

2025 ANNUAL REPORT ON

# Donor Impact



Libraries are for everyone. They are among the only places where everyone is welcome, no matter your identity. Libraries make knowledge accessible and free for all visitors year round. And for that reason, in 2025 they came under attack like never before.

In a year that saw widespread national efforts to defund and censor libraries, The Seattle Public Library stood strong thanks to the incredible support of people like you. Because of your generosity, the Foundation was able to increase our giving to the Library to more than \$6.7 million. Record numbers of advocates spoke up to defend the library values we believe in.

Our organization helped meet the urgent needs of this moment through responsive funding. We planned for the future by listening to community feedback about what the Library needs and how we can position the Foundation to have the most impact. This report will help you see both the immediate and overall impacts of the books, programs, and services you make possible.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, thank you for protecting and enhancing the libraries we love and rely on.

With gratitude,

Sarah Stanley  
Board President, 2024-25

# What is the impact of your support?

The Seattle Public Library (SPL) set a new record for active users in 2025. The Foundation's support makes possible many of the books, programs, and services that make our Library so popular.

Take a look at the difference donors made last year by the numbers:

**102,000+** new books purchased for the Library, including:

**88,000+**

print and digital  
books added into  
circulation

**14,000+**

book giveaways  
at community  
programs

**36%**

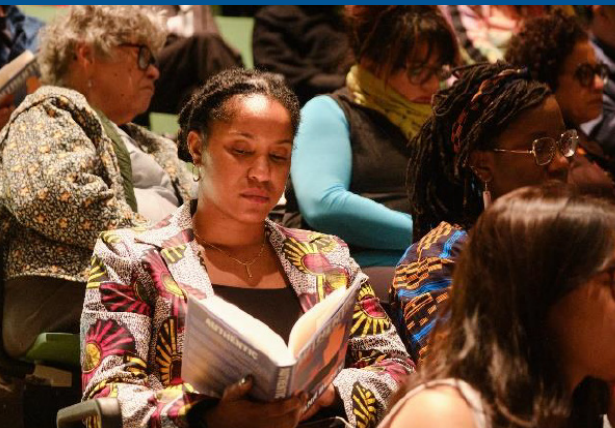
of all new  
SPL books in  
2025

**5,800+** free programs and events, including:

**6,000+** students served at Homework Help

**5,000+** adult participants in Seattle Reads

**3,500+** hours of English conversation practice



# Everything you make happen!

The Library offers so many services. To help you keep track of the amazing things you support, here is a comprehensive list of all the efforts donations made possible at SPL last year, by category:

## Library Collections and Materials

- Adult fiction and nonfiction collections
- Children's collections
- History collections in the Seattle Room, including support for preservation and processing
- Focused and unique collections, such as:
  - African American Collection
  - Biography and literature classics
  - Design and decorative arts collection
  - Genealogy resources
  - Large print and low vision materials
  - World Languages expansion
- 24/7 holds pickup lockers for greater access and convenience
- Books Unbanned, providing digital books to young readers nationwide

## Literacy Through Reading and Discovery

- Digital media programs for teens
- Early learning programs, such as:
  - Raising A Reader preschool activities
  - Play & Learn sessions at branches
  - Story Time in multiple languages
- Global Reading Challenge and author events in schools
- Out-of-school youth programs, such as:
  - Homework Help tutoring sessions
  - Learning Buddies mentoring programs
  - Summer learning activities
  - Team Read literacy coaching
  - Book giveaways to build home libraries



## Enrichment Through Joy and Connections

- Literature and humanities programming, such as:
  - Free author events
  - Bullitt Lecture in American History
  - Community-curated author series
  - Seattle Reads: one city, one book
- Local branch funding for celebrations and programming
- Museum Pass program for free access to arts and culture institutions
- Arts and engagement programs, such as:
  - Artist in Residence
  - QTBIPOC Artist Engagement
  - Special Collections Programming
- Bookmobile and mobile services for senior communities and preschools
- Engagement programs for older adults



