



# Providence **Community** Library

OUR NEIGHBORHOOD LIBRARIES

*Staff, volunteers, artists and teachers —  
continuing to make a difference for our Providence neighborhoods*



**Annual Report**  
2011 — 2012



## MARCUS MITCHELL

### President, Board of Directors

Dear Friends,

Thank you for four years of support for the Providence Community Library! Together, we have overcome serious, tremendous obstacles during this time, resulting in outstanding successes and, most importantly, fulfillment of our Mission: To provide quality library services to the people of Providence. I take our mission very seriously and it has been my great honor to be a part of the Providence Community Library and to work with our friends and community to bring important and needed services throughout Rhode Island, especially during the economic turmoil our city, neighborhoods and country are facing. Please continue to support PCL as we expand our excellent programs and services to educate and assist Rhode Island children, adults, seniors, small businesses and families for generations to come.

The Providence Community Library family has created a true legacy of overcoming obstacles and reaching our goals to provide the best services possible. Last year, through Mayor Taveras's support and your efforts, we concluded the building ownership issue, which will free us to secure necessary grants and funding for repairs and facility improvements. Additionally, PCL successfully lobbied for and won the prestigious RI Statewide Reference Resource Center contract to provide scholarly research support throughout the state. Our programs continue to grow and bring pride and accolades to PCL by supporting schools, summer reading, adult literacy, arts, music, film, city and state agencies, economic development, youth programs, clubs, poetry, ESL and families to make us "The Go To Place" in our communities. Another banner year for PCL! With your continued support and the great work by our dedicated staff, I fully expect us to exceed our accomplishments every year, help to lead our communities through these difficult times and become a world-class library system woven into the fabric of society.

We are well on our way to realizing that vision. Our work is important...and perpetual. It will benefit many generations well into the future. In accordance with our bylaws and term limits designed to avoid future pit-falls, my tenure as PCL's founding President is ending. I thank you for your commitment and tremendous dedication and the great opportunity to work with all of you: our elected officials, community leaders, corporate citizens, residents, partner organizations, donors and students. Thank you PCL staff for your outstanding efforts and heart-felt support; our wonderful board of directors, and especially co-founders Patricia Raub (Vice President), Linda Kushner (Secretary), and Ellen Schwartz (Treasurer), without whom the Providence Community Library would not exist. Again, It has been my true honor and pleasure to serve our communities with each of you in such a fantastic effort with such far-reaching positive impact. Yes, there is still work to do...it is perpetual, but such is the nature of great works. I look forward to continued work with all of you as we serve our neighborhoods in exemplary fashion.

With Utmost Respect and Warm Heart,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Marcus Mitchell", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

**LAURA MARLANE**  
**Executive Director**



There's an interesting quote I stumbled across recently from a noted library supporter. "If it is right that schools should be maintained by the whole community for the well-being of the whole, it is right also that libraries should be so maintained." For as long as I can remember, librarians have been experts at making a little go a long way. This is especially true during hard economic times. Not only do patrons turn to our resources and services even more, but our notoriously small budgets just seem to get a little bit smaller.

It's a sad truth that is happening across the country as cities and towns everywhere struggle to keep going. And, historically, libraries are there; answering patron's questions, helping them find the information they need, pointing them to the services they are seeking—basically just continuing to do what we do every day to help, inform and support the communities we serve. Oh, and just so you know, that quote is from Andrew Carnegie in 1904. The times may change, but some of the challenges stay the same.

At PCL, we face these challenges and continue to strive to further our mission, and here are just a few of the amazing programs that continue to bring us much success!

**GED Graduation**—In June we celebrated the hard work of twelve dedicated students as they completed a year's worth of study and received their GEDs. I'd like to thank our amazing volunteer, Hipolito Reyes for his dedication in tutoring our students, and the work of Michelle Novello and Carolina Briones for making this program such a success!

**Summer Reading Program**—All nine of our libraries participated in the state wide Summer Reading Program again this year, and it was another wonderfully successful program! We've continued to work with the Providence School Department to offer a wide range of activities and opportunities to children in the summer months to keep them reading and learning. And, we are happy to announce that the winner of the big prize—a trip to Disney World—comes from our own Knight Memorial Library!

There's one more program I'm excited to mention, even though it actually began this current fiscal year. For the first time in its history the Statewide Reference Resource Center was put out to bid to all libraries in the state, and it was awarded to PCL!

