



Date: July 3, 2019

To: Patrick H. West, City Manager *P.H. West*

From: Glenda Williams, Director of Library Services *G. Williams*

For: Mayor and Members of the City Council

Subject: **Mental Health Initiatives at Long Beach Public Library**

The Long Beach Public Library (LBPL) recently completed three mental health initiatives done in collaboration with the California State Library. These initiatives shared the overarching goal of improving mental health awareness to better serve the estimated one in five adults in the United States who experience a mental health challenge each year.

The first initiative focused on staff training. Staff at the Main Library finished a two-week, self-paced online course titled *Mental Health Challenges: An Introduction to Library Staff*. This course addressed several common misperceptions about mental health and those experiencing mental health challenges, and prepared staff for a half-day in-person training that followed. The in-person training was conducted by Elissa Hardy, LCSW and Director of Community Engagement at the Denver Public Library. Her presentation, *Where Compassion Meets Action*, focused on trauma-informed approaches to handling difficult patron interactions involving persons with mental health challenges. Staff are now better equipped to serve our patrons with the tips learned in this training. Additionally, \$7,500 worth of mental health books for adults and teens were added to the LBPL's collection using funds from the California State Library.

The second initiative focused on partnering with local mental health organizations to host programs for the public. Staff met with representatives of the LGBTQ Center of Long Beach, Long Beach Guidance Center, Century Villages at Cabrillo, Health and Human Services Multi-Service Center, and Mental Health America to discuss potential collaboration. With funds from the California State Library, a collection of books was selected to be housed at the LGBTQ Center, Century Villages at Cabrillo, and Mental Health America Wellness Center in Long Beach. In addition, LBPL is hosting bibliotherapy programs at these sites in collaboration with mental health clinicians. Bibliotherapy is a type of therapeutic exercise that facilitate broader discussions about mental health issues in a safe and supportive environment through the reading of books relevant to one's life situation. We are calling our bibliotherapy programs "Booktalkers."

The third initiative focused on hosting a mental health fair. LBPL partnered with U.S. Vets to host a Veterans' Wellness Fair at the Century Villages at Cabrillo on June 7, 2019. Veterans experiencing homelessness were provided with food, clothing, wellness kits, free haircuts, mental health pre-screens, health screening services, and wellness activities. Attendees were also provided the opportunity to talk to representatives from CalVet, Veterans Affairs Long Beach, the Multi-Service Center, Higher Ground L.A., JFCS (Jewish Family and Children's Service), and other organizations.

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Through the aforementioned initiatives, LBPL has deepened its partnerships with participating organizations and solidified its commitment to serving veterans in Long Beach.

For additional information, please call Alana LeBeaf, Senior Librarian, Community Services, at (562) 570-6984.

GW:cl

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