

## MERCED BRANCH Community Description

The Merced Branch Library is located at 155 Winston Drive between 19th Avenue and Stonecrest Drive in the southwest sector of the city. The library service area is bounded by Sloat Boulevard on the north, the Pacific Ocean on the west, the city and county limit on the south, and Junipero Serra Boulevard on the east. Main streets running east-west include Sloat Boulevard, Ocean Avenue, Eucalyptus Drive, Winston Drive, Holloway Avenue and Brotherhood Way. Main streets running north-south include Skyline Boulevard, Lake Merced Boulevard, 19th Avenue, and Junipero Serra Boulevard. The M, 17, 18, 28 and 29 MUNI lines serve the branch. Freeways are close, Sam Trans serves the area, and a BART station is located nearby in Daly City.

Lake Merced, a Pacific Ocean inlet, and the surrounding lands (Rancho Laguna de la Merced) were bought in 1837 by Francisco de Haro for a hundred cows and \$25.00 in goods. Very nice small tracts, condominiums and single homes characterize the neighborhood, which was developed just after World War II. Included in the service area are Lake Merced, ocean beaches, the zoo, three golf courses (Harding, San Francisco, and Olympic), San Francisco State University, Lakeshore Plaza, Lakeside Village, a YMCA and Jewish Community Center, Stonestown Shopping Center, and Stonestown and Parkmerced apartment complexes.

Several neighborhoods are included in the Merced district, including Country Club Acres, John Muir Tract, Lake Merced Hill, Lakeshore Park, Lakeshore Acres, Lakeside, Merced Manor, Park Merced, Pine Lake Park, and Stonestown. Merced Branch is situated on the outskirts of Lakeside, a well-maintained garden community of homes with front lawns, white picket fences and rose bushes. Pride of home ownership is evident. The Lakeside Property Owners Association is endeavoring to have the name of the Merced Branch changed to "Lakeside" Branch.

Parkmerced, a large complex of low and high-rise apartments, was developed as a retirement community by Metropolitan Life in 1948. Now it is owned by the Parkmerced Company, a partnership. The managing partner is Helmsly-Spear. Covering 145 acres, the complex houses 6,672 residents in 3,483 apartments. Eleven towers built in the 1950s contain 153 units per tower. Families, students, working adults and retirees from many ethnic backgrounds make up the rental population. 20% are over 65, 19% are 40-49, 14% are 30-35, 13% are 50-59 and 11% are 18-25.

Stonestown apartment complex, completed in 1950 in conjunction with the mall, was originally developed and owned by one family. Now owned by an investment fund, the complex houses between 1500 to 1700 tenants in 683 units. The rental population is approximately 60% to 65% retirees, 20% families and 5% to 7% students.

Stonestown Galleria was originally an open-air mall when it opened



in 1952. It was remodeled in 1986 at a cost of 55 million dollars. A post office, banks, movie theater, medical offices and food market surround 120 shops which employ approximately 1,500 workers.

San Francisco State University officially dedicated its 95-acre, \$12 million campus in October 1954. Part of the California State University and Colleges system, it offers Bachelor's degrees in 116 academic areas and Master's degrees in 94 fields of study. Total student enrollment is 24,625. 1,300 college housing spaces are available, including two residence halls and a new seventeen-story apartment house that provides year-round student housing for 570 upper division and older students. The University library's holdings exceed 3.5 million.

The Sutro Library, a branch of the California State Library System, is located on the campus. It also houses the Labor Archives and Research Center. Among the special collection strengths are natural history, Mexicana, Shakespeareana, records of the Pacific voyages of discovery, the history of printing, genealogy, and local history.

Approximately 15,114 patrons are served by the Merced Branch. 63.07% are White, 23.10% Asian, 6.73% Hispanic, and 6.57% African-American. 9.5% are between the ages 0-11, 4.5% between 12-17, 62.3% between 18-64 and 23.9% age 65+, well over the citywide average of 11%. Most residents speak English only (65.2%). 8.3% speak Chinese, 4.4% speak Spanish, 3.7% speak Korean and 3.4% speak Tagalog.

Those who are native by birth, whether under or over 18, comprise the largest number of the population having citizenship (10,512 in total; 1,648 under 18). Those who have not become citizens total 2,578 (421 under 18). There are 2,080 naturalized citizens of whom 53 are under 18.

Approximately 18.5% of the residents 18 or older are high school graduates or equivalent. 24.3% have some college, but no degree. 9.3% have an Associate degree. 26.7% hold Bachelor's degrees, while 13.7% have a graduate or professional degree.

The median household income in 1989 was \$43,526. 31.8% of the homes were owner-occupied. 68.2% were renter-occupied.

The neighborhood served by Merced Branch is composed of many families with children. 15% of <sup>THE</sup> total <sup>RESIDENTS</sup> people in <sup>THE</sup> area are under 15 years of age. Many of the neighborhood's toddlers and preschoolers attend Merced Library's children's programs, as made evident by an average Lapsit attendance of 40 children and adults.

→ Profile of schools.

→ A total of 19 schools are located within Merced's area, serving a population of over 5,000 students, including preschoolers. There are 6 preschools, 8 elementary schools, 1 middle school, and 3 high



schools.

