



## Provincial Library Grants Report 2019

### Introduction

The Pemberton & District Public Library is located within the Community Centre in the Village of Pemberton. It serves a total population of approximately 6,000, covering the Village of Pemberton and the Squamish Lillooet Regional District Area C, with a service area in excess of 5,600 square kilometers. Its location within a shared recreational facility in the village and the range of services offered strengthen its position as the hub of the community.

Pemberton and District is largely a young and growing population but with a sizeable seniors community too. The community has solid roots in the past and 45% of the population is aboriginal. Agri-tourism, service-based industries, and recreation tourism are the principal industries in the area. Its proximity to Whistler make it attractive to both tourists and those who wish to settle in the area.

Limited public transport options between Pemberton and the surrounding communities can make accessibility to the Library service difficult for some and we must seek out outreach opportunities to strengthen our connection with the outlying areas. Unemployment, low income, lack of affordable housing, and high cost of living, are challenges faced within the community, making the Library and its services an important resource for many.

Our strategic plan covers the period 2017-2019. Our strategic priorities are:

1. **Programming** – To provide free access to a range of formal and informal learning opportunities to the residents of the Village of Pemberton and the Squamish Lillooet Regional District Area C
2. **Resources** – To offer access to physical and digital resources that provide learning opportunities to community members
3. **Partnerships** – To create strategic and creative partnership with community organizations and experts to increase funding and programming
4. **Flexible Spaces** – To have the Library be an integral part of the daily lives of the residents of Pemberton and District.

We made solid progress with the key deliverables within our four strategic priorities in 2019 and the Library has continued to show strong use by the local community both in terms of visits to the Library and use of our resources.

## Library Priority 1: Improving Access

Our strategic priority of *Resources* focuses on *enhancing equitable access to all types of information and tools*. Through this priority we seek to:

- Reduce barriers to resource access
- Provide basic computer support and training
- Ensure ongoing staff development so that staff are better positioned to support the community with their learning needs.

In 2019 we continued to develop our outreach initiatives with a number of 'Pop Up Libraries' - bringing access to Library services out into the community such as at the local Farmers Market, the local secondary school, or the Ts'zil Learning Centre; a post-secondary education and training centre for the Lilwat Nation and surrounding communities.

An ongoing goal in *reducing barriers to access* is to ensure we are providing access to Library services at times that are most needed in our community. As part of our strategic planning process we conducted a community engagement survey, out of which a clear demand for longer Sunday opening hours were identified.

### *Extended Opening Hours*

The Library is located inside a shared facility with the Pemberton Community Centre. With no separate entrance to the building, our opening hours must fit within the parameters laid out by the Pemberton Community Centre. In October 2019 the Community Centre decided to run a trial of extended Sunday opening hours so we used it as an opportunity to trial longer opening hours at the Library at the same time.

Starting in October we increased our opening hours by 3 hours per week – this resulted in one later week night opening (until 7pm) and extended opening hours on Sundays (until 4pm). These changes have enabled us to provide consistent opening hours across 7 days.

The desired outcome of extending the Sunday opening hours was increased opportunities to access library services and resources, to better meet the needs of our community. The use of the Library as a place was a particularly important consideration due to the limited indoor recreational opportunities in the community on Sundays.

This outcome can be demonstrated by the increase in number of people now accessing the Library on a Sunday. The average number of visits to the Library on Sundays increased from 67.4 visits (in 2018) to 117 (in 2019) with the average number of visits per hour open increasing from 16.8 (in 2018) to 19.5 (in 2019). Door counts recording the hourly movement in and out of the Library taken during the trial period also suggested that those visiting the Library were staying longer.

Positive feedback from patrons, and the increase in visits, indicate that the trial was a success. Our biggest challenge to sustaining these extended hours in the long term will be ensuring adequate staffing due to the longer shifts required. We will continue to monitor and assess the opening hours to ensure they are best meeting the needs of the community.

## Library Priority 2: Developing Skills

Our strategic priority of *Programming* aims to build capacity by providing access to a range of formal and informal learning opportunities. This priority aligns closely with the provincial priority of building capacity by *inspiring creativity, innovation and knowledge creation*.