## Empowerment Through Skill Building

- Adult skills classes
- Workforce development for teens and adults
- English for Speakers of Other Languages programs, such as conversation circles and leveled language learning classes
- Citizenship classes
- Digital literacy courses
- Family and financial literacy courses
- Library to Business for entrepreneurs
- Engagement programs and services for teens and young adults



## Welcoming and Belonging

- Branch furniture and fixtures updates
- Launching an Inclusion & Belonging office
- Library Equal Access Program (LEAP), providing accessible resources such as:
  - LEAP Lab
  - All Abilities Programming
- Fresh Start to remove fines for teens
- Community engagement programs
- Training opportunities for SPL staff



The Young Adult Resource Fair at the Central Library offers access to dozens of community organizations providing a wide range of services. (Photo by Anthony Martinez)

## Responding to our community needs

The Seattle Public Library is an essential hub of information. In order to provide free access to all forms of knowledge for everyone, the Library must be responsive to the growing and changing needs of Seattle’s diverse population.

Foundation funding allows the Library to be innovative and flexible. Examples from around the branches demonstrate the value of responding to patron feedback with new resources and services.

“I saw a girl who is usually shy step up to be captain of a team,” said a school librarian of the **Global Reading Challenge**. “The team looked to her for guidance on what to read and how to study. It has shifted the way she sees herself in her classroom and among her peers.”



### Ensuring language access for all readers

Seattle is home to a growing number of Portuguese-speaking immigrants and refugees, mostly from Angola. However, the Library did not offer a dedicated Portuguese book collection. SPL heard increasing feedback from patrons and partner organizations about the lack of reading options for this community. Last year, a new investment launched a collection of 353 Portuguese books for children, teens, and adults. These titles now form the 19th language in the World Language Collection, available at the Central Library and digitally.



### Engaging students with books and art

Youth and families living in Yesler Terrace were seeking more ways to engage with art and reading outside of school. In response, the Library worked with local artists of color to develop a four-week program series with Seattle Housing Authority,

“This is an absolutely necessary tool for me being able to read,” said a patron of one of the **Mobile Services** team’s retirement home “lobby stops.” “The services provide my only source for books now that I’m unable to get to the Library. Indeed, a mental and emotional lifesaver!”

*Engaging students with books and art (cont.)*

titled “Academic Adventures.” Programs were free and held on site at Yesler Terrace to reduce barriers to participation.

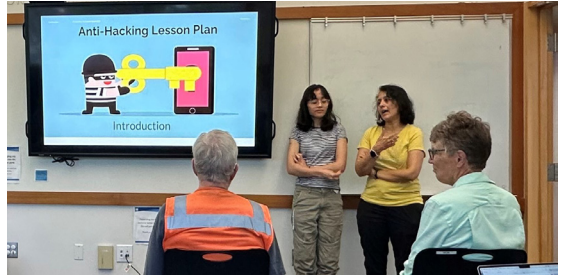
In addition to hands-on arts training, SPL provided responsive read-aloud books, visits

from children’s librarians, and activities and games for students impacted by educational inequities. Across Seattle, similar programs for school-age children engaged 730 families and provided 850 books for students to take home for their own collections.

 **Decoding technology for older adults**

The Library is committed to digital literacy. For many older patrons, that means understanding how to use and interpret new technologies. In response to this need, SPL focused much of its 2025 older adult programming on tech education.

The AI Safety Awareness Project offered free courses on artificial intelligence. Classes with Teens Who Care provided intergenerational tutoring. Kin On, an organization for Asian elders,



*Teens Who Care at the Montlake Branch. (Photo by Emily Billow)*

held Chinese-language tech workshops at the Beacon Hill Branch. Overall, the Library increased its offerings for older adults to 123 programs in 10 languages at more than 40 locations.

