

## INTRODUCTION

### ABOUT FRASER VALLEY REGIONAL LIBRARY

Fraser Valley Regional Library (FVRL), with 25 libraries and a central administrative centre, serves over 750,000 residents spread over 13,000 square kilometers that are governed by 15 municipalities and regional districts. In each of our communities, the local library is a trusted partner and is recognized as a vital community destination and resource for literacy, recreation, and informed decision making.

The communities and local governments we serve grapple with the same long list of huge challenges that impact our province and our nation: globalization, socio-economic change, sustainability, big data and smart technology, lifelong learning, aging demographics, and financing the future.

Spread across our region are people groups that are reflective of past and continued immigration to British Columbia, as well as industries that are both new and old – agriculture, forestry, and fishing to tourism, entertainment, and technology. The communities are dense and urban, as well as scattered and rural. Neighbourhoods are posh and upscale as well as humble and neglected. Roads are occupied by pedestrians and cyclists, mini-cars and buses, SUVs and pick-up trucks, delivery vehicles and semi-trailers. A snapshot of Fraser Valley Regional Library is a picture of the splendor and complexity of British Columbia society today.

### FVRL'S STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS FOR 2019

1. **Inspiration:** Our staff, combined with our technologies and resources, encourage strong economic, creative and social growth in our communities, families and individuals.
2. **Welcoming Place:** Fraser Valley Regional Library is an essential destination connecting people living, working or studying in our communities. We provide a fun, friendly environment focused on knowledge, creativity and experiences that transform lives.
3. **Partnerships:** Our libraries are integral to sparking the potential of individuals and their communities through meaningful connections and relationships.
4. **Engaging Staff:** Our staff continue to grow their expertise and confidence needed to meet evolving customer needs.
5. **Know us. Love us.:** We are known and celebrated for providing a broad and dynamic range of services. Our customers appreciate the friendly and personalized Fraser Valley Regional Library experience. Those who know us, love us.

### FVRL'S MISSION

Opening minds. Enabling dreams.

### FVRL'S VISION

Improving the quality of life for our communities through knowledge, ideas and experiences.

### FVRL'S VALLUES

1. We value development that invests in the enjoyment, lifelong learning, literacy, and the vibrant health of communities.
2. We value open access to library services and materials that remove barriers associated with education, technology, culture, economics, and physical disadvantage.
3. We value and celebrate diversity as integral to an inclusive, vibrant community.
4. We value our responsive, courteous, and friendly staff as the foundation of FVRL's service and success.

5. We seek collaboration and partnerships to maximize our potential to serve our customers and communities.
6. We value innovation as it gives us freedom to grow and take risks to find creative solutions and better serve our public in a fiscally responsible manner.

## IMPROVING ACCESS

### LAUNCH OF THE READING ROOM

#### How FVRL Supports Provincial Plan

1. FVRL Strategic Direction: Welcoming Place - Fraser Valley Regional Library is an essential destination connecting people living, working or studying in our communities. We provide a fun, friendly environment focused on knowledge, creativity and experiences that transform lives.
2. FVRL Vision: Improving the quality of life for our communities through knowledge, ideas and experiences.
3. FVRL Goal: Promote an Environment That Supports Staff in Doing Their Best Work
4. FVRL Goal: Increase Public Awareness and Delight With Our Services
5. FVRL Goal: Enhance the Reputation of Fraser Valley Regional Library and the Value of Libraries
6. FVRL Value: We value our responsive, courteous, and friendly staff as the foundation of FVRL's service and success.
7. FVRL Value: We value innovation as it gives us freedom to grow and take risks to find creative solutions and better serve our public in a fiscally responsible manner.

#### FVRL Program/Service

Fraser Valley Regional Library's Reading Room is a virtual space for our customers to discover new books and other library materials at their convenience. We developed the Reading Room to reach new customers, as well as to provide our existing customers with new ways to connect with the library. The Reading Room initiative supports the communities we serve and improves library service by reducing barriers, increasing remote access and creating more personalized experiences for our online customers.

Prior to the development of the Reading Room, our NextReads newsletter was the only online readers' advisory service we offered. Today, our online readers' advisory services include a podcast entitled ReadRadio, and a personalized reading recommendation service called My Reading Adviser.

