked plenty of laughter. SCLF Board President *Ravi Shankar*, ever gracious, added a special touch to the evening by presenting each of the women on the Board with a beautiful flower.

The night also carried a note of bittersweet reflection as the Board offered warm farewells to *Suzanne Olawski*, recently retired Solano County Library Director, and *Ramona Thomas*, who stepped down from the Board to devote more time to family and personal endeavors. Both Suzanne and Ramona were deeply passionate about the Board's mission, and their presence will be sincerely missed.

After a year of meaningful work—including the success of the Foundation’s *25th Silver Jubilee Authors Luncheon*—this gathering served as a heartfelt celebration of SCLF Board’s achievements and the strong bonds that make the Foundation’s mission possible. It was a joyful way to close the year and honor the dedication, collaboration, and spirit that define the Solano County Library Foundation (SCLF) Board.



SCLF executive board member Satinder with some VIPs. We are actively focusing on our PRESENCE in the community, county, and nonprofits. Thank you, Satinder!

**Welcome to our New Board**

**Treasurer 2026,**

**Ariel Ortilla**



**GREETINGS FROM THE VICE-PRESIDENT & Fundraising Chair, Patricia Kutza**



**Where do we enhance Fundraising in 2026 ?**

The theme of our 2026 annual retreat in January was **engagement** and **renewal**.

Our Board shared personal stories of our earliest memories of engaging with books and the libraries we cherished. It is these

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experiences that we will continue to share with our donors and the community at large as we look forward to this new year.

We also renewed our belief that strengthening our bonds with all of the Solano County Library branches will help amplify the message that our libraries are such a valuable resource worthy of support at all levels: county, state, and federal.

**Here is another option to support SCLF:-**

*Do you want to donate to the programs that the Solano County Library Foundation supports, such as Reach Out and Read, Summer Reading Challenge and Leading to Reading?*

If you are currently investing in an IRA and are 72 years or older, you must take a Required Mandatory Distribution (RMD). Did you know that you can donate your RMD to Solano County Library Foundation?

<sup>4</sup> You will receive tax benefits, but you must use your IRA administrator to initiate the transfer. Maximum contribution amounts do apply so it is best to discuss with a tax consultant in advance of doing so.

**Foundation Administrator Colleen Porter on “Libraries Leading to Reading” Project**



*What is this new Literacy program **Libraries Leading to Reading?** -- It's a one-on-one tutoring program that the Solano County Library has begun offering to Solano schools to assist students who have fallen behind in reading and comprehension.*

<https://www.youtube.com/>

[watch?v=mFtDZTAAMPM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mFtDZTAAMPM)

## SOLANO LIBRARY APPOINTS & **Welcomes a new Director**

Solano County Library is pleased to announce the appointment of **Mike Eitner** as the new Director of Library Services. Cont. next page



Eitner succeeds Library Director Suzanne Olawski, who recently retired after years of dedicated service to the community.

Eitner brings extensive public library leadership experience to the role. He has worked in public libraries in Nevada, Colorado, and California, including management positions with the Denver Public Library & Santa Clara County Library District.

He currently serves as Library Director for the Alameda Free Library. Eitner is also familiar with the Solano County Library system. From December 2019 through April 2024, he served as both Deputy Director and Assistant Director, helping guide system wide operations and services.

In addition to his professional experience, Eitner served for seven years on the California Library Association's Advocacy and Legislative Committee, including a term as co-chair during Fiscal Year 2020-21.

**On behalf of the Solano County Library Foundation Board & Administration, we welcome Mike Eitner's appointment and look forward to many years of continued, growing collaborations to boost Literacy & Lifelong Learning of our people.**

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### **DID YOU KNOW ..... ?**

- 1. Reading for just six minutes can reduce stress by 68%, and reading for 30 minutes a day could increase your lifespan by over two years.**
- 2. While global literacy has improved to over 86% of adults, 739 million adults and 250 million children still lack basic literacy skills.*
3. Access to books in childhood has a significant impact on long-term success, with children who own even a small home library achieving up to 3 more years of schooling.