 **Building teen skills through service**

Service learning placements help teenagers boost college applications and build job skills. But opportunities are often limited, especially for young people from underserved communities. To address this need, the Library more than doubled the number of service learning options for high school students.

Teens received stipends to work on a range of projects that also address community needs at five branches. One group researched local queer history at the Capitol Hill Branch. Another developed and marketed programs for K-5 students in Rainier Beach. At the Southwest Branch, students organized teen trivia. 100 percent of participants reported increased skills in time management, project planning, and teamwork.

 **Welcoming patrons with new tools**

The Library Equal Access Program (LEAP) seeks to expand access to books and programs for people with disabilities. For example, LEAP often receives requests from people who want to learn to read braille. Assistive technology helps meet that need.

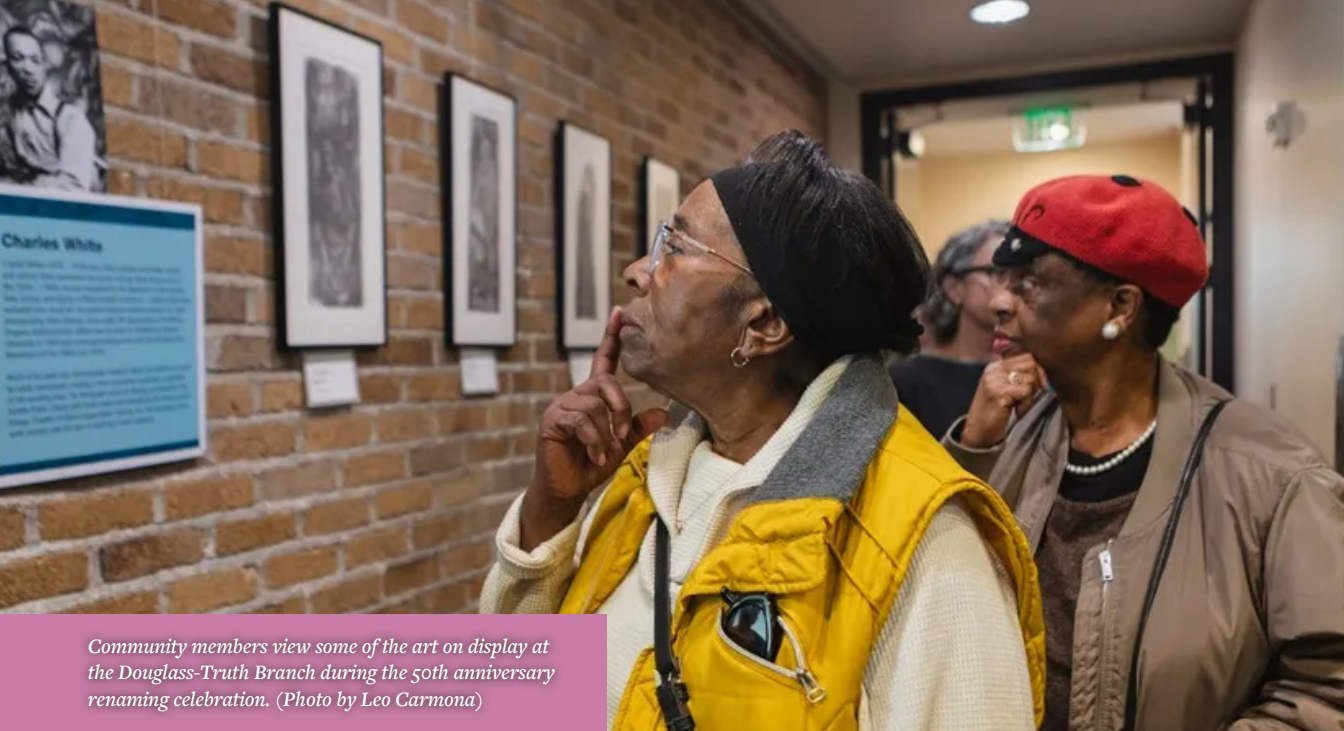
Last year LEAP acquired a new electronic braille learning device that teaches through a gamified

approach. It incorporates the many ways that people interact with braille—sight reading, tactile reading, typing, and using a stylus—into one machine.

