

## ENHANCING EDUCATION, INFORMATION ACCESS, AND QUALITY OF LIFE

### SANTA CLARA COUNTY LIBRARY DISTRICT'S COMMUNITY RETURN ON INVESTMENT

For many, Santa Clara County is synonymous with Silicon Valley, the birthplace of the information technology revolution. While it is true that the County is home to Apple, eBay, Google, HP, and a myriad of start-ups working to be the next "big thing" in IT, the Silicon Valley nickname doesn't fully capture the rich, vibrant history and culture of the area.

The County is comprised of a diverse collection of communities, old and new, urban and rural. While great differences exist among these populations, they tend to share an appreciation for diversity, education and personal enrichment, equal and open access to information, and technology.

In its first 100 years of existence, the Santa Clara County Library District (SCCLD) has shaped its services to best meet the needs and interests of the communities that make up this unique region. The following 5 key roles best describe the library's focus and the benefits it provides to its community:

- ENHANCING EARLY LITERACY AND YOUTH EDUCATION
- PROMOTING LIFELONG LEARNING AND PERSONAL GROWTH
- BUILDING AND BRIDGING DIVERSE COMMUNITIES
- PROVIDING ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND TECHNOLOGY FOR ALL
- SUPPORTING PERSONAL RECREATION AND QUALITY OF LIFE

SCCLD provides these benefits through a range of services, including the ability to borrow books, music, movies, games, and other materials; cultural, educational, and recreational programs; and access to technology and specialized reference services. SCCLD's impact on Library District residents' education, personal growth, community building, information and technology access, and quality of life is immeasurable.

This study shows that the total quantifiable value of SCCLD's services in fiscal year 2011-12 was between \$83.0 and \$171.8 million. This means that for every dollar spent by SCCLD, the community receives \$2.50 to \$5.17 in direct benefits.

As this value conservatively quantifies only those library services that can be easily measured, the actual value of benefits provided by SCCLD is substantially greater.

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THIS STUDY, PLEASE CONTACT:

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JULY 2013

*The Santa Clara County Library District is a high quality repository of books, periodicals, multimedia, job search centers, and literacy resources. It plays the full multiplicity of roles that a 21st century library may play—especially in a county as diverse as ours.*

*Particularly in a tough economy, there are things that the Library provides that families cannot afford themselves: job search resources, children's materials, and entertainment. The Library District is essential—there is no 'somebody else' to provide this service.*

**SUPERVISOR JOE SIMITIAN**  
**SANTA CLARA COUNTY, DISTRICT 5**

SCCLD serves the unincorporated portions of Santa Clara County and the cities of:

- CAMPBELL
- CUPERTINO
- GILROY
- LOS ALTOS
- LOS ALTOS HILLS
- MILPITAS
- MONTE SERENO
- MORGAN HILL
- SARATOGA



## SCCLD PROVIDES MANY INTANGIBLE BENEFITS, THE VALUE OF WHICH CANNOT BE QUANTIFIED.

In addition to direct services such as lending materials and providing programs such as lectures, workshops and events, the Library District also provides many intangible benefits, including the use of its facilities as a community gathering place and “third place;” being a fixture that instills community pride; and supporting positive educational, career, and health outcomes for users.

While the Library may help someone find a new job, start a small business, or address a personal health concern, these benefits are not easily quantifiable and are described in this study as benefits above and beyond those that can be captured in a “return on investment” calculation. While the value of borrowing a book is captured, the personal, familial, and societal benefits of using the borrowed book on entrepreneurship is not captured. Instead, these benefits were explored through stakeholder interviews and other qualitative analysis. Based on this analysis, it is obvious that these benefits, including increased employment and tax revenues for the community and greater personal income, are much greater than the market value of the book itself.

### PROVIDING ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND TECHNOLOGY FOR ALL

Santa Clara County Library District is an objective, trusted source that makes information and technology available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Although Santa Clara County is the heart of Silicon Valley, there are many disadvantaged, vulnerable, and historically underserved populations who rely on the Library for access to computers and electronic resources. Similarly, because the Library District serves Silicon Valley, the breadth and depth of the library collection, including its state of the art virtual library, and reference services are critical resources for professionals and entrepreneurs. In these ways, SCCLD serves community members on both sides of the digital divide.

- Indirect benefits created by access to information and technology among those who might not otherwise have access
  - Information fluency, research, reference, and computer skills
  - Resources for people with disabilities, including access to homebound services and talking book, braille, and other accessible reading materials
- An efficient, environmentally-conscious way to provide shared resources
- Equity and intellectual freedom through open, free access to information and technology

### SUPPORTING PERSONAL RECREATION AND QUALITY OF LIFE

Leisure, recreation, and intellectual engagement are essential elements of a full life. Santa Clara County Library District offers many programs, collections, and services that provide individuals with the ability to express their passions and enjoy life, whether it be by reading the latest best-seller, watching a recent blockbuster with their family or exploring intellectual and cultural interests through Library programming or local museums.

