

What's in... The Stacks

September 2022

A Message from Conservators Isabella Porter & Ned Levine

We became supporters of Providence Public Library as part of our interest in K-12 education. Since many Rhode Island students do not have access to high-quality education and enrichment activities, we began looking for organizations that were “filling the gap.” That is when we thought about the Library. Haven’t libraries always welcomed children and teens with a quiet spot to do homework and access to all kinds of learning resources?



After getting to know the Library, we became Conservators. It was an easy choice. Why?

The Library is an important cultural institution, providing critical resources to Rhode Islanders in an historic building in downtown Providence. As the flagship library in the state library system, it provides free access to educational, news, and historical resources. In this way, it helps keep the public informed with facts, something that has never been more important than now in our democracy.

The Library is a vibrant institution. Board and leadership recognized the Library’s vulnerability in an increasingly digital, self-service world and engaged in an action-oriented strategic planning process. That work has informed the services and programs that the Library offers, and it has transformed the spaces in which it offers them.

The Library today is still a place where you can borrow books, but it is also a place for collaborative learning programs and resources for a wide variety of constituents, and it offers them in a completely renovated building with friendly, open, light-filled, and easy-to-navigate spaces.

We think it is important for more people to understand the statewide importance of the Library, which is why we hosted a “friend-raising” cocktail party this summer at our home in Little Compton.

As Conservators, let us all keep finding ways to get the word out about the Library.

Conservator Society



Did You Know...

... PPL actually has two gardens? In addition to our garage rooftop garden built last year, we also have a hydroponic garden in our Workshop! In addition to hosting a variety of children, youth, and adult learning programs, the gardens have yielded a great harvest this year. So far, we’ve harvested 15 pounds of varied vegetables and made three donations to the Better Lives RI foodbank through the URI Master Gardner Donate a Row program.

Upcoming Events...

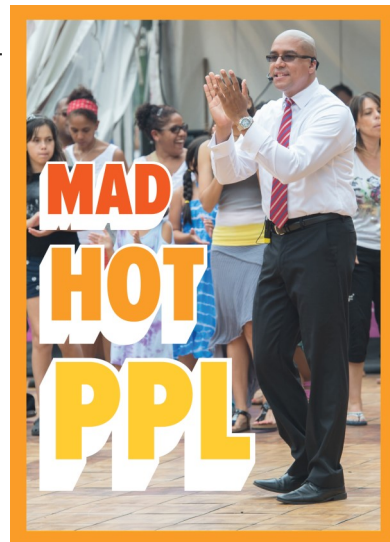
Workshop Open Studio — Tuesday, October 11 PPL Workshop, 5 — 7 pm

Join us during PPL’s Open Studio time to make something and go out together after!

MAD HOT PPL — Tuesday, October 25

Donald J. Farish Auditorium, 5:30 — 7:30 pm

A wonderful evening is planned in PPL’s gloriously transformed auditorium. Get ready to celebrate the arts, enjoy cocktails and refreshments — and dance! Fellow Conservator, internationally renowned dance instructor Rodney Eric López will screen a 20-minute abridged version of the film *Mad Hot Ballroom*, a multiple-award-winning documentary featuring his work with Dancing Classrooms in New York City. We’ll then have a brief panel discussion moderated by Programs & Exhibitions Director Christina Bevilacqua, followed by a reception and a super-fun dance lesson with Rodney. **Kindly RSVP to Alex by October 18 at 401-575-6478 or arempis@provlb.org.**



LOOKING AHEAD...

February — Virtual Crêpe Demo with Claudine Pépin

We are working on details with Rollie Wesen and JWU Jacques Pépin Foundation, but hope everyone will be able to join us!

Coming Soon! — An Author/Literary Event in March/April

Save the Date for Savor the Story! — May 5, 2023

August 24 Gathering

We gathered at the spectacular Bristol waterfront home of Conservators Jackie Savoie and Dennis McCool for a presentation by and conversation with Dr. Caroline Ummenhofer, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, and Dr. Timothy Walker, UMass Dartmouth, on the Nicholson Whaling Collection and its connection to their cutting-edge climate change research. Guests enjoyed lobster rolls provided by the Blount’s Clam Shack food truck and fabulous made-to-order pizzas from a large, wood-fired pizza-oven food truck. Conservator Eric Taylor from Bottles served wine, soft drinks, and delicious Bee’s Knees cocktails using honey from Jackie’s own hives!



Above (l-r): JP Couture, Ted McGuire, Micah Salkind, and Brandon Marshall; Beverly Ledbetter and Janaya Kizzie (with Maureen McDonald, behind!)

On The PPL Pathway...

Meet Angel and Mario

At PPL we love stories, and the story of one-time middle school classmates Angel Arrazola and Mario Orellana, two PPL Alum who began their respective library journeys several years ago as high school students, is definitely one for the books. And, the best part is, their PPL journeys are continuing!

