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Discover & Go: Free Museum Passes

By Cathy Tyson



Robi Duncan and Jing Jing Huang at the Lafayette Library and Learning Center Photo Cathy Tyson

a pass can be reserved by phone or in person at any library in the county.

By leveraging some contributions and using very limited development money - they applied for and received a library innovation and technology grant. The grant money paid for a software developer to create the very easy to use system.

"The (venue) partners have been just wonderful!" said Sanford, who wants to build a partner consortium. Launched just a couple weeks ago, there have been no problems reported and growing usage by patrons. "We believe it will be the most successful program ever," she said.

"I really want to commend the county library system for automating the process," said Lafayette City Council member Don Tatzin who played a key role in the early stages of the project.

"Some forms of learning occur in a library, but others involve going and exploring. This makes it affordable for those that might not otherwise be able to go," said Tatzin. "I want to encourage people to go to the website and get started." Go to www.ccclib.org.

Current Destinations

- Asian Art Museum
- Bay Area Discovery Museum
- Beat Museum
- Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive
- Blackhawk Museum
- Cartoon Art Museum
- Charles M. Schulz Museum
- Contemporary Jewish Museum
- Habitot Children's Museum
- Lawrence Hall of Science
- Lindsay Wildlife Museum
- The Marine Mammal Center

In a groundbreaking new program, The Contra Costa Library System is offering complimentary museum passes for twenty- three museums and cultural institutions all around the Bay Area to patrons with their Discover & Go program. A fun, free and educational outing is just a few clicks away. Passes are similar to airplane boarding passes, just print and present it at the venue.

From the Asian Art Museum in San Francisco and the Marine Mammal Center in Sausalito to the USS Hornet in Alameda and beyond - Contra Costa County residents with a library card can print free passes for a particular day, that don't need to be returned and will never be overdue. The list of participating venues keeps growing, see box below for current destinations.

"We really believe that museums and libraries support one another so everyone can explore and learn" said Cathy Sanford, Deputy County Librarian. Seeking efficiency and effectiveness from the beginning, Sanford and library staffers figured, "If we are going to do this - let's do it right." Their goal was to make passes available in a virtual environment, printable right at home. With helpful "browse by venue" or "browse by date" options along with a handy calendar - they have clearly succeeded. For customers without Internet access,

- Museum of the African Diaspora
- Museum of Craft and Folk Art
- Oakland Museum of California
- Pacific Pinball Museum
- San Jose Museum of Art
- San Jose Museum of Quilts and Textiles
- The Tech Museum
- Town Hall Theatre
- USS Hornet
- Vallejo Naval and Historical Museum
- Zeum: San Francisco's Children's Museum

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