Other new devices include an automatic page turner that lets users attach book pages to arms operated by a wireless pedal, and a high-resolution video magnifier that offers text-to-speech for books. One patron expressed his appreciation for the latter device, which allows him to hear printed materials in his native language.

“Your visits are always a refreshing time, coupled with a new crop of literature to read and enjoy,” said one women’s shelter partner of the Library’s **Community Engagement** team. “Having library books brought into the shelter allows an outlet for individuals who are otherwise closed in.”

**YOUR GIFT TO THE FOUNDATION** supports innovative Library programs that address people’s most urgent priorities. Make a gift at **supportspl.org** today to help continue the services our neighbors need the most.



Community members view some of the art on display at the Douglass-Truth Branch during the 50th anniversary renaming celebration. (Photo by Leo Carmona)

## Bringing our community together

The Seattle Public Library is unique in its ability to connect people. Like almost nowhere else, the Library invites neighbors of all backgrounds to interact, learn from, and celebrate each other, with no costs or barriers to entry.

Gatherings at the Library are vital forms of connection at a time when people feel increasingly isolated. They are also a whole lot of fun, spreading joy and building friendships across the city.

“My favorite part of **Team Read** is how fun and outgoing people are,” said one teen reading coach in the program that pairs high school tutors with younger students learning to read. “That togetherness and community is something that is unforgettable!”



### Celebrating a proud literary legacy

In the 1960s and ‘70s, Black activists, librarians, and organizations pushed to create the African American Collection at what was then called the Yesler Branch. Their years-long advocacy also renamed the branch, after Frederick Douglass and Sojourner Truth, in 1975.

Last year, the community celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Douglass-Truth Branch’s renaming. Staff and local elders led tours, highlighting the branch’s unique artwork and the more than 10,000 items housed in the African American Collection. The Garfield Jazz Band performed and attendees enjoyed arts and crafts, food, and good company.



### Interacting with fellow book lovers

The goal of many Library programs is to make reading fun, especially at a time when literacy rates are in decline. Just as the Global Reading

“We had an absolute blast, and it was lovely to provide a place where the students could get a lot of validation for being their whole selves,” said a teacher who worked with **All Abilities Programming** on neurodiverse gaming sessions. “And oh my gosh did we ever laugh. A LOT.”

### Interacting with fellow book lovers (cont.)

Challenge does for thousands of children, Book Bingo engages adults with programs that connect people around shared reading experiences.

The 2025 edition of Book Bingo saw a 27 percent increase in participation over the previous year. Participants read more than 30,000 books and

were encouraged to join communal book events throughout the summer. The Library participated in a large silent reading party at Seattle Center held by Seattle Arts & Lectures. Branches like Green Lake held Book Bingo celebrations as well. And of course, readers who turned in their bingo boards took home Library prizes!



## Ring in the new year in a new way

The Library is always a popular place for families during school breaks. And the Greenwood Branch event drew even larger crowds than usual at the end of 2025 thanks to the inaugural “New Year’s at Noon!” event.

The lively gathering included a kid-friendly countdown to 12 pm, along with hands-on activities like a photo booth, Chinese lanterns, and interactive programs. The branch welcomed 175



*New Year’s at Noon! (Photo by Dawn Rutherford)*

patrons to celebrate and connect together. “It was hilarious, fun, amazing, and crazy,” said one attendee. “Thank you so very much!”



## Sharing the learning experience and more

The Library significantly expanded English language learning classes in 2025 thanks to a major new grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York. These classes provide more options for immigrants and refugees to build language and workplace skills—and to connect with the community and one another.

