INTRODUCTION

In 2017, the City of Escondido faced increased budget demands and needed to identify areas of savings. City leadership felt it was their duty to act financially responsible, while delivering excellent quality solutions was critical. City leaders realized that the Escondido Public Library (EPL) offered an opportunity to provide better service at a lower cost by moving to an outsourced model, yielding significant savings at $4M over 10 years. In January 2018, LS&S assumed operation.

From the commencement of the transition to ongoing day-to-day operations, LS&S partners worked closely with all stakeholders to ensure alignment and impact. This document provides an overview of the Library services delivered to date. LS&S is proud to partner with the City of Escondido to serve its patrons and community.

OVERVIEW

Through partnership between LS&S, the City, Library staff and stakeholder groups, EPL has been able to offer the community many new benefits over the last year. The statistics cited throughout this report compare calendar year 2017 (under City operation) with calendar year 2018 (under LS&S operation). Highlights include:

- 17% increase in operating hours to 60 per week with expansion of Sunday and weekday hours
- 20% increase in visits (as recorded by door counters)
- 53% increase in program attendance
- 52% increase in number of programs
- 77% increase in community outreach events
- 121% increase in community outreach event attendance
- Enhanced operational technology, including self-check & RFID
- Introduced new patron technology, including 3D printing and virtual reality
- Streamlined materials ordering & processing
- Received California Library Association Public Relations Excellence Award
In addition, EPL’s first-ever strategic plan, delivered and adopted in July 2018, was met with strong stakeholder approval and charts a course to growth and enhanced service to the community.

EPL continues to enjoy the support of more than 200 volunteers and five support groups—Library Board of Trustees, Friends of the Library, Escondido Library Foundation, Friends of Literacy and the Pioneer Room Friends.

LIBRARY LEADERSHIP

Escondido Public Library operation is very much a team effort supported by strong Library staff under the leadership of Patricia Crosby, Library Director since January, 2018.

Patricia joined EPL from the Pickens County Library System in Pickens, SC, where as Assistant Director she administered all library programs and services and developed community partnerships with organizations, businesses and educational centers, including Clemson University. Patricia has a diverse skill set and library experience focusing on operational performance, customer service, strategic planning and organizational effectiveness. She holds an MLIS and Certificate in Archival Administration from Wayne State University, as well as a Masters of History and Bachelor of Arts in History from University of Toledo.
LIBRARY STAFF

Upon commencement of the contract 32 existing employees accepted positions. Today, approximately 90% of those staff remain LS&S employees. A full time Archivist and part-time Assistant Archivist have been added to support the important community treasure that is the Pioneer Room. One staff member from EPL was able to transfer employment to Red Oak Public Library, a LS&S-operated library in Texas, as part of a relocation, which normalizes EPL retention rate to 94%. In addition, total staff wages were increased 3% in July.

Library staff, who have been freed from back office operations, now focus on offering educational programs, providing outreach in the community and spending one-on-one time with patrons. During Summer 2018, staff participated in an employee satisfaction survey and scores were extremely high - higher than industry benchmarks. Highest scores included satisfaction with job duties, coworkers and direction of organization. Staff report being able to continue doing what they love and do well, with the support of managers equipping them to do better. Interaction, collaboration and idea sharing with peers across all LS&S libraries provide unique and invaluable benefit while staff, who know the community best, manage daily operations locally.

Staff attended and presented at industry conferences, including American Library Association, California Library Association (CLA), San Diego Comic Con and New York Comic Con. EPL staff also presented a session at Riverside County’s All Staff Day entitled 'It’s All About Community: Successful Community Partnerships' and moderated a Panel on Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) Partnerships at Serra Youth Services Staff Development Day.

EPL received CLA’s PR Excellence Award in the less than $5 million budget print category for the Read Local, Shop Local marketing campaign. Read Local, Shop
Local is a partnership program that offers discounts to patrons who show their EPL card at local businesses.

LIBRARY FACILITIES

Maintaining EPL facilities is an important part of service to the community. Enhancements to Library facilities under LS&S direction include:

- Fresh paint
- New furniture throughout the Library
- Merchandising and display of new materials
- Alleviating overcrowded shelves
- Weeding to remove outdated or non-circulating items
- De-cluttering to provide better sight lines for self-check support and security
- Optimized space use and seating arrangements
- Regular maintenance of facilities to ensure the Library is clean and welcoming

Community input during the strategic planning process revealed the desire for more collaborative work space. The flexible new furniture can be used multiple ways and provides whiteboard surfaces for brainstorming and group work, helping meet the strategic objective to inspire browsing, participation, quiet study and productivity through spaces that are welcoming, vibrant and efficient.

