



# A NEW ALASKA ROOM AT LOUSSAC LIBRARY

A SPACE TO CELEBRATE AND  
LEARN ABOUT ANCHORAGE'S  
PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

LIBRARY IMPACT REPORT  
SUMMER 2021

*Photo above: A proposed rendering of the  
new Alaska Room at Loussac Library*

Thanks to voters passing Proposition 2, the campaign for a new Alaska Room at Loussac Library is underway! The new space is an important step in the Library's efforts to represent the diversity of peoples and cultures in our city. The Alaska Room will occupy a prime spot on the 3rd floor where it will be more accessible and visible than it was in its previous location. The glassed-in room will feature the existing and growing collection of books, microfilm, maps and other resources, as well as study tables, comfortable reading chairs and small study rooms.

This project will promote all who have contributed to making our state what it is today, by balancing the predominantly white, male explorer/pioneer perspective of the Alaska Collection with voices of Indigenous peoples, women, African Americans, and immigrant cultures. Librarians will use new platforms and expand the methods used to gather resources and share our stories.

More than just a physical space, the Alaska Room will be a catalyst for collaborative learning and exploration. We envision it as a go-to place in our community where everyone is welcome and can see themselves reflected. Where celebrations and learning events are held that bring community members together and help us learn and grow together.

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# Alaska Room, continued.

To engage the community in the creation of the new space, the Library has formed the Task Force on the Alaska Room, a diverse 25-member steering committee that will inform the Library on design and program decisions, including participating in a Community Design Process this fall to inform the space's final designs.

With the passage of the municipal bond, a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, and several gifts from individuals, we are already at two-thirds of our fundraising goal. The Anchorage Library Foundation is leading a capital campaign to raise the remaining funds in 2021-22, with an anticipated late 2022/early 2023 construction start date. Project information can be found at:

[www.anchoragelibrary.org/resources/research/alaska-collection/alaska-collection-redesign/](http://www.anchoragelibrary.org/resources/research/alaska-collection/alaska-collection-redesign/)

## Your Investment at Work

### Library Highlights – You made this possible!

- **Emergency grants to the Library for digital materials and laptops for checkout** - thanks to incredible financial support from the community to provide this extra pandemic relief!
- **Increased Library Funding:** successfully advocated for the Mayor and Assembly Members to increase the Library's budget for 2021: added an Early Literacy Outreach Librarian, additional tech support and funding for the Community Resource Coordinators.
- **Launched a campaign for a New Alaska Room at Loussac Library:** secured a \$390K challenge grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities - one of only 30 projects awarded in the country, and passed Proposition 2 bond to pay for the project.
- **STEM Kits:** added 66 STEM Kits to the Library's collection of science activities for checkout.
- **Launched the Next Chapter Society:** two new members joined the eleven founding members who have designated the Library Foundation in their will or retirement plans.
- **Funded an Assistant Library Community Resource Coordinator** to serve the Mountain View Library, and a peer navigator program (to launch soon).
- **Upgraded furniture and signage at libraries:** including a family reading area at Loussac, a reading nook at Gerish Girwood, new signs at Chugiak-Eagle River and a study bar at Mountain View.



**Photos:** the Library's kits have become a popular way for people of all ages to learn new skills - from STEM, to spring cleaning, biking, baking and gardening, the Library has a kit for just about everything. Except cats. That was just an April Fool's joke. Learn more at [www.anchoragelibrary.org/books-plus-movies-plus-music/find-it/kits/library-in-a-box/](http://www.anchoragelibrary.org/books-plus-movies-plus-music/find-it/kits/library-in-a-box/)



# New Early Literacy Program

In 2020, Anchorage approved a tax on the sale of alcoholic beverages and part of the proceeds from that tax funded a new Library position. The Early Literacy Outreach Librarian position was recently filled by Samantha Blanquart, who has been with the Library since 2016.

The focus for the new position will be on families, particularly ones from underrepresented communities who may not have access to traditional library services. Samantha is excited to work with community leaders in Anchorage to help reach those families.

She said, "It's very important that parents and caregivers feel empowered to help their children become ready for school by using fun, everyday learning activities such as sharing picture books and having engaging, interactive conversations with their children."



Samantha will be expanding the Early Literacy Stations at WIC offices to other medical offices, and hubs like tire changeover lobbies and laundromats. These stations will encourage pre-literacy skills in places where families are already spending their time. She will also implement Welcome Baby Bags for newborns in Anchorage that invites them and their families to the Library. Once the families come in, they will receive a free tote bag, book, and toy. The new program will have a training component, including an online Caregiver Training for caregivers to complete at their own pace. This program will also help with licensure with the State of Alaska. The training comes with an invitation to the library and free books for their in-home daycare center.

Detach and mail to: Anchorage Library Foundation/Friends of the Library: PO Box 244714, Anchorage, AK 99524

## YES! I want to help the Anchorage Public Library build community.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_



I'd like to support the Library's immediate needs for materials and programs with a gift in the amount of \$\_\_\_\_\_.

Make check payable to: **Friends of the Library**



I'd like to support the long-term growth of the Library and new library initiatives with a gift in the amount of \$\_\_\_\_\_.

Make check payable to: **Anchorage Library Foundation**

I do NOT want a 2021 Library Champion Card

Please keep my name anonymous in recognition materials.

Please send me information on The Next Chapter Society.



P.O. BOX 244714  
ANCHORAGE, AK 99524

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### Library-in-a-Box Kits

Stacia McGourty, Adult Services Coordinator for the Library, had a dream to create Library in a Box kits for adults and 2020 was her year to do it! Library in a Box is geared toward milestones for adults, such as searching for a job, owning your own home, or even baking cookies. The kits are based on the needs and feedback from patrons and the community. Each kit includes items geared toward the activity and some sort of consumable item that can be kept by the patron and then is replaced by the APL.

The most popular kits so far are knitting, crocheting, leather working, and home organization. However, there are over 30 different kits to choose from! The easiest way to find them is to search "Library in a Box" on the Anchorage Public Library website: [anchoragepubliclibrary.org](http://anchoragepubliclibrary.org) and put one on hold. Each kit can be checked out for 6 weeks, but cannot be renewed. Two kits per library card. Individuals or businesses can sponsor kits. For instance, Off the Chain sponsored three kits for patrons to learn how to repair their bikes. Each of those kits include a magazine about bike repair, a map, and tools. Do you have an idea for a kit or would you like to sponsor one? Please call Stacia McGourty at 907-343-2975.