For example, the NewHolly Branch hosted more than 225 adult students last year. The class visited nearby organizations like Neighborhood House and the Somali Family Task Force to learn about services. They marked the end of their first quarter with a potluck, and one student shared that it was a “day of celebration” for him. Because of the improved English skills he had gained, he had just been able to act as a translator for his wife’s medical appointment.



## Reinforcing the need for belonging

The Library is committed to program partnerships. In 2025, many cohosted programs celebrated and affirmed queer communities. Legendary Children, the all-ages party with artists who are queer, trans, and people of color (QTBIPOC), celebrated its 10th anniversary. The rousing event at the Seattle Art Museum drew more than 400 people for a night of “unapologetic queer joy.”

The Library and Charlie’s Queer Books cohosted one of the year’s more popular author events, with Schuyler Bailar at the Fremont Abbey. More than 100 people gathered to discuss ways to build trans community and show up as allies.

As one of 2025’s SPL Artists in Residence, Vaquero Azul produced programs including a trans Meso-American art show at the Central Library. “It empowered me to see my work validated in the impact it had on the community,” Azul said.

“It was really cool to be able to affirm our existing experience while letting the book be a container for us giving each other advice and support,” said one participant in a mutual aid book club through **Civic Engagement Programming**.

### YOUR GIFT TO THE FOUNDATION

supports events that create joy and connection for Seattle residents every day. Make a gift at **supportspl.org** today to provide more people with fun experiences and chances to get to know their neighbors at the Library.

# Our Board

Our Board of Directors are passionate community members who give their time and expertise because they believe in what libraries can do. Thank you to the dedicated volunteers who oversaw our budget, fundraised, advocated, and much more as part of the Board in 2025:

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Vice President

Jennifer Southwell  
Vice President

Nick Momyer, CAIA  
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Jon Jurich  
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Brian Lawrence  
CEO, The Seattle Public Library Foundation

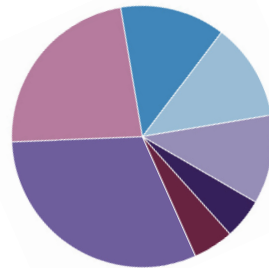
Tom Fay  
Chief Librarian, The Seattle Public Library

Carmen Bendixen  
Board Liaison, The Seattle Public Library

# 2025 impact information

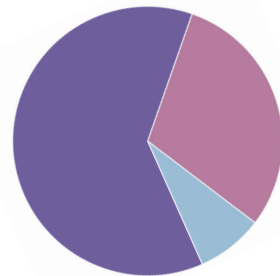
Year ending December 31, 2025\*

## SUPPORT TO THE LIBRARY



<b>31%</b> Collections & Seattle Room	\$ 2,049,000
<b>23%</b> Community Engagement	1,552,000
<b>13%</b> Programs & Advocacy Support	870,000
<b>12%</b> Youth & Early Learning	795,000
<b>11%</b> Technology & Access	761,000
<b>5%</b> Reimagined Spaces	360,000
<b>5%</b> In-Kind Support to the Library	348,000
<b>TOTAL SUPPORT</b>	<b>\$ 6,735,000</b>
Foundation Operations Costs	1,569,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 8,304,000</b>

## SOURCES OF SUPPORT



<b>62%</b> Contributions	\$ 5,583,000
<b>30%</b> Endowment & Quasi Endowment Payouts	2,391,000
<b>8%</b> In-Kind Contributions	348,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 8,322,000</b>

\*Not audited financial statements



The Seattle Public Library Foundation has earned a platinum seal of transparency from Candid (GuideStar) and a rating as a Four-Star Charity from Charity Navigator, the highest honors of financial transparency from leading independent charity evaluators.

# Advocacy

2025 saw more threats to libraries than ever before around the nation. Fortunately, in Seattle, library advocates kept raising their voices even louder.