We ran a wide variety of programs in 2019 but the one that demonstrated the greatest impact was an after-school program for children aged 8-12 called “Maker Monday”

### *“Maker Mondays”*

As a small Library with a limited programming budget we wanted to find an affordable way to incorporate STEAM based learning into our children’s programming. Our Maker sessions are designed for children to encourage innovation, creativity, learning, and discovery. In the Spring and Fall, we offer monthly sessions covering a variety of subjects such as photography, STEAM, crafts and more.

The goals of our maker sessions are:

- Facilitate interest in STEAM
- Promote a love of the library and promote our collection
- Build relationships with our library users (parents and children)
- Cultivate critical and creative thinking to solve problems
- Encourage collaboration and sharing of knowledge
- Encourage innovation and imagination.

Three of the sessions in particular were highly successful:

- *Crazy Circuits with Makey Makeys:*

Using Makey Makeys and other conductive materials we focused primarily on electricity and circuits. We explored conductors and insulators using different materials (play-doh, bananas, marshmallows, wood, etc). We also created simple circuits to make lightsabers that lit up, and fruit powered batteries. We used Makey Makeys and Scratch to build our own game of operation, we also played music using bananas and made our own video game controllers.

Parents commented on how much their children enjoyed this program and participants were very keen to show their parents what they were had created with their Makey Makeys. It was so popular that we used one of the projects in our Summer Reading Club and both parents and children loved it. This session was very well attended, and even had a child from the Whistler area want to drive up from Whistler for our program. One session some of the participants were enjoying their challenge so much that they stayed for an extra hour just to complete it, then made their parents take many videos of their project.

- *Minecraft based STEM Lab:*

This program was based on the book *The Unofficial Minecraft STEM lab for kids* by John Miller and Chris Fornell Scott . In these sessions, we explored STEM themes such as thermal energy, reactions, gravity, and inertia and air resistance, and simple machines. Participants also had optional in-game Minecraft tasks that aligned with the weekly activity done in the library, which they could do at home. Participants enjoyed the hands-on experiments and builds.

- *Harry Potter Witch and Wizard training:*

Participants learnt how to build their own wands, attended potions classes that explored chemical reactions, and took part in a Triwizard's cup in which participants had to complete several challenges including Harry Potter Trivia, skills testing, and casting spells. We quickly discovered that children love talking about Harry Potter. This program gave us the opportunity to promote our collection (Harry Potter books on display and read-a-likes) and to encourage discussion of the Harry Potter books, which aids in the development of language, literacy and communication skills, the development of interpersonal skills: teamwork and collaboration. This program was incredibly popular, and had a very long waitlist. We have had several requests from children and parents to run the program again

We will continue to build on the success of this program and look to expand it to other age groups as staff capacity permits. To have children excited to come to the Library after school to attend a program and learn new skills also inspires the staff to find new ways to engage them in other learning opportunities and build strong connections with the local youth and their families.

### **Library Priority 3: Collaborating on Shared Goals**

Our strategic priority of *Partnerships* seeks to create strategic and creative partnerships with community organizations and experts to increase funding and programming. This aligns directly with the provincial strategy of *Working Together to harness our ability to innovate and deliver services collaboratively*.

In 2019 we continued to strengthen our existing partnerships with organizations such as Service Canada and Canada Revenue Agency, offering 3 well-attended Super Clinics throughout the year. Work BC have a long-established drop-in employment service in the Library and we partnered again with Stewardship Pemberton to offer a highly popular speaker series on the flora and fauna of the local area. A key goal in 2019 however, was to continue to explore new partnerships to increase and diversify the programs and services we currently offer.

Two partnerships in particular were of note in 2019 for their role in delivering services collaboratively: The Poverty Law Advocacy Program and the Settlement Services for Newcomers and Immigrants.

#### ***Poverty Law Advocacy Program***

In 2019 we established a new partnership through the Sea to Sky Community Services *Poverty Law Advocacy Program*. This program offers free advocacy support and assistance to financially restricted individuals and families. The program offers public education, information, guidance and support on a variety of legal matters.

Monthly drop-in sessions were established at the Library, enabling patrons to receive face-to-face support from a poverty law advocate without having to travel to Squamish or consult over the telephone. Public transport options are incredibly limited along the Sea to Sky Corridor and similar to the Service Canada and CRA Super Clinics we established last year; this was an important step in improving access to important services for those most in need of it.