LIBRARY VISITS

Through increased hours and focused attention on programming, the Library welcomed an additional 74,888 visitors during 2018, a 20% increase over 2017.
Participation in library programs is a key indicator of public engagement. Library programs provide valuable education and enrichment that many citizens may not otherwise access, as well as connect attendees to library collections and other services. Program offerings and program attendance have both increased at EPL. Many experts feel that program participation is the most important measure of a library’s contribution to the community.

The number of programs and attendees at programs increased in 2018 over 2017 by large margins with 376 total programs (a 52% increase) and 14,323 program attendees (a 53% increase). Total programs offered and attendance percentage increases are similar; this illustrates that Library program offerings are interesting to and fulfill the needs of the community.

The Summer Reading Club is a longstanding cornerstone of Library programming. Summer Reading at EPL mitigates summer slide, the loss of academic skills and knowledge that occurs over the course of summer holidays. EPL boasted strong summer reading participation with 1,972 registered participants, a 25% increase from 2017, including toddlers, children, teens and adults.

A few examples of Children and Youth Services programming include Storytime, bilingual Toddler Storytime, Baby Storytime, Not-So-Spooky Stories, Dia de los Muertos and a Holiday Tree Trimming Party. Exciting new programs like 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten, Kumeyaay/Diegueño heritage and
TeenTasticFunTime enhanced literacy learning and introduced EPL services to many children, teens and families.

Adult services programming included AutoMate for car repair and maintenance; Learning Express for academic skill-building, standardized test prep and career certification; a bilingual book club and One Book, One San Diego, a San Diego County wide event, which was one of EPL’s biggest programs to date. In December 2018, EPL was invited to participate in the San Diego Museum Council’s 30th Annual San Diego Museum Month. EPL will be a distribution center for the Museum Month Pass in February, 2019, bringing half-price museum admission to residents. EPL’s partnership with the San Diego Children’s Discovery Museum (SDCDM) also expanded in 2018 with the addition of weekly storytimes conducted at SDCDM by Library staff. EPL circulates 47 passes that allow cardholders and their families to visit SDCDM for free.

EPL literacy services provide English language instruction to the diverse Escondido community and surrounding areas. One of EPL’s signature programs is one-on-one tutoring and small group instruction for adults over the age of 18. The program leverages volunteer tutors and pairs them with learners. Trusting, long-term relationships are formed with approximately 150 learners served each year. In 2019, EPL plans to expand the Families for Literacy program from children five and younger to birth-18.

Life enrichment programs are relevant and fun and introduce EPL to those who might not have used the Library in the past. Fight Fake News, Boos & Booze, Dads & Donuts, Family Craft Programs and programs livestreamed via Facebook were all well attended. Newly purchased Silhouette Cameo machines for t-shirt, ornament and tote bag making are used for craft programs.
LIBRARY OUTREACH

Outreach by staff is a key component of modern library service and provides opportunities to create awareness and engage the community beyond building walls and is highlighted in the EPL strategic plan. Partnerships with schools, higher education, local business, museums and cultural institutions have yielded stronger community engagement. EPL participated in many community outreach events, including Back to School Nights, Family Reading Nights, Lunch & Learns, Parent Meetings, Educators Night Out at California Center for the Arts, Escondido Street Fair and Read Local, Shop Local. Partnerships include Escondido Union School District, Escondido EcoVivarium, San Diego Children’s Discovery Museum, San Diego Futures Foundation and the Escondido Chamber of Commerce. EPL was also able to introduce the Library to new users by serving as a polling location.

EPL was especially focused on outreach to schools and the community; in 2018 the Library hosted or participated in 78 events with 6,174 attendees including students, families and community members, a 77% increase in events and more than double the number of attendees from 2017.

LIBRARY COLLECTIONS

The total collection size remained at just over 158,000 English and foreign language items, while titles offered increased by 1,000 for a total of 134,000 available titles. While maintaining the same collections size, the number of titles offered is growing, which means more choices for EPL patrons. The staff actively weeded the collection during the year for condition and relevance. New items were purchased based on circulation history, reviews, and patron demand. Largest increases were in print books (1,371) and English and Spanish eBooks/eAudiobooks (424).

In addition, several collections in the Pioneer Room were digitized, including Escondido Directories (via the California Revealed Grant), Escondido Times Advocate microfilm (1883-1995) and seven newly acquired photo collections.
Technology as part of both efficiency and innovation is a mainstay of LS&S library service. Several technology enhancements were rolled out at EPL in 2018. In March, EPL’s new Automated Material Handling (AMH) and self-checkout machines were made available to the public. Utilizing RFID technology, these machines maximize efficiency and provide patrons with a streamlined, 21st century experience, as well as helping customer service staff streamline workflows and procedures to save time. Patrons are now able to pay fines and fees with credit and debit cards in addition to cash.

