



Libraries Branch

2020 Provincial Library Grants Report: Castlegar & District Public Library

Introduction

The Castlegar and District Public Library is located in the city of Castlegar in the West Kootenay region of British Columbia. From its humble beginnings in the 1940s in the basement of the United Church, to the current building that expanded in 2000, the Library is supported and appreciated by the community it serves. Our Library often receives compliments for being an open, welcoming place where friendly staff and volunteers are ready to assist patrons with their requests and where citizens and visitors can meet to socialize and learn. We boast busy meeting rooms that host a number of community organizations as well as our own programs. We are happy to offer extensive outreach in the community, and continuously work towards being a “special place in the community to explore, create, share ideas, information and have fun.”

The Library serves a wide geographic area including the City of Castlegar, Areas I, and J of the Regional District of Central Kootenay (RDCK), with a service area population of nearly 14,000. Through a service agreement with the Nelson Library, we also serve residents of Area H South of the RDCK.

The major employers in the area include Selkirk College, Zellstoff Celgar, and School District 20. The major regional employer, Teck Resources, is located 30 kilometers from Castlegar.

2020 marked the beginning of our new 2020-2023 strategic plan. Despite the many challenges brought on by COVID-19, our library made gains towards achieving our strategic goals.

Strategy 1: Improving Access for British Columbians

Our strategic priority: Innovation & Programming.

Our Goal: We provide enhanced library experiences for our region

Our Strategy: We offer hands-on experience in accessing new technologies.

As part of our Columbia Basin Trust Community Technology Grant, we purchased 10 new laptops for community programming. We were able to run one complete Code Club in winter 2020 for youth aged 8 to 12. Youth came once per week for an hour to work on a specific programming challenge with Scratch. We use the desktop version of the Scratch program downloaded through MIT <https://scratch.mit.edu/> and provide lessons from the MIT Scratch webpage as well as the lessons offered through Code Club Canada.

This program would not be possible without the financial support of the Columbia Basin Trust Community Technology Grant and money raised by the Friends of the Castlegar & District Public Library.

This program has been an incredible learning opportunity for both youth and staff. Two staff took an online “Prepare to Run a Code Club” course through FutureLearn to ensure a successful program going forward. It was satisfying to watch youth build on their understanding each week, discover new aspects of the program, and begin to gain enough confidence to help each other with Scratch. We see an equal number of boys and girls, and a good range of kids falling within the 8-12 year old age group. Kids are excited to attend each week and begin to make friendships. We had to cancel our spring club due to COVID-19.

Tinker Time

Tinker Time is our introductory STEAM program for preschoolers. It introduces children to a wide variety of activities and builds an understanding of basic science concepts, art exploration, and technology. The library offered one Tinker Time session in the winter, but had to halt further programming in March with our closure.

A few years ago, the Library purchased close to \$2,000 in STEAM activities with money from the Kootenay Library Federation. Tinker Time is just one of the programs staff have experimented with to introduce children and youth to science, technology, engineering, art and math. Our STEAM focused programs consistently have waitlists and we look forward to being able to offer this opportunity to children and youth in the future.

COVID-19

All in person programming for 2020 ended as of March 17 when the library closed. Our focus shifted to ensuring community members knew what electronic resources were available and how to access them. Sitka’s self-registration feature was enabled and an online form was created for people to ask for assistance. With One Time Technology Grant funds from the province, we opted to boost the Overdrive collection province wide and started our own Overdrive Advantage collection. With a grant from the Kootenay Library Federation, we purchased a collection of Orca eBooks for children and youth. We created resource rich newsletters for our adult, children and youth patrons with detailed access instructions and shared it with the school district and the Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy. Our library took advantage of generous free database offerings, and included those in our resource communications.

We are fortunate to have strong Wi-Fi connectivity outside of our building for the community to freely access. During the closure, the Wi-Fi connection was popular and essential for those without an internet at home.

Starting July 6th, our library resumed limited public access computers and printing services. Public computers and photocopying/scanning are hardly an innovation at this point, but COVID-19 highlighted our unique role in providing this access to the community. For the remainder of 2020, we offered 3 physically distanced public access computers for 45 minutes per day.

