

The Stacks

March 2022

A Message from Dr. Philip A. Chan

I remember from a very young age visiting our town public library. Early on, I read everything I could get my hands on and would visit the public library almost daily. As a physician, I've long valued books and the knowledge that is conveyed through them. I am also reminded that it can be much more than knowledge. As a young medical student in 2003, I read *Mountains Beyond Mountains: The Quest of Dr. Paul Farmer, A Man Who Would Cure the World* by Tracey Kidder. The book was about a physician who traveled around the world addressing health disparities and was an inspiration to me as an aspiring medical student. As I reflect on the COVID-19 pandemic, I cannot overstate the importance of reading and critical thinking skills, and the role that public libraries like PPL play in providing these to our community.



Public libraries are a vital source of knowledge and reading, especially for those who live in underserved communities. As I've worked alongside others at the Rhode Island Department of Health, we have spent countless hours addressing the vast amounts of misinformation and myths related to COVID-19. These experiences have only highlighted how important it is to have access to knowledge and trusted members of the community who can help teach people how to think critically, like the staff at Providence Public Library. I've always loved books and found my way in medicine largely by gaining not only knowledge but also inspiration through what I read.

Such inspiration has led me to dedicate my life to improving access to health and addressing disparities. In 2020, the culmination of this work resulted in Open Door Health, the state's only LGBTQ+ community clinic, I serve as Chief Medical Officer of the clinic which is a program of the Rhode Island Public Health Institute. The clinic is located at 7 Central Street in Providence and aims to provide trusted medical advice and improve access to primary and sexual health care for all. It is essential that people have access to trusted, reliable information in this age of disinformation. And for me, it all started with my early curiosity

Did You Know...

PPL offers a STEM Advantage Club where children 6 - 10 team up with teen mentors to explore science, technology, engineering, and math through hands-on activities, while the mentors gain experience acting as role models, helping their community and the environment, and building skills as future leaders.

Continued

through reading and visiting my local public library.

I want to thank PPL for its work in the community improving access to books and knowledge. Reading changed everything for me, and I work to pass it along to all those I care for. Thank you all, my fellow Conservators, for doing the same!

Upcoming Events...

2022 Exhibition & Program Series — April 1

We will soon kick off our 2022 Exhibition & Program Series. This year's exhibition, called TOMBOY, will interrogate the history of cultural expectations and gender norms for girls and women, especially in the interplay between lifestyle, aesthetic, play, and self-identity, while the program series, called IDENTITIES, will offer new ways of exploring who we are and who we want to be. Be on the "look-out" for more news coming soon!

The Pie-Brary is Open — Celebrate Pi(e) Day! Thursday, April 7 | 7 pm via Zoom

Pi Day is an annual celebration of the mathematical constant π (pi)! Join us in celebrating Conservator-style with Gina Herlihy, owner of PVD Pies. We'll hold a virtual pie-baking demo (cherry chocolate almond, anyone?!) with a delicious beverage pairing provided by our friends and fellow Conservators at Bottles Fine Wine. And, yes, you are encouraged to "bake-along!"

Savor the Story Back in Person! — April 29

We are thrilled that our signature Gala will be back in person this year and is already on its way to SELLING OUT, even before the invitations go out! We want to be sure you get tickets if you are interested in attending. We will be honoring Mary B. Olenn with our Enlightenment Award as we celebrate **An Evening in Provence.**



Please let Alex know if you would like a ticket(s) held or if you are interested in sponsoring: 401-575-6478 or arempis@provlb.

State of the Pandemic — February 8 program with Dr. Ashish Jha available for viewing!

We are pleased to share the link to our recent Conservator Society event called *State of the Pandemic -- In Conversation with Dr. Ashish Jha, Covid-19 and the Role of Libraries in Public Health*. Dr. Jha gave an update on the trajectory of the pandemic and how best to stay safe. Brown University Librarian Dr. Joseph Meisel and PPL Executive Director Jack Martin joined Dr. Jha in conversation followed by a moderated Q&A session.

SAVE THE DATE! July 14, 2022
Claudine Pépin Bastille Day crêpe cooking demo!