To showcase the Library’s new patron-facing technology, EPL hosted its first Digital Petting Zoo in 2018. While the virtual reality gaming console and the 3D printer drew people in, the new language learning database, Pronunciator, stole the show at this popular event. EPL also hosts a regular Virtual Reality program to provide patrons with an immersive experience.
LIBRARY VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers, always an EPL strength, continue to dedicate their time and talent. EPL staff work closely with volunteers and the Library enjoys the support of more than 200 volunteers. The partnership yields many benefits; hardworking volunteers operate the EPL Bookstore and assist with numerous other activities.

In July 2017, 210 volunteers gave 2,391 hours. By July 2018, efforts grew to 236 volunteers giving 3,212 hours. One volunteer that resigned when LS&S assumed operations returned upon realizing that negative predictions were inaccurate. Volunteers report that the Library has improved and is cleaner, more efficient and offers more programs and services. They also report being pleasantly surprised and in favor of LS&S operation despite initial reservations about the model.

More than 200 EPL volunteers, City officials and staff celebrated together at a Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon on April 11, 2018. Volunteers were recognized for their tireless effort and support.

LIBRARY STAKEHOLDER REVIEWS

LS&S believes in library service to the community and that strong partnership with all stakeholders is essential to the EPL success. Following is a sampling of testimonials from EPL stakeholders.

To Whom It May Concern:

I along with the rest of the Library Trustees unanimously voted (5-0) against outsourcing the Escondido City Library to the private company LS&S.
Once the Escondido City Council made the decision to outsource it was my feeling that we needed to put politics behind us and work to make sure that the Library was providing the best service possible for the citizens of Escondido.

I have attempted to be as objective as possible evaluating the progress of the Library. Each month I have carefully looked at statistics provided by staff. These have included circulation, patrons, PC use, Programs (both attendance and outreach), total door count, and volunteers.

I am pleased to say that I feel the statistics indicate that the Library is doing a very good job meeting the needs of our community. I believe that Patricia Crosby, City Librarian, is an excellent leader and that the entire staff has done an outstanding job to make our Library a success. In addition, I am very pleased that we have maintained our wonderful volunteers, (Last count 211).

It will be the responsibility of the Board of Trustees to continually monitor services the Library provides to the citizens of Escondido.

Sincerely,
Ron Guiles, President, Library Board of Trustees, December 26, 2018

“We have better communication with Library staff now than ever before! We really enjoy this new, more cooperative relationship.”

Elmer Cameron, Library Board of Trustees; President, Friends of the Library

“I’ve been a volunteer with the Friends of the Library for over 5 years. My time is very well spent in the Book Shop serving and interacting with customers. This little Book Shop promotes the attitude that Escondido is a small, friendly town. The Library is a very important and vibrant part of our community. It was because of my love for the Library that I was adamantly opposed to having LS&S take over the day to day operations. I attended several meetings and City Council sessions to have my voice of opposition heard. In the end, LS&S was successful in obtaining a contract with our Library.
At first, I was unhappy with the change but as time passed, I discovered how very helpful and accommodating the new management is. When the Friends have a request, it is acted upon in short order rather than all the red tape the City required. The staff is enthusiastic and eager to grow our user base with creative and fun new programs. In social media, I’ve noticed a huge increase of posts promoting all the programs the Library has to offer - to all age groups!

I believe the transfer of management to LS&S has been very successful and I look forward to a long and rewarding relationship with Patricia Crosby and her staff."

Linda Parker, Friends of the Library Board Director, December 27, 2018

“I was against the transition, at first. However, I want to say what a wonderful job the new administration and staff does in partnering with us. I will be spreading the good word in our community!”

Jacqueline Balogh, President, Pioneer Room Friends

“Transitions are never seamless, but Escondido Public Library’s transition to management under LS&S has come very close. All of those dire fears about the future were unfounded. The new management has allowed us to continue to do what we do well, while gently encouraging and equipping us to do better. Interactive weekly emails and training webinars keep us in touch with the corporate office and help us feel supported, while daily operations are left to the locals, managed by those who know them best. If this is a dance, we’re mastering the steps beautifully.”