**SCLF has raised over \$6 million to support the life-changing programs of the Solano County Library.**

### **SCLF BOARD SECRETARY SATINDER VASUDEVA shares ...**



**Satinder Vasudeva**

*Greetings of the day to you all ! What a joyful morning at the Fairfield community center celebrating Mychal Threets and friends and the power of Library joy and belonging.*

Today February 15th's 'all ages event ' brought together families, educators, and library lovers to welcome Mychal Threets and the special guests - Jeff Kinney, creator of Diary of a Wimpy Kid, along with award

winning creators, Kaylani Juanita & Joanna.



The read -aloud, Q&A, and book signing all highlighted how books can build confidence, curiosity, and connection. As the Secretary of the Solano County Library Foundation, I was proud to be there and supporting the event and selling our

SCLF book bags to raise funds for library programs that keep this kind of magic going.

I left feeling deeply grateful for our public libraries, the people who champion them, the partners who make events like this possible and for everyone who stopped by the SCLF table, bought a book bag, or simply shared a kind word about the impact of libraries in their lives.



Moments like this are why we do the work of supporting and funding our local libraries.



Thank you, Megan, and Melissa of the Library!

## BOARD PRESIDENT'S REFLECTIONS

***Ravi C. Shankar***

A huge special thank you goes to my team at SCLF: VP *Patricia Kutza* who spearheaded the Auction at the Gala & chaired the Grant, and Fundraising efforts ... *Ramona Thomas* who played dual role as Secretary and Authors Chair ... *Cheryl Stiles* who took on key role of Treasurer & Board Development Team ... Communications Chair *Kimberly Villaber* , Fundraising Team's *Satinder*

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Vasudeva & At Large Member Ariel Ortila. Our lean but strong team pulled it off, even with a couple of glitches to leave a lasting memory with everyone who attended.

As we reflected during our January Board Retreat, we are on target to meet our ambitious goals with an overall emphasis on *storytelling, capacity building and making our presence known in and out of the library system in Solano County.*

With the 2026 being an election year, we can utilize the networks in the city and county administrations and Solano County's multiple networks --even the 5 chambers of commerce.



We hope to see you at our 26<sup>th</sup> Authors Luncheon on **Sunday, November 1st, 2026!**

**A PHOTO FROM THE 25<sup>th</sup> SILVER JUBILEE ANNIVERSARY AUTHORS LUNCHEON: NOVEMBER 2025**

*A lovely baby in a stroller with a BOOK & baby's mom! Future Foundation President? One of my favorite pictures from our Authors Luncheon - Literacy FUTURE leader - baby in a stroller with a BOOK from her Pediatrician.*



**THE VACAVILLE LIBRARY  
GRAND RE-OPENING - Dec-  
2025**

Pictures from that joyful event



At the Vacaville Library Grand Re-opening in December 2025, Solano Library Director Suzanne Olawski, Library Foundation's past President, Jeanette Stevens and SCLF current president, Ravi Shankar. Jan served at the Vacaville Library for many years as Branch Director.

statue of kids reading statues on the front lawn.

# FOUNDATION'S ANNUAL BOARD RETREAT 2026



**Storytelling, Capacity building & Outreach expansion** were reviewed and committed to by all board members for 2026 Board Retreat at the Wooden Valley Winery's lovely Mario's Room.



Solano Library Staff Megan and Melissa

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At the Vacaville Library Grand Re-opening in December 2025, my favorite spot – symbolic

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Board V.P. and Facilitator, Patricia Kutza



Board President, Ravi Shankar celebrating the 2026 commitments after the Retreat !

wish to borrow and use them at their homes and community gardens. That is amazing ...

Learning of its availability, I recently took a chance and asked our friendly, always helpful and smiling staff, Angelina, if a tree trimming POLE PRUNER SAW is available.

To my great surprise, she brought out one and helped me check it out. The next 2 or 3 weeks, I was able to trim a few small branches in my front and back yards and saved a lot of money, gained some muscles (!) with the exercise. Go check for other garden tools available to checkout.

**Thank you, JFK Library & Angelina !** You made my 2026 gardening season begin well at my home in Vallejo.

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**“ Libraries make knowledge available to everyone, which is true freedom.”**

**Board Secretary's REPORT:**

Greetings from *Satinder Vasudeva* !