Sign-ups for the Public Library Action Network (PLAN), the grassroots advocacy alert tool led by the Foundation and Friends of The Seattle Public Library, increased by 250 percent in 2025.

Hundreds of supporters responded when the Trump administration attempted to eliminate funding for the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), sending messages to our federal and state leaders.

At the local level, advocacy to the City Council helped ensure that the Library received stable funding despite a difficult budget environment. Advocates engaged with candidates for Mayor and City Council, building key relationships.



Library and Foundation leaders tour the University Branch retrofit project with U.S. Rep. Pramila Jayapal. (Photo courtesy of The Seattle Public Library)

Greater engagement with elected officials in City Hall, in Olympia, and in Congress helped protect our Library in 2025. Supporters defended SPL from the budget cuts and defunding efforts impacting so many libraries around the country. This built critical momentum for 2026, an important year when the city must pass a new Library Levy. Add your voice and join the PLAN today—your Library needs you!



## SIGN UP FOR THE PUBLIC LIBRARY ACTION NETWORK (PLAN)!

Take action when your voice is needed. Visit [bit.ly/PLANsignup](https://bit.ly/PLANsignup) or scan the QR code to receive advocacy alerts and speak up for libraries!

# Strategic plan

In 2025, the Foundation embarked on a strategic planning process. After extensive discussion, listening sessions, and stakeholder surveys, our Board of Directors approved a plan that builds on our past successes and charts a bold course for 2026 to 2030.

The new plan affirmed our mission and values. We are guided by two foundational commitments:

- **Equity:** continuing to instill equity values through the Foundation and enabling the Library's equity mission.
- **A Vibrant Organization:** building and supporting a strong, healthy organization that can execute our strategy.

The plan also developed four key goals to guide our work over the next five years:

- Grow and diversify fundraising year over year to increase giving to SPL 50% or more by 2030.
- Build advocacy capabilities to leverage public support.
- Support Library strategy and transformation.
- Increase the visibility of the Foundation so the community understands and contributes to advancing our mission.

The Foundation thanks the many donors, SPL staff members, and partners who informed our strategic planning process in 2025. To read the full plan, visit [supportspl.org/strategicplan](https://supportspl.org/strategicplan).



Local illustrator Olivia Sua leads a bilingual Story Time at the South Park Branch. (Photo by Leo Carmona)

# Legacy means passing down love for stories

Including The Seattle Public Library Foundation as a beneficiary in your will, retirement asset, or life insurance – or making a gift to an endowment – leaves a generous legacy that helps ensure the long-term vitality of the Library.

## Your story can fuel others

Everyone has a library story. Turning that personal experience into a gift that creates countless new ones is the promise of the Foundation's Legacy Society.

Kathleen Southwick, a longtime Foundation donor and Legacy Society member, started visiting libraries as a young child at Story Time. By fourth grade, her mother allowed her to walk to the library on her own—and she hasn't stopped going since.

"Library books expanded my knowledge of the world and introduced me to subjects that I would have never learned about in school," Kathleen said. "I made a legacy gift so I could help assure that all the pleasure I received from reading could continue to be available for future generations."

Creating an estate gift through the Foundation ensured that Kathleen's donation will continue in perpetuity. "I want to make sure that children learn to love reading at an early age and can carry that love throughout their lifetime," she said. "So many wonderful stories await them!"

# Honoring our Legacy Society donors

We honor the forward-thinking library lovers who have partnered with us in planning estate gifts to The Seattle Public Library Foundation.