Madelyn Horton, Former EPL Adult Services Librarian, June 18, 2018

PATRON REVIEWS

LS&S people and practices focus on excellent patron service. Following is a sampling of patron testimonials.
“Very nice library with a small store for purchasing some older and used books. Movies are only 50 cents to rent for the week!! They have made subtle changes for updating the checkout area which makes it quicker to check out. There is also a 3D printer! Kid friendly area upstairs and activities during the week like songs and circle time.”

Amanda Fischbeck, December 2018 (Google Business)

“I love our library. I generally feel safe and welcome there with my kids. The staff is friendly and knows us by name.”

Sarah E Springfield, April 2018 (Website Feedback Form)

“I love our library and yes I feel safe. The adult craft projects are fun and include lovely people and great teachers. The music presentations are great but needs a larger room. Thank you for all your hard work.”

Sylvia Lea Trimble, March 2018 (Website Feedback Form)

“I haven’t been in here in a while, and I love how you’ve really opened up the space. It makes it so much easier for me to maneuver and see everything.”

Disabled Patron, December 2018 (In person at Information Desk)

Comments from public survey conducted as part of Strategic Plan, May 2018:

“I wanted to comment that the Library has changed nicely in the past few months.”

“My library experience at the Escondido branch was amazing! It was the first time in a library in 40+ years and I loved it and Thank you for providing staff who all were truly helpful plus all the awesome programs you have too! I look forward to my next visit!”

“I enjoy the fact that this library has a computer with magnification. Software for all persons with a vision disability. Thank you for that.”
Youth Services

- NEW 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten
- NEW San Diego Children’s Discovery Museum Mobile Museum Program
- NEW Baby Storytime at San Diego Children’s Discovery Museum
- NEW Quarterly Library-Led STEM/STEAM Programming at SDCDM
- NEW Twice yearly attending SDCDM Family Engineering and Science Nights with storytime and STEM/STEAM based craft
- NEW Lunar New Year Celebration with a series of programs (Storytimes, Lion Dancers, local author visit)
- NEW Dr. Seuss Read Across America Reader’s Theater
- NEW P.J. Storytime
- NEW Inclusive Art Club
- NEW Composting for a Greener Future program with Escondido Recycling Department
- NEW Dads and Donuts (Free Comic Book Day) All ages program done in collaboration with Adult Services
- NEW STEM Exploration Hour
- NEW TeenTasticFunTime
- NEW Safe Space Escondido
- NEW National Game Day (All Ages Program)
- NEW Board Game Sundays (will be starting January 2019)
- NEW Sci-Fun Science Club (spring 2019)
- NEW Escondido Choral Arts Center Children’s Chorus Performance (California Center for the Arts, Escondido Partnership)
- NEW All storytime offerings have increased in frequency. Baby Storytime at the SDCDM are now offered weekly, P.J. Storytime now offered twice per month and Baby Lapsit, Toddler Tales, and Rhymes and Reading offered an additional three weeks

*NEW indicates program was introduced since January 2018 under LS&S operation.
• Jumpstart’s Read for the Record Program
• San Diego Kids Poetry Annual Workshop
• Rhymes and Reading Storytime
• Knights Realm Chess Club
• Baby Laptsit Storytime
• Toddler Tales Storytime
• Paws for Reading
• Read to a Dragon
• R.E.A.D. Book Club
• Burritos and Book Club (Teens)
• Teen Advisory Board
• Teen Review Crew
• Dia de los Ninos/Libros (Day of the Child/Book)
• Not So Spooky Stories (Halloween)
• Dia de los Muertos
• Holiday Tree Trimming Party (Christmas)
• Annual Summer Reading Challenge
• Kids Book Club in a Bag
• San Diego Children’s Discovery Museum Free Admission Passes

Adult Literacy
• NEW Expanded Summer Reading Challenge Program
• NEW Conversation Class
• NEW Families for Literacy Family Programs (These are coming in Spring 2019)
• NEW Night classes at Del Lago Academy (Coming Spring 2019)
• Reading Basics
• Reading Comprehension
• Writing Basics
• Practical Writing
• Reading Critically – Book Discussion
• Clear Speech
• One on One Tutoring
• Learner Assessments
• Scrabble-thon
• Learner Recognition Reception

