

2019 Provincial Library Grants Report

Introduction

Founded in 1914, the Gibsons & District Public Library (GDPL) is the best-used resource on the lower Sunshine Coast, with 62% of all residents in the Gibsons area holding an active library card. Its service area comprises the Town of Gibsons and three rural areas in the Sunshine Coast Regional District, covering approximately 1,900 square kilometres including two islands.

Gibsons is experiencing rapid socio-economic growth and development as our population continues to increase. We are becoming a major tourist destination with travelers drawn to the Sunshine Coast by the spectacular nature, the evolving food and craft beer venues and the rich Art and Music offerings. Sustainable Housing is a major challenge as the number of rental units decreases with the rise in Air BNB and other tourist accommodations. Transportation is another key issue as local residents rely on the ferry and are often affected by heavy tourist traffic.

GDPL is a thriving community hub that is often described as the heart and soul of the community. Our mission is to connect our community to the world of culture, knowledge and ideas through our resources, expertise and inspiration. As outlined our 2019 to 2022 Strategic Plan, our primary goals are to build community, to encourage and enable lifelong learning, to invigorate people and culture and to create welcoming spaces and resources.

As the cost of living increases and our population grows, the Library improves quality of life by ensuring everyone has equal access to the resources that will help them move forward. The Library cultivates a more sustainable and resilient community by connecting people with lifelong learning, opportunities for personal growth and expanded awareness of cultural diversity and social issues.

We achieved the strategic goals we set for 2019 with the key accomplishments being:

- Our above average library membership of 62% of our populace
- Expanded programs and services for Children and Youth, the LGBTQ2 community and people living in social isolation
- Facilitation of learning opportunities around Truth and Reconciliation
- Facilitation of learning opportunities around Sustainable Living
- Improved accessibility and services to people living homelessness and/or poverty
- Effective communication using our website reaching our goal of 3,000 visits in 30 days
- Development and maintenance of a strong staff team with a completed comprehensive job description and compensation review, and completed training in Libraries & Homelessness and Customer Service Excellence
- Solidified partnerships & shared programming with other organizations including SD46, Vancouver Coastal Health, the Gibsons Arts Building, the Gibsons Heritage Museum, Sunshine Coast Community Services and Welcoming Communities.

An ongoing challenge for GDPL is dealing with rapid population growth and the affordable housing crisis: our staff and facility are working at maximum capacity. An emergency shelter was located directly next to the Library in 2019 so the day use of people seeking shelter at the Library dramatically increased. GDPL offers a restricted access card that enables people who may not have a phone or address to have a library card with a five item limit. The number of these cards processed doubled in 2019 from 2018.

We have completed the first year of our 2019 to 2022 Strategic plan. Our four primary goals of Building Community, Encouraging and Enabling Lifelong Learning, Invigorating People and Culture and Creating Welcoming Spaces and Resources drive our planning, decision making and reporting. GDPL was busier than ever in 2019 with substantial increases in program participation and active patronage as our Annual Report demonstrates.



2019 GDPL Staff Team

Provincial Strategic Priority 1: Improving Access

GDPL Strategic Goals and Objectives that support Improving Access:

Encourage and Enable Lifelong Learning:

We will:

- Inspire learning and critical thinking
- Cultivate Creativity
- Support Digital Literacy
- Increase Library Membership

Create Welcoming Spaces and Resources

We will:

- Partner with other organizations to offer collaborative services
- Help create a cultural hub in Lower Gibsons
- Enhance virtual and online spaces

Build Community

We will:

- Continue to be a hub, connecting people to each other
- Support staff and volunteers to meet their full potential
- Identify and remove barriers to library services
- Evaluate the impact library services have on our community

Invigorate People and Culture

We will:

- Celebrate our diverse community
- Participate in ongoing learning about Truth and Reconciliation
- Provide resources that support people to further their education, develop employment skills and grow local businesses

GDPL Programs & Services that Improve Access:

In 2019, there were 110,593 in person visits to GDPL: 2,952 more than in 2018. This dramatic increase demonstrates that our community is accessing and using the Library more than ever before. In response to the growing number of individuals who do not have stable housing or phones, GDPL has promoted our limited access card which enables people to become members without an address. As the 2019 emergency shelter was located directly next to the Library, GDPL worked in close partnership with Rain-city Housing to ensure residents of the shelter could access the Library. Rain-city used GDPL's Mainil Room workshop space to meet with clients each Friday which also improved accessibility to the Library by people living with homelessness and/or poverty.