PCL applied for and was awarded two grants by the State to take over both operations and reference services for the SRRC. We've only been up and running with this since July 1st, but are excited about exploring innovative ways of providing the services and access that Rhode Islanders need! We have hired a dynamic team of individuals to oversee the operations and work with PCL. In addition to a wide array of online databases and electronic resources, you can live chat with a librarian to get your questions answered in real time!

Libraries are communities, and I can't think of any library I've ever worked in where I've felt that more deeply than at PCL. The support of the Mayor and the City Council has been nothing but strong and positive. The help and advice of our extremely supportive Board and our Friends Groups is nothing short of amazing.

*Laura Marlane*



PCL Founders and Board Officers, from top:

- 1) President Marcus Mitchell
- 2) Vice President Patricia Raub
- 3) Secretary Linda Kushner
- 4) Treasurer Ellen Schwartz

## Providence Community Library

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The PCL Board is a coalition of the many constituencies that have a stake in the continued existence and vitality of neighborhood libraries in Providence. To ensure adequate representation of these constituencies, PCL's By-Laws specify that members are appointed by the Friends organization of each of PCL's nine libraries, the Mayor, the City Council, the Governor, and the PCL staff. In addition, up to nine at-large community members are elected by the Board of Directors. The Board elects four of its members to be officers.

Board meetings are held monthly (except for the month of August) and are conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Open Meeting Law of Rhode Island. The Annual Meeting takes place in September.

### Board of Directors 2011-2012

Marcus Mitchell **PRESIDENT**

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The origami program has made the greatest impact on our children of all ages (5-14 years of age) here at Knight Memorial Library. Not only are the children very interested,

but even some adults have been happily surprised how rewarding it is to create these incredible works of art out of paper. There really isn't any need to recruit participants for this program. Children just flock over to the teen area and start asking questions. They love to learn how to create the next cool paper project. Children are always looking forward to seeing Rod come in and what he'll be creating for the day...or the following week. Rod always makes it fun for all kids even when it is educational.

—MARIA COTTO, CHILDREN'S LIBRARIAN,  
KNIGHT MEMORIAL LIBRARY



*"Origami was fun and I never thought I can do so many things with paper. I ended up working with Mr. Rod the cool Origami Guy. Now I can start to help others at the library enjoy creating origami."*

—YOUTH PATRON, Knight Memorial Library

*Pictured above: Mr. Rod Nice, the "cool Origami Guy" with two eager students.*

## Latino Programming at PCL

From PCL's mission statement: *PCL assists people in reaching their personal literacy goals and enhancing life skills in order to fulfill their responsibilities as parents, citizens and workers.*

According to the 2010 census, 38.1% of Providence residents are of Hispanic or Latino descent. This year PCL expanded the ways we met the needs and demands of this growing community.

Countless Latino and other patrons have complained over the years that there have not been enough open spaces in existing ESL programs in Providence. PCL determined to meet this important need, even though we were not able to find dedicated funding for a new ESL program. We faced this challenge by recruiting a large number of volunteers and trained them to be ESL instructors. Many thanks to the 50+ volunteers who so generously donated their time, spirit, and energy. ESL classes began in January, and PCL was able to serve more than 250 students!

This year also saw PCL's first ever Spanish-language GED (high school equivalency) class. Twelve students completed the year-long course, enjoyed a graduation celebration at Knight Memorial Library, and went on to take their GED tests at CCRI.

Other Spanish language programs that PCL held throughout the year included basic computer classes, educational workshops for home day-care providers, book clubs, film screenings, and the annual children's bilingual writing and drawing contest, "*Día de los Niños, Día de los libros.*"

## Youth Educational Programming

From PCL's mission statement: *PCL serves as an out of school time learning center for children, offering after-school programs, homework assistance, and early childhood story-times.*

PCL continued and grew our unified, system-wide out-of-school-time educational programming begun last year. We again offered children throughout the city the opportunity to learn comics writing and drawing with the Comics Consortium, poetry and hip-hop composition and performance with Poetry/Hip Hop Elements 101, computer technology with CyberKids, documentary photography, homework help and more!

PCL was a very active participant in Mayor Taveras's Children & Youth Cabinet, especially its Summer Learning workgroup. Improved summer learning is one of the three pillars of the Cabinet's Grade Level Reading Campaign. PCL has created the summer reading lists used by the Providence Public Schools, and participation in PCL's own summer reading program doubled from the previous summer.