→ There are 6 preschools in the vicinity of Merced Library. The largest, Lakeside Presbyterian Center for Children (LPCC), is located at Eucalyptus and 19th Avenue, just 2 blocks north of the branch. It serves 150 children, preschool through kindergarten. LPCC's children visit the library periodically. One block east of LPC is the Stonestown YMCA's Preschool, comprised of 20 children ages 2-6 years old.

To the north of the branch, San Francisco State's Child Study Center, an early childhood research and teacher training center, provides daycare for 40 children ages 3 and 4 years old. Other preschools in the area include Montessori Children's Center, United Methodist Church Headstart, and the Associated Students Children Center which provides daycare for the children of San Francisco State students.

Lakeshore Alternative Elementary and Commodore Sloat Elementary schools belong to the San Francisco Unified School District. Lakeshore Alternative has a student population of 517 in grades K through 5, with students coming from all corners of the City. San Francisco's ethnic diversity is reflected in the student population: 33% White, 21% Black, 18% Chinese and 12% Spanish-Surnamed are the largest ethnic groups represented. Approximately  
→ 16% of Lakeshore's students attend GATE (gifted) classes. 6% are classified as LEP/NEP (Limited/No English Proficiency).

Commodore Sloat Elementary school is located approximately 1 mile northeast of Merced Library. It has an enrollment of 488 students in grades K through 5. Commodore Sloat is a "district" school meaning that the majority of students live in the school's vicinity. Only 23% of CS's students are "optional enrollment" (i.e., from other areas of the City). Ethnically, the student population is comprised mostly of White (31%), Chinese (20%), Black (21%) and Spanish-Surnamed (10%) students. 14% of students attend  
→ GATE classes. 18% are LEP/NEP.

The remaining 6 elementary schools are private. The largest are St. Stephen's School with 310 students and St. Thomas More School with  
→ 301 students. Both are Catholic parochial schools, located within walking distance of the library. Brandeis Hillel Day School, a Jewish school, has 266 students. It is located approximately one-half mile south of the library. Other private schools include Saint Gregory Armenia (Orthodox), Holy Trinity Orthodox (Greek Orthodox) and Children's School of San Francisco. All have K through 8th grade.

Aptos Middle School, a San Francisco Unified School District school, is located in nearby Ingleside district, about 1 mile north of Merced Library. The student population is 1,023 students, grades 6 through 8. The major ethnic groups are 30% Spanish-Surnamed (the largest represented group), 23% Black, 18% White, 10% Chinese and 10% Filipino. Aptos has 22% LEP/NEP and 59% Educationally Disadvantaged (EDY) students. 18% of students attend GATE classes.



Merced Library serves 3 high schools: Lowell Alternative High School and the San Francisco School of the Arts, both public high schools, and Mercy High School.

Lowell Alternative High School is one of the most prestigious high schools in San Francisco. It has an enrollment of 2,745 students attending grades 9 through 12. Admission to Lowell is very competitive and attracts the most qualified students. This high degree of selectivity is reflected in Lowell's academic achievements: greater than 80% of all students' CTBS (Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills) scores are above the 75th percentile (both district and statewide). 40% of all students attend GATE classes. 3% are EDY and 0.4% LEP/NEP.

The San Francisco School of the Arts Alternative High School (SOTA) is located about 3/4 of a mile southwest of the branch. Aside from its academic curriculum, SOTA has an emphasis on pre-professional training in the areas of music, dance, visual arts and theater. Student enrollment at SOTA is 339, comprised mostly of White (38%), Black (20%), and Spanish-Surnamed (16%) students. 23% of students attend GATE classes; 34% are EDY.

Mercy High School, founded in 1953, is one of the oldest, most prestigious college-preparatory high schools for girls in San Francisco. It is owned and sponsored by the Sisters of Mercy. This high school enrolls 600 girls attending grades 9 through 12. It is located 1 block north of Merced Library.

All but one of the schools mentioned possess some kind of school library on the premises ranging from formal, curriculum-based collections to informal, browsing reading rooms. Most are available limited hours during the week. Staffing varies from school to school, but is comprised mostly of paraprofessionals or parent volunteers. Only Aptos Middle School and Lowell High School are staffed by professional librarians.

#### → Recreational areas.

Junipero Serra Playground, 1 block south of the library, offers a wide variety of activities for children of all ages. It is comprised of a playground, tennis courts and a community center. A wide variety of activities, including afterschool programs, are offered. Many of our young patrons visit the playground either before or after attending library programs.

→ In addition, Rolph Nicol Playground, Lake Merced, and the San Francisco Zoo are all located within a two-mile radius of the library.

The Recreational Center for the Handicapped, located near the Pacific Ocean about 2 miles west of the library, is a private nonprofit recreation center for handicapped children and adults. Programming includes afterschool care, swimming lessons, arts and crafts and the like. Approximately 1,800 people attend the Center on a part-time basis each month. Groups from the Center visit the

OCCASIONALLY?

→ library sporadically.

→ The Merced Branch serves a white majority and a large Asian-American minority, followed by small minority groups of Hispanics and African-Americans. Families, students and seniors are frequent users of branch materials. A <sup>SEVERAL</sup> ~~small number~~ of private investors use our business newspapers and periodicals on a daily basis. The collection is basically sound and balanced, but needs updating. Patrons often request longer open hours. A restoration of Saturday open hours would be very desirable given our proximity to the mall, large apartment complexes, San Francisco State University, and working homeowners.

revised

7/19/94