ReadRadio is FVRL's bi-weekly podcast of recommendations by library staff. Listeners hear an FVRL staff member share some of their favourite books, movies, TV shows and music. A team of FVRL library staff members developed a project plan for a one year podcasting pilot; the project plan included planning, implementation, and evaluation activities to ensure that the new service provides customers with staff expertise that is meaningful to them. This project has engaged staff in a fun, creative project that utilizes their skills and expertise. Since the launch of ReadRadio, we have released 54 episodes. Staff uptake of this project has been so enthusiastic that they are regularly recording episodes on topics and titles of their choice; we currently have over four months' worth of episodes recorded, mixed, and ready to release.

My Reading Adviser is FVRL's online portal for personalized reading recommendations. From the Reading Room page, customers can see pictures of some of FVRL's Reader's Advisory experts and see what they like to read and what subjects they have expertise in. Customers are invited to answer a few questions on our online form to tell us what they like to read. In response, they will receive a personalized list of recommendations! This new service provides our customers with new opportunities for our customers to connect with and access the expertise of FVRL staff online. My Reading Adviser is committed to providing our customers with the answers that they need within 48 hours, therefore delivering services people can count on.

With the launch of the Reading Room and its full suite of services, FVRL has provided new opportunities for our customers to access the library's information, resources, and services.

### Key FVRL Partnerships

FVRL designed and launched the Reading Room and its services independently. However, since launch, FVRL has made new community connections and partnerships. For example, in response to the launch of Read Radio, the City of Abbotsford connected with FVRL about developing their own internal podcast. FVRL staff shared their knowledge and experience with a team from the City of Abbotsford in a series of meetings, resulting in the successful recording and publication of two podcasts by the City of Abbotsford.

### FVRL Outcomes

There have been several notable outcomes and outputs, since the launch of the Reading Room, including:

- One (1) new suite of services designed to support the communities we serve and improve library service by reducing barriers, increasing remote access and moving towards creating personalized experiences for our online customers
- Two (2) new services to provide FVRL customers with online reading recommendations
- Fifty-four (54) podcasts – written, recorded, and published – that have 6,921 listens on SoundCloud. SoundCloud analytics provide interesting insight into listeners. Currently, within the Fraser Valley, Abbotsford is showing as highest area with people that are listening with 1,202 listens. SoundCloud also indicates there are listens from outside Canada. However, the free version of SoundCloud does not allow for deeper analytics.
- 9,949 page visits to the My Reading Adviser website since March 2018, resulting in 217 queries from customers. Since online RA was not previously available, we can say that we have increased service options for 217 people (interactions). 60% of users expressed a preference for online RA interaction, proving that this service does meet a need.
- Positive feedback from customers through an online survey. One customer commented on ReadRadio, “Love this! I can't wait for each new episode. Hearing all the different staff share their favorites is just fantastic.” Another customer commented that the My Reading Adviser service is a “fantastic idea that gives me more of a connection to FVRL.” Another commented, “Please continue this service... it has been an amazing tool for finding new and exciting materials, and has given me a stronger connection to the library and staff. Thank you, and specifically to Sally for some great suggestions!”
- Multiple media responses on both the launch of Read Radio and My Reading Adviser that describe Increased Public Awareness and Delight With Our Services

## DEVELOPING SKILLS

### LAUNCHPADS

#### How FVRL Supports Provincial Plan

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#### FVRL Program/Service

Over the past few years FVRL has been augmenting the suite of early literacy services at the library with a more strategic focus on FVRL's Youth Digital Strategy. In 2019 FVRL had the opportunity to pilot a new component of this Youth Digital Strategy with Playaway Launchpads. Launchpads are preloaded early learning tablets with curated content for children. FVRL staff selected 12 titles with STEAM and creativity content, and implemented them at three library locations of varying sizes and community characteristics. At many FVRL locations the children's gaming computer systems were approaching end of life. This pilot enabled library leadership to test more innovative solutions and determine whether and how best to implement such devices throughout FVRL.

The Playaway Launchpads offer quality first digital experiences to children who may not otherwise have access to educational tablets outside of the library. However through FVRL's Youth Digital Strategy staff understand increased screen time isn't right for every child. The marketing department helped leadership create approachable materials to offer guidance to parents about appropriate screen time use and limits for children of different ages and stages. These materials nicely complement FVRL's other digital offerings to youth, including Sphero, Ozobots and Cubetto – some of which incorporate screen use, and some that offer a screen-free environment.