Like many other libraries in the province, we started a Curbside Pick-up service prior to reopening safely lending our print collection. This service was popular, appreciated, and worked to connect us to our patrons once again at a safe distance.

One Time Technology Grant

In 2020 our library opted to help boost the Overdrive collection province wide to increase access to digital materials. We also started our own Overdrive Advantage Collection with a focus on decreasing

wait times for popular holds, purchasing Castlegar patron requests and developing a BIPOC and youth collection. Curation of a lendable technology collection began, with purchases starting in January 2021. This collection includes 18 educational launch pads for preschoolers through to adults and 2 new Victor Readers for those with print disabilities. Our library also signed on to meeScan self-checkout through the Kootenay Library Federation with our grant funds. We have purchased the necessary iPad and we hope to have the kiosk set up this spring. Our patrons have been without a self-checkout machine for a year so we look forward to offering a user-friendly way for our patrons to sign out their own materials.

Strategy 2: Building Capacity

Our strategic priority: Organizational Vitality.

Our goal: We have the people, resources and expertise to sustain our success.

Our Strategy: We support the development of our staff [and board].

COVID-19

In the initial stages of our closure, staff worked from home monitoring our library inbox, helping patrons with electronic resource questions and participated in learning opportunities. Carving out time for staff to take webinars for professional development is a challenge when the library is offering its full range of services and activities. A positive aspect of the closure was that all staff could take advantage of a range of training opportunities including:

- Sitka tutorials
- CELA training
- Overdrive webinars
- Exploration of our library databases
- Homelessness training within the context of libraries
- American Library Association webinars
- Booklist archived webinars
- Ace the 3 R's
- Moments of power to elevate the customer experience
- Conversations about COVID-19 and libraries through CULC and OCLC
- Lawmatters training
- Reader's advisory webinars
- Ill and ILC professional development panel through the Kootenay Library Federation

All staff resumed in person work at the library in late spring. Since that time, we have continued taking advantage of learning opportunities as they become available so we can all grow and learn. COVID-19

has made the virtual learning environment essential. Although it is not the same as in person connection, it makes professional development more accessible to everyone.

Strategy 3: Advancing Citizen Engagement

Our strategic priority: Community Engagement

Our goal: We are known as a special place in our community where learning and fun thrive

Our Strategy: Work collaboratively with partners.

Our Strategy: We actively work towards reconciliation

In 2020, our library created a youth Indigenous section making this collection visible and easy to access. One of our fabulous staff members takes great care to raise awareness through engaging displays. This year our library had displays for Orange Shirt Day, National Indigenous Peoples Day, Black History Month, Remembrance Day, Science Literacy Week, International Women's Day, BC Heritage Week, Earth Day and Freedom to Read. These displays bring our resources into view and invite people to stop and engage with important issues, celebrations and topics. Many of these bookmarks, books, DVDs and pamphlets go home with people to spark thought, reflection and conversation.

Our annual Food for Fines and Giving Tree events are an opportunity for the Library to contribute to our local Community Harvest Food Bank. Our patrons filled a Christmas tree with donated hand knit hats, scarves and mittens and a huge box with food and personal hygiene items. Contributors know the library collects these items yearly in November and December for Christmas Hampers and knit in advance! These events raise awareness for the need in our community.

Covid-19

Grab and go craft bags were hugely popular in 2020. Our staff prepared and assembled 1,380 bags for families to correspond with our virtual story time. We also collaborated with the Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy to support the distribution of their ready to go activity bags, as their location is not conveniently located.

In the summer, we received a grant from the Family Action Network to purchase a collection of screen-free fun books. The books highlighted all of the fun (and educational) things families can do with children and youth that do not involve an electronic device. The 15 books covered indoor and outdoor games, card games, young chefs, and fun science experiments to try. Staff also included many of these activities in their grab & go craft bags for kids to do with their families.

One Time Technology Grant

The one time technology grant gave our library the opportunity to start an Overdrive Advantage Collection. Purchasing a collection of titles by BIPOC authors is one way that we can bring stories, experiences, history and different ways of thinking to our patrons. Our BIPOC collection has 97 circulations indicating their popularity for our medium sized library.

Strategy 4: Enhancing Governance.

Our strategic priority: Organizational Vitality

Our goal: We have the people, funding and resources to sustain our success.

