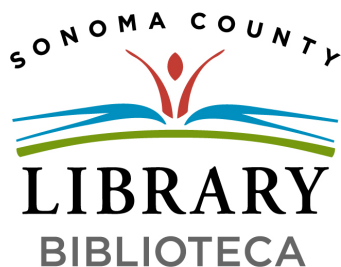


# Library News July 2025



"It is what you read when you don't have to that determines what you will be when you can't help it."

— Charles Francis Potter

Sonoma County Library creates community through discovery, culture and connection

## FROM THE DIRECTOR



**Sonoma County Library Director Erika Thibault**

## Literacy promise an investment in future

**In June I attended the Sonoma County Office of Education's first Literacy Summit where Sonoma County Library signed a literacy promise along with 12 other community organizations.**

The event highlighted the challenges we face here in Sonoma County, in which only 40.86 percent of third graders are reading at grade level.

As a community, we must take action to support literacy countywide, as reading proficiency by third grade is a critical milestone in a child's academic journey. Up to third grade, children are learning to read; after that, they are reading to learn.

Students who are not reading at grade level by the end of third grade are more likely to struggle academically in later years, as reading becomes the foundation for understanding subjects like science, math, and social studies. Research shows that students who read proficiently by third grade are significantly more likely to graduate from high school and succeed in life.

Early reading skills also impact a child's confidence and engagement in school. Struggling readers may feel discouraged, leading to reduced participation and a lack of motivation to learn. Furthermore, third grade reading levels are often used as a predictor for future educational planning and resource allocation.

Sonoma County Library provides a variety of programming to help children with their

reading skills, including storytimes and the Read to a Dog program, where young readers practice reading with a certified therapy dog to improve reading skills and confidence.

The Healdsburg Regional Library also successfully piloted a program called Book Buddies, where teens volunteered to help children learn to read. We hope to expand this program to other branches in the future.

I am looking forward to working more closely with SCOE and educators across the county as we develop ways to address this critical issue for our young people and community.

Investing in early literacy—through access to books, high-quality instruction, and family engagement—can help close achievement gaps and ensure every child has the tools they need to succeed. Promoting literacy by third grade is not just an educational goal—it's a societal investment in the future.



**Sonoma County Library literacy boosters (l-r): Erika Thibault, Rachel Icaza, Kathy DeWeese, Philip McGough, Marcos Soriano.**

# Library News July 2025

## OUR PATRONS SAY ...

### From library patrons:

"Really appreciate being to check out books online and using Libby to download books."

"Open, clean, available staff, good check out system, feel welcome, feel the community is welcome."

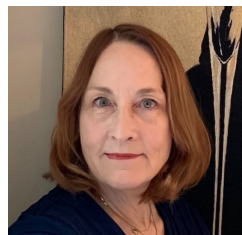
"Books, free to checkout, no penalty for a little late!"

"It's free, clean, open to public, and everyone is welcome, the staff is excellent. Why people buy books instead of going to the library is a mystery to me."

"Free books, clean environments, rentable objects, what's not to love!"

"Excellent website makes it easy to order and pick up books, as well as find where a book is located if you want to go to that library yourself. Helpful staff, easy to navigate."

## FROM THE COMMISSION CHAIR



**Library Commission  
Chair Deborah Doyle**

Summer has arrived! Amazing summer adventures begin with library programs, meeting spaces, author talks, community events and more.

You'll find robust collections on library shelves, computers and your phones. Dip into them at the coast, the river, the mountains or the woods. Our WiFi hotspots will help when you are off the beaten track.

Join readers of all ages taking part in our Summer Reading program through August 9. All events are free; you don't even need a library card to win prizes. The renovated Healdsburg Regional Library is now open—check it out!

It's been my honor to serve as Chair of the Sonoma County Library Commission for the last five years. Thank you.

Deborah Doyle  
Chair, Sonoma County Library Commission  
*Free people read freely!*

## Easy Literacy Tip: 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten

### Sign up for 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten

Sonoma County Library encourages families and caregivers to read 1,000 books with their children before they enter kindergarten.

Reading aloud to children from birth helps strengthen language skills and build vocabulary—two important tools for learning to read.

You can read just three books a day and reach your goal in less than a year. Stop by any library to sign up. For every 100 books you read on your journey, your child gets a special sticker!



**The Healdsburg Regional Library reopened on June 25 after a remodel. Check it out!**

### The Sonoma County Library Commission

Deborah Doyle, Town of Windsor, Commission Chair  
Brooke Greene, City of Cloverdale, Commission Vice-Chair  
David Cahill, City of Santa Rosa  
Andy Elkind, City of Healdsburg  
Fred Engbarth, City of Sebastopol  
Eve Goldberg, County of Sonoma  
Paul Heavenridge, City of Petaluma  
Sarah Laggos, City of Santa Rosa / County of Sonoma  
Barbara Mackenzie, City of Rohnert Park  
Tina Poles, City of Cotati  
Kimberly Taylor, City of Sonoma  
Erika Thibault, Library Director