Adult Services
• NEW Author Event: Michelle Carter – Saturday, February 10, 3:00-4:30 p.m.
• NEW Virtual Reality @ the Library: 2nd & 4th Wednesdays, 5:00.-6:30 p.m. (monthly)
• NEW OverDrive bookmobile – Thursday, February 27 10a.m.-2p.m.
• NEW Succulent Swap – Sunday, April 15, 1:00-2:00 p.m. Adult Spring programming (annual)
• NEW Alzheimer’s Workshops – Wednesdays, March 4, 11, 18, 25 1:00-2:30 p.m.
• NEW Free Comic Book Day/Dads & Donuts – Saturday, May 5. 1:00-4:00 p.m. Adult giveaway event (annual partnership)
• NEW Fake News program – Saturday, May 19, 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
• NEW Summer Reading Challenge Themed Program- Plan 9 from Outer Space! Saturday, July 15, 2:00-3:30 p.m.
• NEW Boos & Booze– Saturday, October 20, 2:00-4:00 p.m.
• NEW One Book, One San Diego events (including protest sign making)-October (all month, annual)
• NEW Carol-oke & Crafts- Saturday, December 15, 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
• NEW Upcoming for 2019: Wellness Fair (bi-annual), Career Fair (bi-annual)
• NEW Digital Petting Zoo
• NEW Virtual Reality @ The Library
• Summer Reading Challenge Kick-Off Event – Saturday, June 16, 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
• Writer’s Group Open Mic Saturday, June 16, 10:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m.
• Death Café Saturdays, 10:30a.m.-12:00 p.m. (quarterly)
• Adult Winter Crafts– Saturdays, 10:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m. (monthly/seasonal series)
• Writer’s Group –Tuesdays, 1:00-4:00 p.m. (monthly)
• 2nd Saturday Concert (monthly)
• 2nd Tuesday Book Club - 6:00-7:30 p.m. (monthly)
• SDCC Graphic Novel Book Club – 3rd Mondays, 6:00-7:30 p.m. (monthly)
• Rincon Literario Bilingual Book Club – Saturdays, 10:30 -11:45 a.m. (monthly)
• Dia de los Muertos – Saturday, November 3, 1:00-3:00 p.m. (annual)
• Read Local, Shop Local-Newly expanded, California Library Association PR Excellence award winner, 2018 for most impact in the library community
• Adult Book Club in a Bag

Pioneer Room
• NEW Gallery Exhibit (Rick Smith Collection- Opening Saturday, October 27, 3:00-5:00 p.m., to remain on display for 3 months
• NEW Middle school tour of Pioneer Room
• NEW Upcoming for 2019: Quarterly gallery exhibits spotlighting historic Escondido
• Recipes of Escondido- (fundraising opportunity for Board)

Adult Services Librarian Speaking Events
• NEW SERRA Adult Services Cooperative panel-Every other month
• NEW California Library Association annual conference panel: “Fight Fake News”
• NEW LS&S All-staff day presentation “It’s All About Community: Successful Community Partnerships”-Friday, September 21, 10:30 a.m.
• NEW San Diego Comic Con educator’s panel- “If You Build It, They Will Come: Adult Graphic Novel Collection Development in Public Libraries”
• NEW New York Comic Con educator’s panel- “What’s It Worth? Adult Graphic Novels Are An Investment”
• NEW Banned Books Week Livestream on Image Comics Twitch-Librarian interviews with comics creators
• CAFÉ presentation on library services- Friday, October 26, 8:00 a.m.

Youth Services Librarian Speaking Events
• NEW LS&S All-staff day presentation “It’s All About Community: Successful Community Partnerships”-Friday, September 21, 10:30 a.m.
• NEW Moderated a Panel on STEM Partnerships on Thursday, October 18, 2018 at Serra Youth Services Staff Development Day. This was for all libraries in San Diego County.
• CAFÉ presentation on library services- Friday, October 26, 8:00 a.m.
Community Outreach (attended by Youth Services and Adult Services staff)

- Juniper School’s Read Across America Day- Library Outreach
- Felicita Schools’ Family Read Night- Library Outreach
- Del Dios Family Day- Library Outreach
- Library Focus Group #1 at EVCC- Grove Room- Community Event
- Library Focus Group #2 at EVCC- Grove Room- Community Event
- EUSD Family Liaison Meeting – Library Outreach
- YMCA 9th Annual Healthy Kids Day- Library Outreach
- Felicita School’s Lunch N learn- SRC Outreach
- Reidy Creeks Lunch N Learn- SRC Outreach
- Rock Spring’s Lunch N Learn- SRC Outreach
- SDCDM STREAM Night Event #2 – Library Outreach
- Juniper School’s Lunch and Read event- Library Outreach
- Orange Glen’s Lunch N Learn – SRC Outreach
- Educators Night Out at California Center for the Arts
- Escondido Street Fair
- San Diego Children's Discovery Museum Family Science and Engineering Nights
- National Night Out
- STEM Fest put on by San Diego Futures Foundation
- Grandparents Day
- 2018 San Diego Latino Book and Family Festival at Mira Costa College
- 8th Annual Tots and Trucks