Similarly, just as the Playaway Launchpad pilot formed a component of the larger FVRL Youth Digital Strategy, it also played a role in a balanced approach to early learning, early literacy and play. FVRL found offering Launchpads in a cozy context, with baskets, pillows, and encouragement to caregivers and children to experience the Launchpad games and activities together, were a nice complement to group literacy activities such as Storytime and reading programs such as 1,000 Stories Before Kindergarten.

As a result of the Launchpad pilot at FVRL, library leadership approved recommendations to implement Launchpads system-wide at FVRL's 25 locations. This implementation is now underway!

### Outcomes

FVRL conducted outcomes-based evaluation for this pilot, including a survey completed by 69 caregivers. The Playaway Launchpad pilot evaluation results indicate FVRL has been successful in achieving the following intended outcomes:

- Increased access to children’s technology in the community:
  - 91% of survey respondents said they found the Launchpads easy to use.
  - 52% of survey respondents said that as a result of the library, they or their child tried a tablet for the first time.
  - 40% of survey respondents said they don’t have access to a tablet outside of the library.
- Increased preschooler tech-literacy:
  - Received numerous customer comments indicating parental tech-literacy sophistication, such as:
    - “I love that you have learning games that are age appropriate. A great addition to the library.”
    - “I like that the Launchpad is educational (especially the reading stories, highlight word function, but I don’t like my child having too much screen time or the focus being taken away from books. I would like the option to check them out of the library however.”
- Increased customer satisfaction with the children’s tech experience at the library:
  - 87% of survey respondents said they are happy the library has Launchpads.
  - 84% of survey respondents said their overall Launchpad experience was good or fantastic.
  - 62% of survey respondents said they would recommend the library to family and friends because of the Launchpads.
  - Received numerous customer comments, such as:
    - “Great addition and improvement on previous computers”
- Increased use of the library collections:
  - 14% of survey respondents said they borrowed other library materials inspired by the Launchpads.
  - Received numerous customer comments indicating Launchpad use affected book selection, such as:
    - “Kids love it. Maybe the Launchpads should suggest which books to take?”
    - “The Launchpads kept my children occupied and close which enabled me to make better book selections that i would never have been able to make for them.”
- Increased library confidence in deciding whether to implement Launchpads throughout FVRL
  - Staff were able to analyze statistical and feedback data and formulate an enthusiastic recommendation.
  - Received customer testimonials, such as:
    - “My son is really enjoying the Launchpad program. He is 2.5 years old so this is his first experience with a screen education toy. He is using lots of language when he interact with it. I.e. “I did it”, “I planted them”. I will be bringing my 5 year old to come play with these Launchpads too as I know he’d love them as well. Thank you for the opportunity to play with the pads at Brookswood Library.”
  - Received numerous customer comments highlighting positive impact, such as:
    - “Great addition and improvement on previous computers”
    - “The Launchpads make a great learning tool and encourages my son to be at the library more, when he’s not always in the mood to read.”
    - “My friend told me about the Launchpads as her kids like them too. I like that they are pre-loaded by age.”
- Increased library knowledge about how to implement Launchpads throughout FVRL:

- Staff shared feedback and observations about the customers' and staff experience.
- Pilot leadership prepared a list of suggestions and recommendations for implementation at various types of libraries.
- Received numerous customer comments with suggestions, such as:
  - “My 4 year old misses earphones. We love the place regardless. Thank you to the kind librarian who helped us. We loved the read to me option.”
  - “It is good they are not connected to WiFi.”
  - “More learning games ABC, colours numbers.”
  - “Children love it but have to set time limit.”
  - “Maybe apps for learning other languages.”

## COMPUTATIONAL THINKING THROUGH PLAY

### How FVRL Supports Provincial Plan

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### FVRL Program/Service

FVRL offers non-traditional library collections and experiences in order to provide access to technologies and experiences that Fraser Valley residents might not otherwise be able to access. One of the ways we evaluate non-traditional additions to our collection is by examining their utility through the lens of Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math (STEAM) learning. The inception of our Playground collection has positioned FVRL to be able to both complement the STEAM learning that happens in our local schools as well as expose adults to STEAM learning concepts through play.

The implementation and evaluation of our Playground collection has made a positive impact on the lives of people in our service area by inspiring them. However we have also been able to leverage this unique collection to support sustained and sustainable future economic growth in our service area. Several of the items our dedicated staff use in library programming have introduced our customers, young and old alike, to the concept of computational thinking- a foundational precursor to learning to code.