Emphasis was also given in 2019 on connecting with people who are socially isolated, new Canadians, youth, seniors and people who are LGBTQ2. Our monthly LGBTQ2 and allies support group delivered in partnership with the Sunshine Coast Pride Society increased its participation and the partnership led to GDPL hosting the annual Read Out Loud Authors' Event that profiles LGBTQ2 writers. A monthly Queer Book Club called Elevenses was also developed for LGBTQ2 individuals to gather and discuss topics relevant to their experiences.



2019 Read out Loud Event for Sunshine Coast Pride Month

"Read out Loud was quite possibly one of the best performances ever at GDPL. The bar has been lifted! Awesome."(Library Patron)

GDPL also focused on improving access for people living with mental health issues and their caregivers. The BC Alzheimer Society continues to provide a support group in partnership with GDPL for caregivers of people with Dementia. GDPL partnered with School District 46 to offer a workshop series for youth living with anxiety. This series culminated in a film screening of *Angst*- a film that tackles this topic. Over 70 people including youth, parents, and teachers attended the screening and the facilitated discussion. The feedback from this series led to GDPL offering another writing series titled “It doesn’t have to be about mental health” that offered people the opportunity to develop stories under the facilitation of a trained writing instructor.

A key strategic objective for GDPL is to offer education to our community about our being on the unceded traditional territory of the Squamish Nation and to advance Truth and Reconciliation. Working in partnership with the Squamish Nation and the Syiyaya Reconciliation Group, GDPL offered a Kairos Blanket Exercise. Squamish Elders were invited to share their residential school survival stories, and the 38 attendees participated in an experiential exercise that demonstrated Canadian History through an Indigenous lens. This event strengthened the relationship between GDPL and key members of the Squamish Nation, and laid the groundwork for future offerings like this one.

GDPL expanded its outreach services to Christenson Village Care Facility in 2019. In addition to our customary service of bringing a mobile library to residents monthly, GDPL worked with Christenson Village staff to bring audiobooks to residents, and developed a book club residents can attend weekly. These initiatives provide library services to people whom might normally not access them.

Lifelong learning is supported in a myriad of ways at GDPL. Patrons can always get support with how to use their digital devices, and are accessing many free online courses through our databases. The Library Director offers a free exam proctoring service enabling distance learners to complete their exams locally. This free invigilation service is in high demand as the number of people seeking distance learning increases daily. This is a key service that supports access to education. Conversational language groups in Spanish, French and Japanese, and weekly knitting and intergenerational knitting groups bring together people in the community to share their skills and learn from each other.

2019 was a year of partnerships. GDPL collaborated with the SC Museum and the Gibsons Arts Building to offer the second annual Halloween Block Party. Over 700 people enjoyed an evening of community celebration that included story-telling, theatre, shadow installations and music. The GDPL Child and Youth Coordinator worked with local Author Janine Youth to offer a Terrifying Tales writers series in advance of the event, and the young writers shared their work live at the Block Party. This event brought people of all ages together to interact and enjoy the cultural corner of Gibsons



2019 Halloween Block Party: Terrifying Tales Youth Participants reading their work

The library experienced an increase in circulation of 3% from 2018 with a total of 173,682 digital and physical resources circulating in 2019. Database logins increased by 17% with a total of 29,931 uses in 2019; Wi-Fi logins increased by 10% from 2018 with a total of 12,371 logins. 168 Child and Youth programs were offered in 2019- up 23% from 2018. The demonstrated increase in use of GDPL and its services, particularly by people who may be marginalized show the Library effectively improved access in 2019.