Conservator Society



PPL Alum Spotlight

*Because of YOUR generosity, individuals from all walks of life have transformative experiences at PPL. We're thrilled to share these stories of success and achievement with you to demonstrate **the incredible impact you are making** when you support the Library. **You REALLY do make these alum stories possible!***

Maria Lopez: On Becoming a U.S. Citizen

I attended Providence Public Library's Citizenship Class and obtained my U.S. citizenship!

PPL has a great team and this has been a great accomplishment for me. Thank you again for helping me gain the confidence, security and preparation needed to be able to attend my citizenship interview and pass the test.



I could write many pages for all the happiness and gratitude that my family and I have for you. You can

"PPL has a great team and this has been a great accomplishment for me."

count on all of us for any event or program where you require volunteers! Every day I had one of you on the phone for hours, helping me practice each question and the answers. Hopefully, many more people in Rhode

Island can benefit from this excellent program that helps people like me get better opportunities and provides security and confidence to us immigrants.

I want especially to thank Eva Al Hadad, Cindi Portno and Dave Barsamian for all their efforts to prepare me for the interview. It is not easy to take hours of your precious time to help others in a selfless way.

Fundraising Update & Other News...

The Papitto Opportunity Connection has generously granted us \$150,000 supporting our Programs & Exhibitions team's work to uplift the voices of BIPOC Rhode Islanders, especially vis-à-vis the Langston Hughes Community Poetry Reading in partnership with April Brown. Papitto's focus is empowering Rhode Island BIPOC residents, and we're grateful they've made a significant investment in our dynamic, community-centered, collaborative programming model.

Residential Properties has agreed to become our lead donor for the Passport to Summer Learning program's weekly take-home bags that will serve 12,000 Providence public schoolchildren this summer. Special thanks to Conservator and dear friend Sally Lapides for her extraordinary generosity in making this happen.

Welcome New Conservators!

Welcome to Rick W. Campbell, Carol Golden & Stuart Einhorn, Mark A. Lavallee, Tad Lawrence & Vicky Seelen, Beverly Ledbetter, MJ Robinson, Sundaresan & Vijaya Sambandam, Jonathan & Julie Rousseau, and Deborah Venator.

We'd love to have email addresses and birthdays for all our Conservators. Please contact Alex at 401-575-6478 or arempis@provlb to help us stay in better touch!

Conservator Profile Meet Noni Thomas López and Rodney Eric López

We were so happy to become members of PPL's Conservator Society in 2021. We have been supporters of PPL since the day we toured the Library last summer. Libraries have been a transformational part of our educational lives since before either one of us could read, and we have passed that love and appreciation on to our children. We can't imagine a world without libraries. It means a great deal to us to have a relationship with our local libraries, and we feel like giving to PPL is a tangible way to demonstrate that.



There are so many things to love about PPL! Noni is excited by the dynamic programming and variety of events designed to serve a diverse community. PPL is a true public commons. Rodney is curiously fascinated with the book drop machine!

We wish more people knew what a beautiful resource PPL is, especially since its renovation. The teen room is thoughtfully designed to allow young people to read and learn in ways that work for them. The theater is a classic space to host a film screening or town hall, there are gorgeous rooms that are perfect for special events, and there are a number of comfy places to lose yourself in a book or just set up with your laptop. It's a peaceful oasis in downtown Providence.

Have we mentioned the book drop machine?? It's lovingly known as the Bookie Monster. How could we not support a place with such a sense of fun!

PPL Staff Profile Meet Seiji Abe, PPL's Workshop Coordinator

We are thrilled to introduce Seiji Abe, PPL's new Workshop Coordinator. Seiji has a diverse background with degrees in Cultural Anthropology and Computer Science. He has spent the last five years developing and delivering hands-on experiential learning opportunities in schools and libraries throughout Rhode Island. He focuses on in-depth and individually tailored STEAM learning opportunities through the teaching and use of DIY-Design methodologies and "maker" tools, techniques, and technology.



In his new role, Seiji is spearheading the development of the Workshop, which includes a dedicated educational makerspace, shared partner offices, a classroom, and a large communal work space. He sees the Workshop as the heart of PPL's initiative to make libraries hubs of communal learning as well as providing access to cutting-edge tools and technology.

Seiji is passionate about expanding access to these resources and empowering makers of all ages and interests to pursue their passions. He is excited to be at PPL because of the opportunities provided by having a dedicated space to serve as the foundation for the collaborative learning community that he and the Library are hoping to build going forward.



Conservator
Society