As Secretary of the Solano County Library Foundation, I've had the pleasure of attending a few community events on behalf of the Foundation- connecting with supporters, sharing our goals, and celebrating the positive impact our libraries continue to have on people's lives.

**“Libraries don't serve an age group- they serve the human journey from curiosity to wisdom.”**

At the **Marsh Arts Centre in Berkeley**, I had the honor of meeting Ms. Karen Ripley, a gracious lady serving at the bar. She shared how her local library helped shape her life and fueled her dreams. Her words resonated with me on a deep level, highlighting that libraries don't just lend books; they open doors of possibilities.

On February 5th, at the networking mixer at **Valley Strong Credit Union**, the Vacaville business community had gathered, bringing together small business owners and community partners for relationship building. Not only did we exchange our business

**STORYTELLING .....**  
**“Garden Tools from our Libraries” !?**



**YES ...** Most library patrons know they can check out books, CDs, and DVDs ... In recent years, there were flower, veggie, and herb SEEDS from the Seed Bank. At the JFK Library in Vallejo, they are even offering GARDEN TOOLS to members who

cards, but also smiles and stories, maintaining a positive upbeat energy throughout the event.

ON February 12th, I got another opportunity to meet and socialize with the members of City Council, **APAPA**, & AAGE. The esteemed guests exhibited strong encouragement and advocacy for libraries.

On February 17<sup>th</sup> at the **Fairfield Community Centre**, I truly felt ebullient attending **Mychal Threats** & Friends. The event brought together families, educators, and library lovers who experienced the inspiring presence of special guests and authors, *Jeff Kinney*, *Kaylani Juanita*, and *Joanna Ho*. As the secretary of the SCLF, I was proud to be there supporting the event and selling our SCLF book bags to raise funds for library programs that keep the magic going. I am grateful to everyone who bought a bag or two and contributed towards the mission of our Foundation.

I am appreciative of the people who champion the cause, the partners whose collaboration enables us to bring events like this to shine.

Our Foundation works to strengthen library programs, expand access to resources, and foster a love of learning across Solano County. We invite you to join us in our efforts, whether by volunteering, donating, or simply spreading the word, to ensure our libraries remain vibrant centers of learning and connection for everyone.

**“Thanks to you, our community has a soul: i.e., Its library.”**

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**Have you checked or referred to our SCLF website lately?**

Board Member and current Website Manager,  
**Cheryl Stiles-Haskins**



Cheryl shares interesting updates on our SCLF website, including the picture and profile of our newest Board Member, Joshua Trujillo (see 2<sup>nd</sup> column), pictures from some recent events and our 1st Quarter 2026 Newsletter.

Cheryl also finalized the new board member recruitment and onboarding process as committee chair along with Ravi and Kimberly as members.

If you have any committed candidates who wish to serve on our board, please ask them to contact Cheryl or Colleen at the office at 707-421-8075/solanolibraryfoundation@gmail.com

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*Foundation Admin. Director Colleen gets books signed by our Library superstar ... Mychal Threats in Fairfield.*



It is never too early to fall in love with learning, says Joshua.

In fact, he says he would tell his younger self "*that Kindergarten is the perfect place to start this journey.*"

As a retired police officer, he is acutely aware of the important role libraries play in providing safe, inclusive spaces and equitable access to resources that encourage lifelong learning.

Apart from adding a youthful, strong, and fresh perspective to our board, Joshua proactively networks and leads outreach efforts in all of Solano county with all its diverse, geographically linked cities.

In his spare time, Joshua enjoys savoring the natural beauty Solano County offers, playing with his dog, playing baseball, reading, and working out. In an alternate universe, he visualizes working for Lonely Planet.

### **In this Newsletter**

**Newsletter Team:** Ravi, Patricia & Colleen

- 2025 Holiday Board Gathering**
- Re-opening of Vacaville Library**
- 2026 Board Retreat & Planning**

**Welcome Joshua !**

**Welcome to our  
Foundation's New Board  
Member 2026,  
JOSHUA TRUJILLO !  
Oakland Police Officer, Retired**