For the youngest patrons Cradle to Crayons is a popular program at each of PCL's libraries. It is designed to introduce young families to the library in a comfortable setting and to develop early literacy skills through songs, rhymes, storytelling and play. Library staff members offer tips that can be used at home or in child-care settings to encourage an early interest in reading and learning. Community resource specialists attend some sessions to share information on child development, health and safety.

## The Great Checkout

PCL held our third annual gala fundraiser in March, this time at the Rochambeau Library. Central to **The Great Checkout** was a most unique raffle of rare books - Living Books. Modeled on the newest concept in library services - borrowing people with your library card - the raffle allowed library supporters to "check out" real life experiences with well-known Rhode Island entertainers, scientists, elected officials, historians, visual artists, farmers, and other fascinating people. Thanks to all those Living Books who donated their time and experiences to the evening's success. And, of course, we are ever grateful to the event's generous sponsors - GTECH, Adler Pollock & Sheehan P.C., City Kitty Veterinary for Cats, DeLuca & Weizenbaum, and Regency Plaza Apartments.



*Pictured above: PCL Latino Program Coordinator Carolina Briones with some of our ESL volunteers.*



"An adult patron was trying to figure out how to insert a video clip into her Power Point presentation she was doing for class. I asked the PC students that are here doing homework help if they wanted to assist the patron. A young man in the 8th grade spoke up and said, 'I know how to do that. I think we learned that in Cyber Kids!' He quickly went over to the patron and showed her how to do it."

—ALAN GUNTHER, LIBRARY MANAGER,  
SMITH HILL LIBRARY

# Providence Community Library STAFF

## ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

Laura Marlane EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
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Moses Lilly MAINTENANCE ASSISTANT  
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Sara Huber LIBRARY CLERK  
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Donna St. Angelo LIBRARY CLERK



*Pictured right:  
Maria Cotto, Children's  
librarian, with two  
young patrons at  
Knight Memorial  
Library.*

"Having lived the majority of my life in Los Angeles, California, coming to Knight Memorial Library has been a great pleasure. Upon entry, I was welcomed and received wonderful assistance. I often compare Knight Memorial Library with other libraries in the Los Angeles area. There is no comparison! Your staff is helpful, attentive, and always eager to help! In an age of complaints and anger, I thought they deserved to hear a good word."

— Letter from a NEIGHBOR AND ENTHUSIASTIC PATRON

## The Year — BY THE NUMBERS

Number of Libraries	9
Number of Staff	66
Number of Patrons	55,545
Library visits	753,041
Size of Collection	393,498
Total Circulation	478,708
Reference transactions	89,369
Number of Programs	3,877
Program Attendance	54,106
Computers available for public use:	
as of 06/30/09	133
as of 06/30/10	165
as of 06/30/11	183
as of 06/30/12	198
Public use of library computers	217,909 sessions

## GTECH After-School Advantage Labs

GTECH's generosity towards PCL continues to astound! Not only was GTECH again the main sponsor of our annual gala fundraiser, but PCL received another After-School Advantage Computer Lab -- at Knight Memorial Library. GTECH has now provided PCL with state-of-the-art computer labs designed specifically for and dedicated to children at six of our nine libraries. Thank you GTECH!

*Pictured right: photos of the GTECH ribbon cutting ceremony at Knight Memorial. Top: Marcus Mitchell, Angela Romans (Senior Advisor on Education for the City of Providence) and Councilman Wilbur Jennings; Middle: the new lab; bottom: students performing from Trinity Academy for the Performing Arts.*



## The Comics Consortium Grows



In 2010 the RI State Council on the Arts (RISCA) gave PCL a grant so that PCL could hold a series of workshops for pre-teens and teens, to teach them how to create characters, develop a storyboard, and write and illustrate comic books. That fall artist Walker Mettling created the Comics Consortium and began teaching multi-week courses to Providence youth at five PCL libraries. These classes have been so popular that they have continued to be offered ever since, and for the past two summers Walker has taught Comics Boot Camps (classes every day for two weeks) at nearly every PCL library.

The Providence Comics Consortium has published seven issues of the Comics Consortium Showcase.

These volumes include comics drawn by both PCL youth patrons and guest comics artists from around the United States and Canada. Two of these anthologies were selected as required reading for Brown University's Pre-College Literary Arts Graphic Novels course this summer. You can find these editions cataloged and available at each of our libraries!

Walker spoke on the panel "Teaching Comics to Kids" at the Chicago Alternative Comics Expo in June and just won a grant from RISCA to teach eighteen comics-making workshops for children at libraries statewide, the resultant work, along with submissions from international comics artists, to be compiled into an anthology that will be available at every library in the state.