Anonymous (137)  
Joan Abrevaya  
Douglas Adkins  
Alissa Allen  
Chris Altwegg and  
Ellen Blackstone  
Sodelba Amador  
Roger Anderson  
Gretchen Anex  
Jesse Angelo  
Karen Arman de Carvalho  
Catherine and Sky Arnold  
Stephanie and Kalman Axelrod  
Ross C. Baker and  
Karen Brandvick-Baker  
Hannah Baldwin  
Jane Ballard  
Deborah Barker  
Patricia M. Bentz  
Kathy and Keith Bieber  
Daniel Black  
Lawrence Bloom  
Bob Blumenthal and  
Janis Krug  
Bailey Bonaci  
Robert Breidenthal and  
Susan Crane  
Christie Brown  
Drs. Greg and Kim Bruce  
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Matthew Cannard  
Yiran Cao  
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Esme Cottingham  
Leah Crosby  
Kathryn Daniels  
Gaby de Jongh  
Harvey and Nancy Dean  
Detta Detonancour  
Alyssa Dobbs  
Donna Doepken  
Judith Donaghue  
Pamela Dore  
Rick Downey  
Ellen Duernberger  
Vasiliki Dwyer  
Meredith Easton Brown and  
Matthew Brown  
Laura Eise  
Sara Elward and Joadey eStar  
Doreen Eng  
Steve Faust  
Courtney Ferguson  
Ellen FitzGerald  
Jeanette Flory-Sagan and  
Bill Sagan  
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Barry and Amy Fortier  
Marcia Friedman and  
Todd Petersen  
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Karen Fuhrwerk  
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Vicki Gibbs  
Dillon Gilmore  
Constance Gould  
Jodi Green and Mike Halperin  
Stephanie Gregerson  
Deepinder Grewal and  
Paresh Gupta  
Sharon Griggins  
Richard Groomer and  
Betsy Lieberman  
Matthew Grover and  
Tom Bernard  
Joan and Joe Gruber  
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Lynn Frances Guthrie  
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Amy J. Haugerud and  
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Suzanne Hittman  
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Timothy Hamlin  
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Sarah Hutchinson  
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Grace Jacobs  
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Clayton Blinkley  
Cindy Jennings  
Philip Johanson and  
Kathryn Barron  
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Glenna Olson and  
Conrad Wouters  
Sue and George Olson  
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Kimberly Pate  
Deborah Paul  
Julia Paulsen and  
Kevin O'Connor  
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Cathy Spicer  
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Susan and Alfred Starr  
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Neal and Nan Sullins  
Norman Swecker  
Amado Tanglao  
Jack Taylor  
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Dale Durran  
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Diane Tibbott  
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Dick Weyte  
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Beatrix Wiedmer and  
Carl Bolstad  
Kimberly Windsor  
Marcella Wing  
Steve and Lynn Wolf  
Hannah Woodworth  
Sharon Zerr-Peltner  
Rona Zevin  
Julie Zunker



The Seattle Public Library Foundation

1000 Fourth Ave., Seattle, Washington 98104

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Seattle, WA



## Estate gifts

We pay tribute to the memories of those who left generous bequests realized in 2025 to enrich the community through The Seattle Public Library Foundation:

Anonymous (1)

Estate of Robert D. Adelman

Estate of Susan Gayle Ash

Estate of Janet Maurer Daggatt

Estate of Dorothy Elaine Davis

Estate of Howard A. Drake

Estate of Jeffrey M. Gerson

Estate of Darren R. Hamby

Estate of Ronald and Ursula Johns

Estate of Margaret H. Lévis

Estate of Jeffrey J. Robbins

Estate of Ina G. Tateuchi

Estate of Leon A. Uziel

Estate of Frederick C. Van Hoof

Estate of Kirtsina Louise Veirs

Did you know that there are many ways to help the Library? Gifts of any size and type make a difference. You can donate stock, vehicles, or through an IRA or donor advised fund.



To see all the ways you can help the Library you love, please visit [supportspl.org/ways-to-give](https://supportspl.org/ways-to-give) or scan the QR code.

You can help guarantee the Library's vitality for generations to come with a charitable bequest. For more information on attending our free estate planning webinars and creating a legacy, contact [foundation@supportspl.org](mailto:foundation@supportspl.org).

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