Computational thinking is a set of skills that guide scientific and technological discovery and learning- the “S” and “T” in STEAM. It also helps to build problem-solving skills that are applicable in other areas of life. The major components of computational thinking are:

- **Decomposition:** Breaking a problem down into smaller steps
- **Abstraction:** Removing complex/unnecessary details
- **Pattern recognition:** Identify trends and generalize them to make predictions
- **Algorithms:** Making steps and rules to solve the problem

FVRL’s Sphero SPRK+, Ozobots, Cubetto, and Scratch resources teach computational thinking to staff and customers alike using fun, accessible tools to enrich the lives of individuals, and by extension, our communities. Using these tools also reinforces creativity, perseverance, and collaboration as problem-solving skills.

### Scratch Workshops and Resources

The ability to code computer programs is an important part of literacy in today’s society. FVRL’s Sphero SPRK+ and Ozobots are controlled by block coding (and, for more advanced users, are also controllable with JavaScript). However, Scratch is the most popular block coding language, and it is an entry point to coding for learners with no prior experience. Scratch was designed especially for learners aged 8 to 16, but is used by people of all ages. Learning to code in Scratch helps users to develop important strategies for solving problems, designing projects, and communicating ideas.

Many FVRL staff had no prior experience in computer coding, and with the introduction of coding tools and the concept of teaching coding literacy, we realized that we needed to support staff in learning to code. To enhance FVRL’s ability to run coding clubs and workshops, and to help staff gain a deeper understanding of block coding, FVRL initiated staff training in the Scratch coding language, and developed programming kits to support staff in delivering Scratch workshops. This has helped to increase staff confidence in coding concepts and enhanced our

staff's ability to teach STEAM content. FVRL's staff Scratch training sessions were taught by facilitators from Kids Code Jeunesse, a leading Canadian organization that exists to teach young people to code. Each staff session has quickly filled, and response from staff has been overwhelmingly positive.

### **Scratch training outcomes:**

1. Increase staff knowledge of block coding:
  - 85% of staff surveyed indicated that their knowledge of Scratch coding increased as a result of attending a staff coding workshop.
  - The high numbers of staff attending indicates that there is a strong desire for technical and STEAM related professional development within FVRL.
2. Increase staff comfort with coding concepts:
  - Respondents indicated that they found the instructors knowledgeable and approachable, and the lesson plans easy to follow.
  - The majority of those who attended the workshop had positive comments about the experience and they indicated that they feel comfortable with Scratch. This indicates that staff confidence in their ability to teach and talk about coding with customers was increased as a direct result of the Scratch training workshops.
3. Increase staff interest in holding coding clubs and coding activities in their libraries:
  - 55% of respondents left feeling inspired to coordinate a Scratch coding club at their libraries.
4. Increase staff understanding of how coding connects to our Playground collection:
  - 45% of staff who attended staff coding workshops said the content of the workshop would be useful beyond simple Scratch coding. This indicates that staff were able to extrapolate the coding concepts they learned in one training session to apply them to other coding activities with customers.
5. Increase opportunities to connect coding concepts to offline activities:
  - Our Scratch programming kits include card games that teach Scratch, and books with themed activities such as creating paper chains to represent algorithms.
  - This intersection of traditional handmade craft activities with coding has been well-received by staff, who appreciate the opportunity to introduce and/or reinforce coding concepts with "analog" activities.

### **Sphero SPRK+**

The Sphero SPRK+ is a spherical robotic ball that is controlled using an app on a smartphone or tablet. Users create and remix code within the app to roll the Sphero SPRK+ and make it change colours. Through careful planning and evaluation, FVRL trained staff in the use of Sphero SPRK+ and created a highly successful Sphero SPRK+ lending collection. Staff led activities with the Sphero SPRK+ such as programming them to run through mazes, racing them through different obstacles, and choreographing "dances" with multiple Sphero SPRK+ units. Staff and customers use computational thinking concepts in order to solve challenges in controlling the Sphero SPRK+ robots. Demand for this lending collection was so high that FVRL increased the number of Sphero SPRK+ kits by 700% to keep up with demand.

### **Sphero SPRK+ Outcomes:**

1. Increase customers' access to tools for personal growth and learning:
  - Customers from all 25 libraries have borrowed Sphero SPRK+ kits.
  - 86% of initial survey respondents indicated that this was their first time using a Sphero SPRK+.
  - FVRL's lending Sphero SPRK+ units have been in constant use since their introduction, and gave a large proportion of borrowers their first opportunity to try coding.
  - 80% of borrowers said they learned something new as a result, and 62% said they tried coding for the first time!