A desired outcome of offering the Poverty Law Advocacy drop-in sessions was to better support patrons in need of legal information and support. Not only have we been able to direct patrons to the drop-in sessions at the Library, it has raised staff awareness of what support is available in the community so that we can also refer them to the correct service provider outside of the drop-in service. One patron that had been experiencing tenancy problems thanked us for connecting them to the service and helping them during a particularly stressful period.

#### *Settlement Service for Newcomers and Immigrants English Conversation Circle*

In 2019 we re-established a partnership with Sea to Sky Community Services and Whistler Settlement Services to offer free drop-in Settlement Services for Newcomers and Immigrants. A Settlement & Integration Worker from Whistler Settlement Services offers a monthly drop-in service at the Library providing information and support to help adjust to a new life in Canada.

The Library also runs a weekly *English Conversation Circle* program in the evening. Not intended as a formal English language learning program, the goal is to foster connections in the community and provide a relaxed and friendly atmosphere for anyone that wishes to improve their English language skills and meet other newcomers. An outreach worker from the Pemberton Multicultural Network also attends the program to help foster connections and support networks.

The Library is often the first place newcomers will visit to orientate themselves to their new community, by being able to offer support services out of the Library and to also provide referral services we are better positioned to support those that need it. A desired outcome for the English Conversation Circle was that it would facilitate newcomers to our community in making connections and building their support networks. As a small mountain community with limited transport options, there is a risk of isolation, particularly for those new to the area. Many of those that have attended the program have built strong connections with both the facilitating staff member and each other, helping them settle in to their new lives in Pemberton.

## **Library Priority 4: Enhancing Governance**

Our strategic priority of *Flexible Spaces* aims to have the Library be an integral part of the daily lives of the residents of Pemberton and District. Our goal to *promote comfort and enhance access to the collection* supports this provincial priority through *the effective governance, planning, information sharing and demonstration of the Library's impact* required to realize this goal.

A key goal in 2019 was to review the progress made on the 2017-2019 Strategic Plan and to establish a new set of goals and priorities for the next three years so that the Library can continue to sustain and grow its services into the future, remaining responsive to the changing needs of the community.

#### *2020-2023 Strategic Planning*

In September 2019 staff and trustees attended a full day session to develop our 2020-2023 strategic plan. The facilitated session enabled us to review our progress on the

2017-2019 strategic plan, revisit and update our vision and mission, and discuss our goals for the next few years. Prior to the session we had conducted a community engagement survey and the results were also used to inform the process and drive decisions.

While the primary goal of the session was to develop the strategic priorities for the next three years, another desired outcome was for library staff and trustees to get to know each other better and gain a better understanding of each other's roles and responsibilities. This strategic planning session was the first time all staff and board members had been together and everyone commented how beneficial the experience had been in getting to know each other better, working towards a common goal.

### *Trustee Orientation Program*

In April 2019 we hosted a BCLTA Trustee Orientation Program (TOP) with attendance from Lillooet, Squamish and Pemberton libraries. Not only was this a good opportunity for new trustees to gain a deeper understanding of the governance role of the Library board, it was an excellent opportunity to meet with other trustees along the Sea to Sky Corridor. The revised TOP program was well received by the new trustees who commented on how it helped them better understand the significance of their role in the effective running of the Library and the role of the Library in the community. This discussion also served as a great refresher for existing board members and highlighted the importance of regular governance training for an efficient and effective board and the board/library director relationship.

## **Summary**

2019 was another busy year for the Pemberton & District Public Library. We celebrated our 40<sup>th</sup> birthday, settled into our newly redesigned space, and continued to observe changes in how the Library is being used as our community also continues to change and grow.

While visits remained similar to those of 2018 with only a 0.1% increase, we saw a 3.7% increase in items being borrowed from the Library and a 45% increase in the number of digital resources being borrowed. Unlike many other libraries, this upward trend in digital borrowing is relatively new to our community and signals a significant change in the borrowing habits of our patrons. We continued to see significant growth in the use of the WiFi (20.3%) and the public access terminals (5.5%). With this, we continue to face the challenge of how to better support our patrons with their digital literacy needs, particularly when staff resources are limited.

Ensuring adequate funding for core operations, collections and programs so that we continue to anticipate and respond to these changes to remain relevant and vital to our communities, will remain at the forefront of our strategic planning. This further reinforces the importance of the funding we receive from these provincial grants, for the continued investment in our services, and the importance of demonstrating our value and impact to our funding bodies.