

OPL Advocates Spring Mixer

Since 2013, the Friends of the Oakland Public Library and the Library Commission have organized an annual social event: the OPL Advocates Mixer. Before the pandemic, this was held at the African American Museum and Library at Oakland each December. From 2020 - 2022, the mixer was online. Beginning in 2023, the mixer has been held in person – and outdoors – at the Main Library.

The OPL Advocates Mixer is a very special event. Seeing so many people who contribute to the health of our libraries in one place is powerful and inspiring. And now that it's taking place during National Volunteer Month (April), the mixer offers the perfect opportunity to honor and thank individuals who support the library community in so many ways.

This year, there's an additional reason to celebrate: the Friends of the Oakland Public Library are marking 75 years of service!

The 2025 OPL Advocates Mixer will take place on Sunday, April 6, from 1pm - 3pm, at the Main Library (125 14th Street) in the Madison Street courtyard.

Contact OPLAdvocates@gmail.com to learn more or to sign up. All library Friends are welcome.



At the 2024 Spring Mixer. Photo by Pooneh Koohyar.

WHO ARE THE OPL ADVOCATES?

OPL Advocates work to maximize resources and amplify messages in support of Oakland's public libraries. Library advocacy happens throughout the nation, and is more important now than ever before. Read our recent blog post to learn about advocacy resources: tinyurl.com/5bwytt3k

THE BOOKMARK — BOOKSTORE —

933 Broadway, Oakland

Memberships can be renewed or purchased at the store.
All proceeds benefit the Oakland Public Library.

SPRING SALE, MAY 17-18

Join us the weekend of May 17-18 for our annual spring sale! Find a great selection and low prices on gently used books, puzzles, games, media, 5,000+ cookbooks, and more.

Saturday, 10am - 7pm: 50% off for members
Sunday, 11am - 5pm: 50% off for everyone

RECURRING SPECIAL EVENTS

Mahjong First Sundays

Watch, play, and learn on the spot! The first Sunday of each month, 12pm - 5pm. See page three for a related event at the Asian Branch Library!

Second Sundays is Free Children's Book Day

Kids 12 and under get one children's book FREE!
Second Sunday of each month, 11am - 5pm.

In Memory of Gen Katz

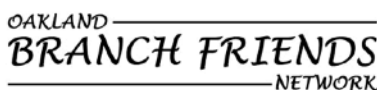
In late December, Oakland's public library community was saddened by the news that longtime Friend Genevieve (Gen) Katz had passed away.



As a Library Commissioner, a Friend of Dimond Library, a Friends of the OPL Director, and an OPL Advocate, Gen worked hard to protect and improve library service throughout Oakland. Gen was instrumental in the promotion of successful library parcel tax measures Q (2004), D (2018), and C (2022).

One of Gen's most effective and long-lasting contributions is the Branch Friends Network. Originally described as "Friends Helping Friends," Gen conceived of the project to connect various library Friends groups throughout Oakland in 2010. She even designed the group's logo, below! With support from the library and the Friends of the OPL, this network continues to meet at least once each year to share ideas and information.

In 2014, Gen's many contributions were acknowledged with a special award from the California Public Library Advocates. An inspiration to countless library volunteers, Friends, and advocates, Gen will be sorely missed.



Recognizing 75 Years of Service

As the Friends of the Oakland Public Library's Board of Directors marks the organization's 75th anniversary, we gratefully acknowledge the hundreds of dedicated volunteers who helped with founding or maintaining the Friends since 1950.

Volunteers who love books and libraries have worked in the Bookmark Bookstore, taken meeting minutes, mailed solicitation letters, staffed outreach tables, prepared financial statements, and so much more. The online treasure trove of archived editions of *Off the Shelf* is a testament to the dedication and passion of hundreds of individual volunteers.

Former Friends of the OPL Director Sophie Souroujon (d. 2020) wrote dozens of volunteer profiles for the

Friends' newsletter during her board tenure from 2001- 2015. You can read many of these interesting and inspiring pieces – including a March 2010 interview with Gen Katz – in the *Off the Shelf* archive at www.fopl.org/newsletter.

The Friends of the OPL has grown and prospered thanks to the service of volunteers. Please join us in saluting those who contributed their time, talents, and expertise to make 75 years of supporting Oakland's public libraries possible.

Get to Know Your Grants

By Sara DuBois, OPL Coordinator of Grants & Volunteers

It's spring! Flowers bloom, birds sing, and the Oakland Public Library's calendar is packed full of events for all ages.

Between March - May, the library is hosting 30 (!) garden-related programs at 16 locations. 26 of these programs are only possible thanks to funding from the Friends of the Oakland Public Library.

If gardening is not your thing, then consider checking out chair yoga at the Eastmont Branch Library, adult craft programs at 81st Avenue or Temescal Branches, author talks at multiple locations, or a performance by the amazing Mariachi Feminil at the César E. Chávez Branch on May 3. All of these events are made possible by 2024-25 programming or equity grants from the Friends.

Don't feel like going out? Check out the library's YouTube channel for inspiring performances from Oakland Youth Poets past and present, or for brief Cantonese lessons -- all courtesy of the Friends.

And there simply isn't room here to describe all the amazing programs that the Friends' support provides for children and teens.

Come and see for yourself what's happening at OPL! Check the calendar at oaklandlibrary.org/events or visit your local library.

Get to Know Your Grants is a regular newsletter feature which highlights some of the library programs, activities, and improvements that are possible thanks to your support for the Friends of the OPL. Contact Sara at sdubois@oaklandlibrary.org or (510) 238-6572 for more information.

Welcome, Noah & Alexis!