The Comics Consortium continues at PCL and expands statewide! From humble beginnings...





PCL collaborates with many organizations to create programs at our nine libraries. For the past two years, we've partnered with The Peace Flag Project to

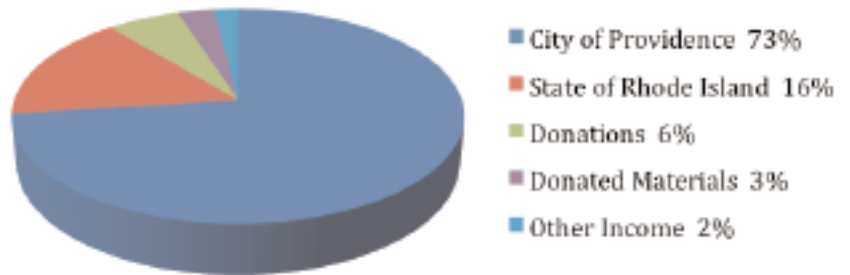
offer workshops for children and adults to create their own flags to express and share their wishes for world peace, in celebration of the Month of Peace. One outcome of this workshop: "We had a 2nd grade boy attend the Peace Flag Project. He had never attended a program at the library before, although he frequently checked books out with his mother. At home he had made a sample of what he wanted his peace flag to look like. He then brought that in and worked diligently throughout the workshop. He stayed for the whole program. Later, he told me how much he had enjoyed himself and wanted to come to more library programs."

—JENNIFER ROMANS, CHILDREN'S SPECIALIST,  
SMITH HILL LIBRARY

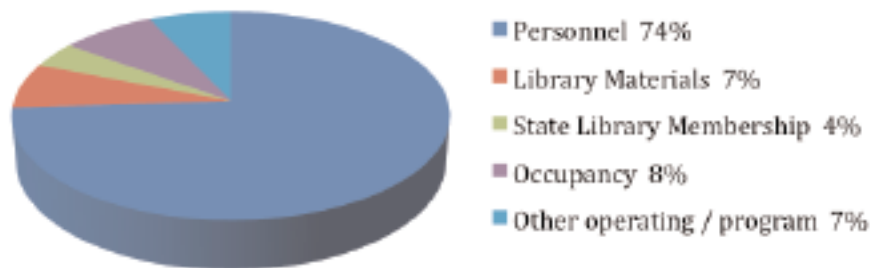
## Financial Information

Snapshot of the Providence Community Library finances (unaudited) for fiscal year 2011-2012 (July 1, 2011 – June 30, 2012)

### Resources: \$4,892,730



### Use of Resources: \$4,892,730



"I was wary of enrolling my son in a photography course at PCL because he has learning disabilities, some severe enough to often limit his opportunities to learn in groups of 'typical' learners. I needn't have worried as he was beautifully and skillfully integrated into the group, and the course content was fun, engaging, informative and, perhaps most important, totally accessible. At the end of the program, my son felt empowered, successful, and eager for more. I can only hope that these remarkable experiences will continue to be offered to our kids. What a great investment!"

— Letter from happy MOM at FOX POINT LIBRARY

*Pictured left: Photo by student MariCarmen taken during the Photography workshop.*



*We were walking around Olneyville taking photos when a student remarked with wonder, "I thought all you could do at the library was check out books!"*

— JORI KETTEN, Photography Instructor, teaching at PCL with a grant funded by Rhode Island State Council on the Arts.



# Providence Community Library SUPPORTERS

Providence Community Library wishes to thank the hundreds of donors who helped make our third year possible and successful (gifts made from July 1, 2011 - June 30, 2012).

## \$1,000,000+

City of Providence

## \$500,000+

State of Rhode Island

## \$25,000+

John and Letitia Carter  
MetLife Foundation  
Mabel T. Woolley Trust

## \$10,000+

Dexter Donation  
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“Neighborhood kids and young adults come to our classes and programs, hang out by themselves or with each other in a safe environment, call their parents, get homework help, and play video and board games. They talk to staff about their report cards, their homework, problems and achievements at school, issues with their friends and families, their birthdays, their haircut, and they show us pictures of their pets. And as with the adults who use this library, this is a place where kids meet up with friends and make friends.”

—LANHAM BUNDY, LIBRARY MANAGER,  
WASHINGTON PARK LIBRARY

(continued next page)

## In-kind Contributors

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Ellen Schwartz

... and the many readers who  
have given their treasured  
books to our libraries.

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