Our Strategy: We support the development of our staff [and board].

2020 was year one of a three year strategic plan. Despite the pandemic, we have made progress in all of our focus areas.

Organizational Vitality: City contract renewal with 2% increase over 3 years-Development of staff through webinars-Creation of Indigenous section for children's books.

Physical Space & Collection: Revitalization of small meeting room with new furniture and tables-Creation of a dedicated youth non-fiction section-Started an Overdrive Advantage collection to decrease wait times on digital resources.

Community Engagement: Partnerships with Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy and Family Action Network-Communication with community via social media, newspaper and newsletter.

Innovation and Programming: Weekly virtual story time with grab and go activity kits-Participation in the Kootenay Library Federation Read Local and Teen Book Clubs.

Zoom erased geographical barriers and meant that our Library Trustees could attend BCLTA sessions and Kootenay Library Federation meetings. This was a great way to understand the work of both organizations and was an opportunity to talk about common experiences during the pandemic. Trustees attended meet-ups and governance workshops.

Board Co-Chairs worked towards filling a long vacant space on our board for a Regional District of the Central Kootenay (RDCK) representative. RDCK gives vital support to our library and residents are avid library patrons. Representation from this stakeholder is important to maintain so we are proud to have an active trustee in this position. Trustees also took action on a request to have youth represented on the board and recruited two recent post-secondary graduates, which have become strong voices at our meetings already.

Summary

The library hosted five individual artists in 2020. As a central, busy, public space, the library is a popular venue for artists to show and sell their work. Patrons appreciate the ever-changing displays and often discuss the work with staff. We featured pastel on canvas, pencil drawings, jewelry and miniatures, aviation art, acrylic local landscape, photography, and paint pouring this year.

We were fortunate to receive both Young Canada Works and Canada Summer Jobs grants in 2020 allowing us to fund two Summer Reading Club Coordinators. Although our program was shortened from 12 to 8 weeks, we felt it was vitally important for our community to take advantage of the online Summer Reading Club portal developed by BCLA and employ post-secondary students for the summer. Although we did not have in person programs, students were able to engage children and youth via Zoom, and distributed 600 craft bags for kids to pick up and take home. The craft bags brought families into the library and encouraged them to check out materials.

In the past year, we have received heartfelt feedback from our patrons. Many have let us know how important the library is in their lives and how thankful they are that we continue to offer service. I was touched on our first day of re-opening when one patron said he felt like he was coming home.



Castlegar & District Public Library

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Mari Martin
Director, Libraries Branch
BC Ministry of Education
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October 14, 2020

Dear Ms. Martin

On behalf of our community, thank you to the Ministry of Education for the One Time Technology Grant.

Our Library will curate a diverse Overdrive Advantage collection giving our patrons more digital reading and listening options. Our initial collection will focus on reducing wait times for popular items, building resources for youth, and bringing a focus to titles that raise awareness around racism and reconciliation.

With the grant, we can build a technology lending collection, which satisfies the province's and our Library's strategic goals. Launchpads loaded with a variety of topics will enhance learning opportunities for children, youth and adults in an engaging format. Updated Victor Readers will benefit those with print disabilities and provide residents with the opportunity to try new technology with CELA and NNELS collections.

Since spring, we have been without a self-checkout station. The grant will allow us to replace our machine offering convenience and privacy to our patrons.

Software is another benefit of the grant. Local community groups will enjoy the opportunity to use and learn Adobe Photoshop at our Digitization Station and, workstations are now up to date with the latest Microsoft Office suite.

As you can see from my report, many projects will benefit from this infusion of funds. I look forward to introducing these resources to our city.