- Individual relaxation and enjoyment
- Opportunities for personal exploration, creativity, and expression
- Intellectual engagement
- Art displays, cultural programming, musical performances, and other opportunities for cultural appreciation and enrichment

- Leisure-related circulation, including fiction, music, console games, and movies
- Book Clubs and Book Club kits
- Recreational, cultural, and arts programming, including cooking, Tai Chi, and travel programs
- Discover and Go museum passes including the Aquarium of the Bay, the Bay Area Discovery Museum, and the Tech Museum of Innovation

- Circulation of nonfiction materials
- Adult, children's, and virtual reference services
- Online database searches
- Public access computers, including dedicated ADA, teen, and children's terminals

- Meeting Rooms
- Group study rooms
- Programming and community events
- Multilingual circulation, programming, and reference services

### BUILDING AND BRIDGING DIVERSE COMMUNITIES

Santa Clara County Library District brings together the diverse populations that make up the Santa Clara County community. The Library District's eight libraries serve as a gathering place for youth, seniors, families, and others. In rural areas of the county, twice monthly bookmobile visits serve as regular community social events. Meeting rooms, programming, and community events connect individuals, families, and cultural groups from a tremendous range of economic, social, linguistic, and ethnic backgrounds.

- A gathering place for diverse communities throughout the Library District
- A particularly important community focal point in rural areas of the District
- A safe, clean, and comfortable “third place” for individual community members
- Civic engagement and partnerships developed through community-sponsored events and meetings
- Nexus for cultural communities through multilingual programming
- Social interactions for adults, teens, and children
- Access to diverse collections representing multiple points of view

### ENHANCING EARLY LITERACY AND YOUTH EDUCATION

The Santa Clara County Library District plays a tremendous role supplementing and supporting the work of the region's public and private schools, providing access to resources, research assistance, homework help, free computers and other technology, and safe places for individual and group study. Library programs cultivate early literacy skills necessary for school success. These benefits support the well-being of individuals and Santa Clara County's families, businesses, and society that depend on a well-educated, literate population.

- The full benefits of early literacy, which include success in school, career, and life
- Expert guidance in obtaining identifying reliable information sources and the cultivation of information literacy
- Safe, inviting spaces for children and teens to learn
- Circulation, programming and reference services for educational purposes
- Story time, infant lapsits, and other programming that promotes early literacy
- Online tutoring programs
- Group study rooms

NON-QUANTIFIABLE BENEFITS ↑  
QUANTIFIABLE BENEFITS ↓

- Circulation, programming and reference services related to career, financial management, and health and wellness
- PlaneTree Health Information Center
- The Reading Program

### PROMOTING LIFELONG LEARNING AND PERSONAL GROWTH

The Santa Clara County Library District provides opportunities for personal enrichment to individuals of all ages, offering resources and programming that support health, wealth, and job skills. The Library District's PlaneTree Health Information Center offers in-depth consumer health and medical information services, and The Reading Program promotes literacy among adults. By promoting individual health and well-being, the Library helps avoid greater society costs associated with social support services and subsidized medical care.

- Individual, family, and community benefits of employment and financial management, including decreased demand for social services
- Individual and community benefits of personal health and wellness, including improved health outcomes and reduced individual and society medical costs

The quantifiable value of direct services to library patrons includes the borrowing of print and non-print materials, programs, and technology and reference access.

To determine a range of values for these direct services, the number of uses of a library service was multiplied by a low and a high market rate (the going rate for the service on the open market). In some cases, a discount rate was applied to account for the difference between borrowing and owning an item. Market rates were established by obtaining quotes for comparable goods and services available to Santa Clara County residents.

The total quantifiable value of SCCLD's services in fiscal year 2011-12 was determined to be \$83.0 to \$171.8 million, as shown in Exhibit 1. To determine the return on taxpayer investment in SCCLD, these benefits were divided by SCCLD's operating expenditures in fiscal year 2011-12: \$33.2 million.

As shown in Exhibit 2, for every dollar spent by SCCLD, the community receives \$2.50 to \$5.17 of direct benefits. As this value conservatively quantifies only those library services that can be easily measured, the actual value of benefits provided by SCCLD is substantially greater.



Over 3.9 million children's books are borrowed from SCCLD every year. This accounts for 63% of the Library District's book circulation.

## EXHIBIT 1 Summary of Estimated Annual Value of Quantifiable Benefits Provided by SCCLD, Fiscal Year 2011-12

	TOTAL ANNUAL BENEFIT (LOW)	TOTAL ANNUAL BENEFIT (HIGH)
<b>CIRCULATION</b>		
Audio Books	\$3,223,593	\$6,208,860
Books	\$41,139,791	\$79,272,859
DVDs	\$1,843,604	\$9,832,552
eBooks	\$311,970	\$727,930
Interactive Media	\$801,169	\$3,916,825
Music	\$2,897,408	\$4,635,852
Periodicals	\$777,580	\$1,036,774
<b>PROGRAMS</b>		
Adult	\$263,950	\$560,690
Teen	\$117,470	\$258,434
School Age	\$399,560	\$998,900
Preschool	\$572,928	\$1,432,320
The Reading Program	\$72,648	\$242,160
Online Tutoring	\$194,784	\$649,280
<b>REFERENCE</b>		
Reference	\$2,933,858	\$8,801,575
PlaneTree Reference	\$11,950	\$47,800
Database Searches	\$25,426,346	\$48,399,704
<b>SPACE</b>		
Meeting Room Use	\$20,900	\$41,800
Group Study Room Use	\$56,450	\$282,250
<b>TECHNOLOGY</b>		
Public Internet Computer Use	\$1,674,901	\$3,129,814
Wifi Use	\$262,000	\$1,310,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$83,002,858</b>	<b>\$171,806,379</b>

## EXHIBIT 2 Benefit/Cost Ratio of Estimated Quantifiable Benefits to Full SCCLD Expenditures, Fiscal Year 2011-12

	LOW	HIGH
Total Estimated Benefits	\$83,002,858	\$171,806,378
Total Expenditures	\$33,248,990	\$33,248,990
<b>BENEFIT/COST RATIO</b>	<b>2.50</b>	<b>5.17</b>