

My name is Rachel Rosekind. I represent District 1 on the Library Commission and serve on the Contra Costa Library Foundation organizing committee. I'd like to touch upon the foundation's history, mission, and priorities.

The organizing committee is composed of individuals who have committed time, energy, and talent to identifying and addressing funding scarcity and inequities within the Contra Costa Library system. Two members have been part of this effort since its inception and worked on the 2016 report presented to the Supervisors, the County Librarian, and the Library Commission. This report outlined our system's overall lesser funding relative to other Bay Area counties, the unevenness of supplemental monies provided by library support groups and municipalities, and the ways that a countywide foundation could attend to these issues.

During the last 18 months of meaningful ramp-up, the organizing committee has been working diligently to articulate mission, goals, strategy, and fundraising project criteria and has communicated extensively with community-based organizations, our library support groups, the County Library Commission, and elected officials, including all County Supervisors. Our process has been one of collaboration and meaningful communication, aspects that will be a vital part of the countywide foundation's internal processes and external partnerships. *And* critical to its overall success in galvanizing countywide connections, donor partnerships, and private funding to advance the goals of our County Library, equalize its services, and meet the diverse needs and desires of Contra Costa residents.

Barriers—both visible and invisible—keep some people in and others out; provide some people with robust resources, opportunities, food, housing, books, and education, while other people go on and go without. This fundamental injustice drives my participation in this effort.

The countywide foundation will seek out and lift up projects that champion equity and will solicit private funding to bring more robust services, programming, collections, and resources to *all* of our county residents. Through focusing on underserved and unserved areas and populations, we hope to achieve greater parity in resources and opportunities to offset the funding disparities resulting from uneven library support group and/or municipal assistance.

*Diversity is not the terminus of an organizational commitment to inclusion – it is the starting point.* It is not singularly defined but rather reflected by variation in socioeconomic and cultural background, racial/ethnic identification, age, abilities, geography, profession, ways of seeing and thinking, lived experience, gender, community connections, and more. It cannot be monochromatic. Having a diverse board will inspire belief in the integrity of our organizational intent and confidence in our mission. Diverse board members bring individual passions, perspectives, and communication styles, all of which will help us to attract donors and enable us to leverage private funding in support of our foundation's goals and priorities. Without diversity, our foundation will not have the tools we need to serve the people we want to serve and will not be truly in alignment with our mission.

I have spent the past thirty years fighting for greater attention to and visibility for society's vulnerable voices and marginalized members— in the classroom, on the page, in the streets, and in my communities. I have partnered with libraries extensively during this time—around the country—from grant writing to event planning to authoring reference collection materials to facilitating creative writing and family engagement workshops. Although I run my own highly successful business, I am not a “business leader” nor a tech luminary. But I *know* (because I have done so in the past and have

the confidence and drive to continue) that I could forge community connections and donor partnerships that would raise the visibility of our foundation's mission and draw funding to support it. Aspirations like Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice are not buzzwords, passing fads, or campaign slogans for me. They are my personal passion and my vocational North Star. And I have devoted my life to calling out racial, social, and economic injustice and to educating my students, clients, and community members about its pervasive institutional presence and the depth of harm and severity of impact it has fostered.

As we transition to a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, we are eager to expand breadth and depth of representation. Since equity is our organizational focus and diversity is one of our county's core strengths, board member recruitment will hew to both criteria in process and outcome. We welcome suggestions from the Supervisors and from other community stakeholders so that we can *meaningfully* and *authentically* represent the full spectrum and scale of diversity in our county.

We inspire belief in others by practicing what we preach. Make no mistake, I am *personally* committed to helping our foundation articulate and achieve diversity goals that ensure breadth *and* depth of demographic representation and to maintaining our organizational focus on raising funds to address opportunity and resource gaps within our County Library system that will benefit *all* county residents.