Partnerships that support this priority:

Vancouver Coastal Health
 School District 46
 Sunshine Coast WHANT (Women's Health and Networking Team)
 Sunshine Coast Pride Society
 BC Alzheimer's Association
 Christenson Village (Senior's Care Facility)
 Sunshine Coast Community Resource Centre Pro Bono Legal Aid Clinic
 Sunshine Coast Makers

Outcomes:

Reduced social isolation
 Increased employment skills
 Increased civic engagement
 Increased participation in lifelong learning
 Increased connections to community
 Increased understanding of Truth and Reconciliation
 Improved mental health

Provincial Strategic Priority 2: Developing Skills

Library Strategic Goals that support Developing Skills

Encourage and Enable Lifelong Learning:

We will:

- Inspire learning and critical thinking
- Cultivate Creativity
- Support Digital Literacy

Create Welcoming Spaces and Resources

We will:

- Enhance virtual and online spaces

Build Community

We will:

- Continue to be a hub, connecting people to each other
- Support staff and volunteers to meet their full potential
- Identify and remove barriers to library services

Invigorate People and Culture

We will:

- Celebrate our diverse community
- Participate in ongoing learning about Truth and Reconciliation
- Provide resources that support people to further their education, develop employment skills and grow local businesses

Programs & Services that align with Developing Skills:

GDPL serves as a bridge that addresses the digital and technology education divide that exists in our community. In 2019 GDPL upgraded its 7 public computers and purchased new headphones to ensure patrons have access to the technology they need. This past year the Library has experienced an increase in patrons using the Library to complete government forms such as Immigration applications and pension forms. As the only Service B.C. location is in Sechelt, GDPL often serves the public in this capacity.

The 168 programs for Children and Youth that were offered in 2019 at GDPL enabled young people to develop a range of skills. As an example, our Lego Robotics programming expanded to include four sessions throughout the year. This program matched volunteers from the Sunshine Coast Makers Society with youth to learn coding and robotics, and to take on weekly challenges.



2019 GDPL Lego Robotics Program

"Thanks again for making the library so relevant and vibrant for young people" (Library Patron)

Our youth writing series enabled our Child & Youth Coordinator to bring in facilitators like Jillian Christmas to lead writing workshops on spoken word, poetry, illustrations, and short stories. Working with the Reel Youth Film Society, stop and digital animation programming was offered culminating in a screening of the Reel Youth Film Festival that included footage of our locally made films.

In addition to these technology-based creative ventures, GDPL also fostered other types of creative thinking and work via our monthly Teen and Tween Book Clubs, Dungeons and Dragons Game Nights, Magic Card Tournaments and our innovative Teddy Bear Sleepover Program. These types of programs improve literacy, speaking and social skills. The Teddy Bear Sleepover invited young children to drop off their favourite stuffed animal for a sleepover at the Library. GDPL staff photo-documented the fun the stuffed creatures got up to (including dancing in the stacks and sitting in the Library Director's chair). The children were then invited back the next morning to create stories using the photos of their stuffy friends' adventures.

The ongoing GDPL Conversational groups in French, Spanish and Japanese enable people to develop their language skills. Working in partnership with Capilano University and the Welcoming Communities Program, GDPL offered an English Language Learner program to new Canadians. This program provided a gateway for newcomers to become integrated into their new environment, and enabled them to improve communication skills.

Another key way GDPL developed skills was within our staff team. Every staff member has completed the Libraries and Homelessness Training, and four staff have participated in Customer Service Excellence Training. A comprehensive job and compensation review was completed in 2019 which has assisted staff to further their training and education as they now receive a fair working wage.

