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Final Report December 31, 2012

2012 was a year of changes at the Encino-Tarzana Branch and for the Los Angeles Public Library system, all for the good of the Library and the community it serves. Thanks to voter-approved Measure L (March 2011), Library services restoration continues. The big improvement for 2012 came just this past October when Friday mornings and evening hours on Wednesday and Thursday were restored.

Other signs of change are the hiring of new staff. In March, Martin Gomez left as City Librarian for a position at USC; and our new City Librarian, John Szabo, assumed leadership in September. At the Encino-Tarzana, we have experienced some staff changes, the most notable being the appointment of a Young Adult Librarian in February. He has been busy working on our very popular young adult materials collection, as well as recruiting teens to volunteer, planning programs, and doing outreach.

The Encino-Tarzana Library remains one of the busiest of all 72 branches. Our circulation of materials (items that patrons borrow) consistently ranks in the top four throughout the system, and is number three for the fiscal year 2011/2012. Facility improvements include replacement of the graffiti film on our windows, which make them look brand new; and replacing all the lights around the building and in the parking lot.

Our Branch programs for all ages were as popular as ever this past year (most of them sponsored by the Friends of Encino-Tarzana Branch Library). One of our most memorable and well-attended programs of 2012 was part of Tarzana's community-wide celebration of the 100th anniversary of the publication of Edgar Rice Burrough's classic novel Tarzan of the Apes in August. Local historian and Tarzana native Ralph Herman spoke to a packed crowd about growing up in the area and his friendship with the Burroughs family. For adults, we also were pleased to present the League of Women Voters (before the primary and presidential elections); Conversations with Heroes (WWII Veterans talking about their experiences); a monthly Persian movie screening; book clubs; and the Last Saturday of the Month Poetry group. Our children's and young adult librarians also planned and presented fun and interesting programs for our younger patrons. We had magicians, temporary tattoo artists, storytellers, a singing cowboy, movie screenings, art projects, food programs, and artist demonstrations, just to name a few. This year's Summer Reading Club was as successful as ever, hundreds of children and teens signed up and participated and earned books and the chance to win bigger prizes for reading. More importantly, they did it just for the fun and love of reading.

This year, thanks to their tireless volunteering and fundraising in the Branch bookstore and at the very successful quarterly book sales, the Friends have provided the funds to purchase hundreds of materials for the Branch (books, magazines, music CDs and DVDs), as well as the supplies the staff needs to process them for the shelves. The Friends also supplement our budget with programming assistance. The ever popular FOL-funded Hot-Off-The-Press program continues;

we are one of the few branches that is able to provide this service to our patrons (that is, one week lending period to get current bestsellers into as many readers' hands as possible). FOL also bought us 3 much-needed new tables in our Meeting Room.

System wide, our emedia collection continues to grow; and early this year we had major upgrades to our public computers. The Library has also implemented two major programs this year that demonstrate our continued commitment to supporting and assisting all patrons in the communities of our diverse city. Late this year, Citizenship Corners opened up in every branch in the system. This is a program designed to help immigrants navigate their way successfully to American citizenship. The Library offers materials (to keep as well as to borrow) and programs, and provides training to the staff so that we are better able to assist patrons with their questions about the nationalization process. Each branch also now provides a Student Zone. This is a designated workspace, with computer access and homework supplies, available to students (elementary through high school) for a part of each day Monday through Thursday. Our goal is to ensure that students have the resources they need, at their local branch, to succeed in school.

Despite our continuing budget and staff shortages, our new programs, the appointment of permanent upper management staff, and our extended hours all help to strengthen the Los Angeles Public Library, and keep it active and relevant in the communities we serve. Additionally, the contributions of the thousands of dedicated hardworking staff, volunteers (from teens to special project volunteers to literacy tutors to book club leaders to Friends of the Library), and patrons help keep the Library on course to a strong recovery and a bright future.

Encino-Tarzana Branch continues to be a vital and active part of the Encino and Tarzana communities. Judging by the amount of items that patrons borrow and the number of items that citizens donate to the Branch, the love that this community has for its Library is evident and impressive. All year long patrons shared with me good words about and suggestions for the Branch. They tell me about how one of our librarians helped them find a book with limited information ("the cover is yellow and it was on NPR"); or about a clerk who went out of his or her way for them; or a program that they enjoyed at the Encino-Tarzana Branch. It really is encouraging to me to hear these remarks. It demonstrates the value of the Branch as a staple in the community; and it inspires me to continue thinking of ways that we can better serve the public.