We are pleased to announce the election of two new Directors to the Friends of the OPL Board:

Noah Cohen is a Navy veteran and Contract Specialist with the Metropolitan Transportation Commission. Originally from Kentucky, he moved to the Bay Area in 2021. Noah has volunteered with several organizations, most with a focus on civil rights and LGBTQ+ issues. An avid reader since elementary school, he keeps a yearly book journal and considers himself a bibliophile. As



someone who believes everyone should have access to knowledge and that equity starts with our institutions, he is excited to begin working with Friends of the Oakland Public Library. You can find Noah frequently volunteering at the Bookmark Bookstore!

Alexis Joseph Merritt is an avid reader who was bitten by the bookworm from her earliest childhood days, reading in bed with a flashlight instead of sleeping the night away. As a senior People and HR leader in growth stage tech companies, she has been in the Bay Area since 2013. Alexis is committed to ensuring that all Oakland residents have access to the



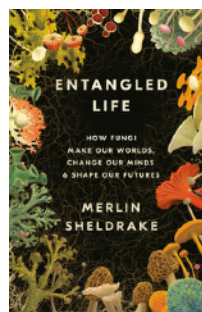
community opportunities, learning spaces, and important services that our public libraries provide. When she isn't on the lookout for new mysteries and thrillers to read from her Rockridge and Montclair library branches, she lives in the Oakland Hills with her husband, Michael, and their sometimes grumpy, but always lovable, 12-year-old pooch.

Giving

- In memory of Linda Davis, from Francie Alexander, Rhonda Hatcher Colcord, Erin and Commissioner William Kresse of Chicago, Janine Rhone, and Camron and LaVerne Samii
- In honor of Michel Roublev, from Dorrie Slutsker
- In honor of Sue Bennett & Elese Lebsack, from Judy Armstrong
- In memory of Gen Katz, from Sara DuBois and Winifred Walters

What the Friends Board is Reading

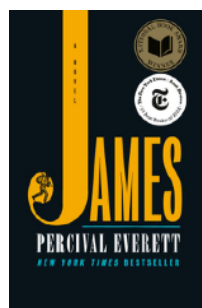
These titles can be found at the library (check the card catalog at oaklandlibrary.org) or purchased from Bookshop at bookshop.org/shop/theBookmarkBookstore



ENTANGLED LIFE by Merlin Sheldrake

Sheldrake leads a journey into the hidden world of fungi, revealing their roles in ecosystems, human history, and even our own bodies. It's a fascinating and eye-opening exploration of the life forms that connect us all.

- Recommended by Glenn Poppe



JAMES by Percival Everett

Everett gives voice to the enslaved Jim – or James as he wants to be known – from Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. James's journey to freedom is adventurous and exciting, yet sad and heart-breaking, as it not only depicts one man's fight for

freedom but also the historical truth about slavery in the United States.

- Recommended by Pooneh Koohyar

Save these Dates!

Stories around the Mahjong Table

Hear from Nicole Wong, author of the newly released book, *Mahjong*, and learn the basics through game play afterwards.

Saturday, May 10, 2pm - 4pm

oaklandlibrary.org/mahjong

2025 Summer Programs

Sign up online or grab your all-ages game board at any OPL location.

Saturday, May 24 - Saturday, August 2

oaklandlibrary.org/summer

Oakland Youth Poet Laureate 2025!

This year's cohort of talented young poets will share their work at this exciting event.

Friday, June 6, 7pm

oaklandlibrary.org/youthpoets



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Friends of the OPL Board Members

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- ✦ Mifta Chowdhury, *Assistant Treasurer*
- ✦ Noah Cohen
- ✦ Erica Dennings
- ✦ Elizabeth Falkner, *Secretary*
- ✦ Aniya Grimm
- ✦ Colleen Haikes
- ✦ Corey Hatcher
- ✦ Sara Jewell, *Treasurer*
- ✦ Diana Kaw
- ✦ Pooneh Koohyar
- ✦ Ronile Lahti
- ✦ Alexis Joseph Merritt
- ✦ Rebecca Pfiffner
- ✦ Glenn Poppe
- ✦ Kathryn Sterbenc, *President*

We welcome your feedback & comments:

info@fopl.org

If the date on your mailing label is **03-01-2025**
or earlier, PLEASE RENEW TODAY!

**Thanks to your support, in the last 10 years Friends of the OPL granted over \$2 million
for library programs and projects. Thank you for your continued support!**

Mission

Our mission is to advance the role of the Oakland Public Library as a vital community resource and as an institution critical to the culture, education, and welfare of our diverse community.

The Friends of the Oakland Public Library is the only organization that provides support to all Oakland Public Libraries.

In addition to that great feeling that comes with supporting the library, members receive this quarterly newsletter, which includes a regular feature highlighting grants to the library.

The Bookmark Bookstore operates on volunteer power and is a community resource for everyone who loves books. The Bookmark has been in Oakland since 1992. Proceeds benefit the Oakland Public Libraries.

Ways to Support the Friends of the OPL:

- Keep your annual membership current.
- Make a tax-deductible donation.
- Invite a friend to become a member.
- Leave a legacy by naming Friends of the OPL as a beneficiary in your estate plan.
- Shop for books and media at The Bookmark Bookstore, where members receive discounts for their purchases.
- Donate gently used books to The Bookmark.
- Purchase new books online at bookshop.org/shop/theBookmarkBookstore.

**Your support is what makes our grants to the Oakland
Public Library possible!**

To learn more about Friends of the Oakland Public Library, visit www.fopl.org.

The Friends of the Oakland Public Library is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit.
Our tax ID is 94-2553734. All contributions are tax deductible.

THE BOOKMARK
— BOOKSTORE —

Erin Rivero, *Operations Manager*
Cheryl Liquori, *Volunteer Manager*
Julie Waldman, *Online Sales Manager*