Partnerships that support this priority:

School District 46
Sunshine Coast Tech Hub
Sunshine Coast Makers
Gibsons Library Foundation
Sunshine Coast Literacy Coalition

Outcomes:

Reduced social isolation
Increased computer skills
Increased employment skills
Increased civic engagement
Increased participation in lifelong learning
Increased connections to community
Increased capacity for economic and community development

Priority 3: Collaborating on Shared Goals

Library Strategic Directions and Goals that support Collaborating on Shared Goals:

Encourage and Enable Lifelong Learning:

We will:

- Inspire learning and critical thinking
- Cultivate Creativity
- Support Digital Literacy
- Increase Library Membership

Create Welcoming Spaces and Resources

We will:

- Partner with other organizations to offer collaborative services
- Help create a cultural hub in Lower Gibsons
- Enhance virtual and online spaces

Build Community

We will:

- Continue to be a hub, connecting people to each other
- Identify and remove barriers to library services

Invigorate People and Culture

We will:

- Celebrate our diverse community
- Participate in ongoing learning about Truth and Reconciliation
- Provide resources that support people to further their education, develop employment skills and grow local businesses

Programs & Services that align with Collaborating on Shared Goals:

As GDPL enters the second year of its 2019 to 2022 Strategic Plan, we share a range of shared goals with our community partners and stakeholders. As a trusted and objective disseminator of accurate information, GDPL is integral to bringing accurate information and quality education to our community. As such, we were the conduit for many organizations to bring their services to the public via the Library. In 2019 GDPL collaborated with Vancouver Coastal Health's Harm Reduction team to provide information sessions on substance use, and training on Naloxone.

GDPL and School District 46 work closely to enhance each other's services. The GDPL Child and Youth Coordinator communicates regularly via the SD46 newsletter to parents and staff to ensure people are aware of the databases and resources the library has that can assist students of all levels with their academic work. The success of our 2019 Youth and Anxiety Program has laid the groundwork for more collaborative plans with SD46 such

as a Parenting Book Club. The free proctor services we offer are regularly used by the SD46's Spider Home Learning network.

Partnerships with the Sunshine Coast Makers and Sunshine Coast Tech Hub have resulted in monthly repair cafes, and the spring and summer digital literacy programming. These partnerships are thriving and many future endeavours are being considered in collaboration with these partners.

The Sunshine Coast Literacy Coalition allows GDPL to work closely with other key stakeholders in literacy including Capilano University, The Sunshine Coast Festival of the Written Arts, the Sunshine Coast Community Resource Centre and the Squamish First Nation. For family literacy week in 2019, the coalition provided a series of free Charlotte Diamond concerts that involved 520 participants from all over the coast coming together to celebrate literacy.

GDPL continues to actively promote engagement in the Truth and Reconciliation process. In follow up to our 2019 Kairos Blanket Exercise with the Squamish Nation and the Siyiyaya Reconciliation movement, GDPL plans to offer more of these events.

Partnerships that support this priority:

Town of Gibsons
Sunshine Coast Regional District
Sunshine Coast Literacy Coalition
School District 46
Squamish Nation
Sunshine Coast Festival of the Written Arts
Sunshine Coast Makers
Sunshine Coast Tech Hub

Outcomes:

Reduced social isolation
Increased computer skills
Increased employment skills
Increased civic engagement
Increased participation in lifelong learning

Increased connections to community
Increased capacity for economic and community development
Increased awareness of sustainable living practices
Increased community capacity to deal with natural emergencies.

Priority 4: Enhancing Governance

Library Strategic Directions and Goals that support Enhancing Governance:

Create Welcoming Spaces and Resources

We will:

- Partner with other organizations to offer collaborative services

Build Community

We will:

- Support staff and volunteers to meet their full potential
- Identify and remove barriers to library services
- Evaluate the impact library services have on our community

Invigorate People and Culture

We will:

- Celebrate our diverse community
- Participate in ongoing learning about Truth and Reconciliation

Programs & Services that align with Enhancing Governance:

The development of the GDPL 2019 to 2022 Strategic Plan was a key accomplishment of our Board and Staff. The GDPL Board reviewed all of its governance policies and has a clear vision for itself as a governance board. A Staff and Board Working session was facilitated in 2019 that effectively unified the Staff and Board in our strategic objectives and shared vision for GDPL. The feedback from this session was very positive and it resulted in a positive connection between staff and board. This connection has been further strengthened by the Board inviting individual staff members to board meetings with the objective of learning more about what each persons' role is at the Library.