Regards,

Kimberly Partanen
Library Director

2020 LIBRARY TECHNOLOGY GRANT REPORTING FORM: CASTLEGAR & DISTRICT PUBLIC LIBRARY

Total Technology Grant Amount: 13,976

Area of Need	Outcome	Metrics	Strategic Links	Actions	Collaborative Links	Timeframe	Project Budget	In-Kind/Leveraged funds	Comments
Electronic collections (licensing) Overdrive 20% Boost	Improving access to digital collections. Reduction of waitlists.	Positive patron feedback and increased access to the collection over last year.	Province: Improving Access for British Columbians CDPL: Physical Space and Collections	Actively building a bigger collection that our patrons find useful and timely.	Provincial Collection	Completed Spring 2020	895.00		
Electronic collections (licensing) Started Overdrive Advantage Collection	Improving access to digital collections. Reduction of waitlists.	Increase new Castlegar users and see awareness of new collection through Advantage statistics. Current users 941 – raise by 20%	Province: Improving Access for British Columbians CDPL: Physical Space and Collections	Purchasing titles that Castlegar Library members are on waitlists for, or have recommended for purchase.		Started Spring 2020- Complete Winter 2020	5,000		
Electronic collections (licensing) Overdrive Advantage BIPOC	Improving access to digital collections. Reduction of waitlists. Provide resources to raise awareness and understanding around reconciliation and racism.	Increase new Castlegar users and see awareness of new collection through Advantage statistics. Current users 941 – raise by 20%	Province: Improving Access for British Columbians Province: Advancing Citizen Engagement CDPL: Physical Space and Collections CDPL: Organizational Vitality (Reconciliation)	Consciously building a collection to develop understanding around reconciliation and racism.	Will communicate collection to COINS (Circle of Indigenous Nations Society)	Started curating Fall 2020 – Complete Winter 2020	1,000		

Electronic collections (licensing) Overdrive Advantage Youth Collection	Improving access to digital collections for children and youth.	Increase new Castlegar users and see awareness of new collection through Advantage statistics. Current users 941 – raise by 20%	Province: Improving Access for British Columbians CDPL: Physical Space and Collections	Curate a collection of items for youth that covers a range social issues, interests and recreation.		Started curating Fall 2020 – Complete Winter 2020	1,000		
Patron software upgrades Adobe Photoshop for Digitization Station	Enhance the library’s digitization station by offering free use of a professional photo-editing tool.	Launch our digitization station and see 50 users in 2021.	Province: Improving Access for British Columbians CDPL: Innovation and Programming	Purchase Adobe Photoshop through the Adobe website.	Kootenay Camera Club. Youth Action Network.	Subscribe spring/summer2021.	1,000 (628 CAD for 2 licenses plus IT installation costs)		Ideally, we would have Covid 19 behind us before launching this service as it will bring more traffic into the library and may require face-to-face assistance.
Digital programming Lendable Launchpad Collection	Offer children, youth and adults a unique learning opportunity with lendable technology.	Circulate all launchpads 3 times in 2021	Province: Improving Access for British Columbians CDPL: Innovation and Programming	Carefully choose a collection of launchpads that enhance literacy, STEM knowledge, memory building, life skills, and digital literacy.	Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy.	Begin purchasing November 2020.	2,700		
Patron hardware upgrades (public computers, printers, etc.) Self Checkout solution	Offer patrons user friendly and private self-checkout solutions.	Ease of use is important as well as patron adoption. I will be monitoring usage and patron feedback. I would like to see at least a dozen people a week using the machine.	Province: Improving Access for British Columbians	Email to KLF and Sitka to find best solutions. Consult with Kimberley Public Library whose IT person has figured out a workable hands free solution with Sitka.	Collaboration not needed for this. Consultation with other libraries.	Winter 2021	3,000		Our self-checkout machine broke down in March 2020. Self-checkouts give patrons privacy and reduces wait times.
Patron hardware upgrades (public computers, printers, etc.) Victor Reader Stratus 12	Improving access to CELA and NNELS material.	Introduction of the devices within our care homes. My goal is for both machines in circulation at all times. Increase subscribers by 20%.	Province: Improving Access for British Columbians CDPL: Physical Space and Collections	Purchase new Victor Readers through Humanware	Local care homes where the library does outreach. (Castlewood, Castlevue, Talarico Place).	Winter 2021	1,100		

		We currently have 22 subscribers.							
Staff software upgrades Updated Windows Staff Computers	Ensuring staff have the resources they need to do their job.	Staff reported professional development opportunities using the new software and satisfaction with the update.	CDPL: Organizational Vitality	Purchased software through Tech Soup and had our computer technician install the software.	Library Staff.	Complete Summer 2020	304.50		Reduced price through TechSoup Canada.