For this affable duo who initially found their way to PPL separately, Angel as a student at Classical High School and Mario who attended Evolutions High School and then Mt. Pleasant High School, the Library quickly became more than just a meeting place or somewhere to go to study after school. Once connected to the varied opportunities that PPL offered to youth, the pair have made the most of every experience afforded them, actively pursuing their individual interests and aspirations. (Angel is quick to credit longtime PPL children’s librarian Bonnie Lilienthal for serving as his initial library matchmaker while Mario notes that Head of Youth Services Kate Aubin initially introduced him to the Library!)



Angel Arrazola

Moreover, both attest to the Library’s programs giving them a variety of valuable learning opportunities. They were not only exposed to technology and critical skills in the world of coding and data analysis through the Rhode Coders 2.0 and Teen Data Navigators classes, they also have been able to grow and flourish not only as students, but as teachers and mentors to younger students.

Angel, currently a sophomore at Brown University, joined PPL’s Board of Trustees this year (becoming the youngest-ever member of the Library board). Meanwhile, Mario formally joined PPL’s staff in July as a Youth Services Specialist, splitting his time between Teen Services, Children’s Services, and the Workshop.

Passages

RICHARD SPOFFORD CHAFEE

We are saddened by the passing of Richard Spofford Chafee in June. He leaves his wife, Inge, daughter Louisa Chafee and husband Joe Elorriaga and grandchildren Clementine and Tallulah; his sister Molly Harrington and her family and many Spofford and Chafee cousins. His daughter Clio Chafee predeceased him, as did his brother Nathaniel.



A scholar, Richard was an alumnus of Moses Brown, Eaglebrook, Deerfield, Harvard (AB), Yale (MA) and London University (PhD). Richard and his wife have been decades-long supporters of PPL, ultimately joining PPL’s Conservator Society in 2008 and becoming regulars at Library gatherings. Richard was also a long-time supporter of the Henry S. Chafee (his uncle) Book Fund.

An historian of architecture, he taught the history of architecture at Connecticut College and Roger Williams University.

Welcome New Conservators!

Welcome to Eric Estes, Marlon Henry & Cendhi Arias Henry, and Janaya Kizzie.

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

Angel credits his experiences in the Library’s youth technology offerings with his decision to take his current path of study at Brown University. He’s planning to concentrate in computer science and imagines possibly also majoring in educational studies.

He explains, “The many mentoring opportunities I’ve had over the years through PPL programs for youth, both during the school year and the summers . . . as a student and a teacher, have greatly influenced me and allowed me to develop an affinity for teaching.”

As students, both Angel and Mario attended multiple sessions of Rhode Coders 2.0 and Data Navigators 2.0, graduating to teaching assistant roles in the programs. Both also worked together supervising in the Library’s Teen Data for Good program (modeled after PPL’s adult Data For Good – a community service program that grew out of the Library’s Rhode Island Tableau User Group.)

Transferable Skills

“The knowledge and experiences I received through all of the Library coding and analytics programs have given me skills that I can apply beyond the classroom. Not only have I been able to excel and take leadership roles in the classroom, but also as a participant in outside group projects, from a cybersecurity program to an educational studies project with Providence Public Schools. I realize now the true value of all I’ve learned,” said Angel.

Angel’s library journey is long from ending. This spring, in addition to helping out with tutoring in the new Teen Loft, he joined PPL’s Board of Trustees as the youngest-ever member. He is excited to follow this new path, already having greatly enjoyed multiple speaking engagements on behalf of the Library — telling his story both at Conservator events and through video. But he’s not giving up on teaching either; he’s quick to add that he will soon be teaching a remote Python class for teens.

Similarly, Mario, who just this summer joined PPL’s staff as a Youth Services Specialist, splitting his time between Teen Services, Children’s Services, and the Workshop, is looking forward to what’s to come in his new role at the Library and expects to continue growing personally and professionally while on this path.



Mario Orellana

“I once thought that maybe I would pursue a different side of technology, like becoming a software developer, but I feel right now like everything I’ve done over the past year or so has led up to this job,” he says.

Mario interned in the Teen Loft earlier in the year and also worked as a teaching assistant with PPL’s Training Specialist Sherry Lehane on a current grant working to share PPL’s adult Data For Good program with partner libraries nationally.

Big Takeaway

“I’ve had so many opportunities at the Library and all of these experiences have had a great impact on me, particularly allowing me to develop my social and interpersonal skills. That for me has been the biggest takeaway from my time at PPL. I feel I have truly come out of my shell because of everything I’ve done here. I’ve also been able to understand better my true interests.”

While he’s happy with what he’s doing right now and has no immediate plans beyond digging into his current role, Mario concedes “I’ve come to see that I really like teaching and helping others.”

Fundraising News...

We are excited to report that we’ve received a \$50,000 grant from the CVS Health Hometown Fund to sustain and continue developing our Behavioral Health Career Pathway. This represents the first ever grant to PPL from CVS!

In addition, we received \$25,000 from the Governor’s Workforce Board’s Real Jobs RI Program to develop our employer connections and help create even more opportunities for our learners.