The GDPL Board has enjoyed stable and committed membership, and the majority of the Board completed TOP training with the BCLTA in 2019. Connection with the broader library community is fostered by the GDPL Board regularly liaising with InterLINK and the BCLTA. Currently, the board development committee is seeking professional development opportunities for the board to engage in.

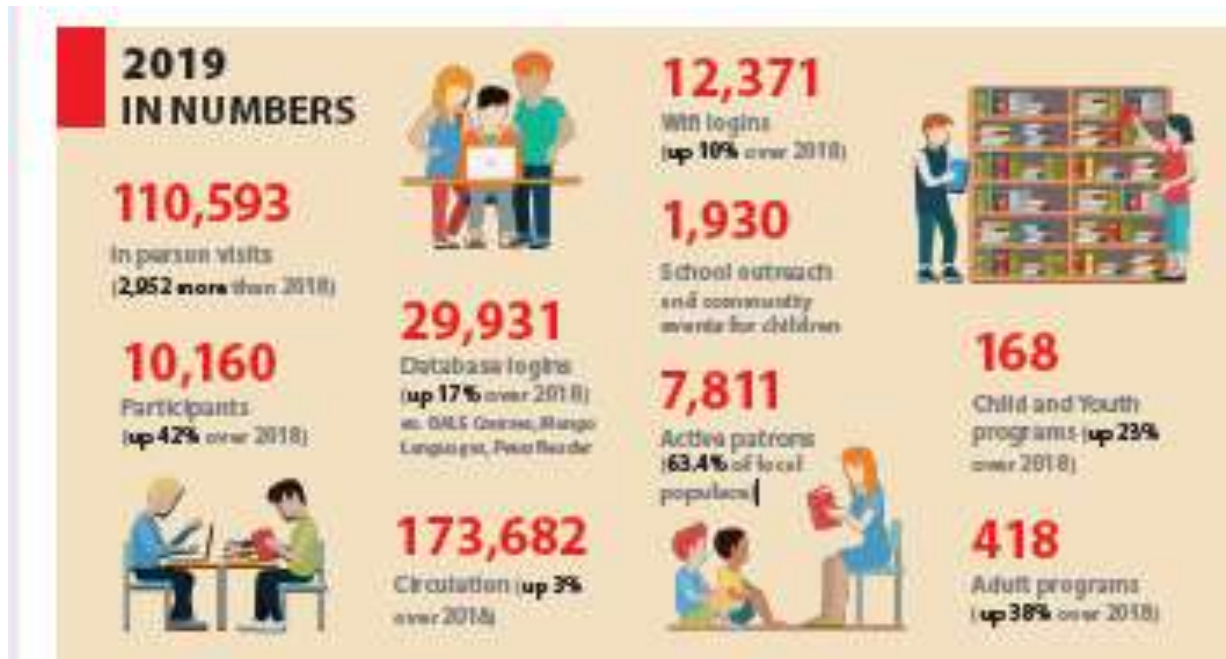
In 2019, GDPL sent the Library Director, two staff and the Board Chair to the BC Library Conference. The Library Director and Board Chair work in close partnership and have effective communication. Overall, 2019 cemented the GDPL Board as a highly functional and skilled team.

Partnerships that support this priority:

BC Library Cooperative
InterLINK
BCLTA

Outcomes:

Increased efficiency of library services
Increased community profile of the library
Increased diversity of patrons



Summary

In 2019 GDPL accomplished the strategic goals we set out for the year, and we celebrated the significant increases we have achieved in our library membership program participation, and our improved accessibility. The highlights of our key accomplishments include our improved access by people living with homelessness and/or poverty, new Canadians, people who are LGBTQ2, and people living in social isolation; our high library patronage; and our strengthened staff and board.

Our 2019 to 2022 Strategic Plan has effectively captured the vision GDPL Staff, Board and Patrons have for the future of the Library and we look forward to continuing our focus and work on these important strategic objectives. We will continue to further the advancement of our four goals of Building Community, Encouraging and Enabling Lifelong Learning, Invigorating People and Culture and Creating Welcoming Spaces and Resources. We greatly appreciate the support provided by the Provincial Library Grant and look forward to meeting our shared goals through our continued work together.