2. Increase customers' awareness of FVRL collections and/or services:
  - More than a third of Sphero borrowers indicated that they learned something new about the library as a result of the introduction of the Sphero SPRK+ lending collection.
3. Increase popular awareness of FVRL as an innovative organization:
  - The Sphero SPRK+ lending collection generated a lot of good feelings about FVRL- nearly every survey respondent has said they would recommend FVRL to friends or family, and many have expressed amazement that the library was lending robots.
  - Traditional and social media coverage of FVRL's Sphero SPRK+ initiative was extensive and enthusiastic.

### **Ozobot Bit**

Ozobot Bits are coding robots about the size of golf balls. They run on small wheels and are programmable by drawing coloured lines on paper using felt pens. The robots follow the lines and respond to colour codes by changing their speed, direction or LED light colour. They are also programmable using drag-and-drop block coding on a smartphone or tablet. FVRL's Ozobot program grew out of a partnership with Science World British Columbia's Tech-Up program. This initiative promotes coding and computational thinking instruction in schools and libraries throughout British Columbia.

Ozobots have been an excellent fit for FVRL's STEAM learning focused Playground initiative. FVRL has hosted Ozobot programs at most of our libraries. Programs are typically targeted for children in grades 4 through 6 and usually use markers, paper, instructional books and games to help kids think about coding and practice computational thinking skills without screens.

### **Ozobot Bit Outcomes:**

1. Reduced barriers for access to technology:
  - In the first month of Ozobots Kit programs alone, FVRL staff offered access to the Ozobots throughout our service area, including north of the Fraser, east to Chilliwack, and west to Tsawwassen.

For half the customers surveyed, the Ozobots programs have offered exposure to technology they didn't previously have access to. This necessarily means we have increased access to the technology for our customers.
2. Increased customer knowledge of coding concepts:
  - Computational thinking strategies are a necessary component of problem solving with the Ozobots Kit contents.
  - Two thirds of our Ozobot users believe they're learning new aspects of coding and computational thinking through these programs!
  - Qualitative feedback from attendees at Ozobot programs put Coding, Drawing, Making and Learning in the top five words (excluding the word 'Ozobots'), suggesting various aspects of learning were a key feature of the programs in customers' minds.
3. Increased opportunities for customer play:
  - The strong majority of respondents indicated they had fun at the Ozobots programs. These results suggest the Ozobots programs are a new, fun way to engage our customers, and uphold FVRL's commitment to Play. This result also suggests staff efforts to present Ozobots programs in a fun way has been successful.
  - Further, statistical word analysis of customers' open-ended feedback put Fun, Love, and Awesome in the top five words mentioned. This suggests that play was a key aspect of the Ozobots Kit programs in customers' minds.
4. Reduce customer isolation:
  - More than a quarter of the respondents indicated they received social benefits from the Ozobots programs.

- Staff feedback relates very clearly what this looks like – young customers gathering around the Ozobots, engaging in problem solving and creative activity together.
  - Parents and caregivers at programs also participated enthusiastically. For many of our customers, the Ozobots are bringing people together.
5. Increased customer perception of FVRL as an innovative organization:
    - More than half the respondents indicated the Ozobots programs helped them see the library in a new light, as doing interesting things.
  6. Increase staff knowledge about modern tech:
    - The initial round of training was very successful, with 85% of staff attendees handling Ozobots for the first time, 82% of staff learning something new about coding, and 91% learning about computational thinking for the first time.
    - Staff were eager to implement Ozobot programming and computational thinking concepts in their libraries.

### **Cubetto**

FVRL added Cubetto to its Playground collection after extensive research into STEAM learning for young children. The Canadian Pediatric Society recommends limiting screen time for children under five years old and emphasizing learning in real time interactions, and this toy meets both of those criteria.

Cubetto is a friendly wooden robot that teaches younger children ages three and up computational thinking skills through stories and hands-on play. In addition to the cube-shaped wooden robot, this toy comes with themed patterned mats for Cubetto to move on, and a wooden board that connects to Cubetto by Bluetooth. The board has spaces for children to press plastic directional blocks into it, and each block represents a different move that Cubetto can do- forward, left, right, backwards, or “random.”

As children work to get Cubetto to specific squares on the mat, they experience an imaginative and fun first step into computational thinking concepts. When the child has pressed the directional blocks onto the control board and touches the start button, Cubetto follows the directions the child has created with the plastic shapes. Cubetto’s control board even introduces the concept of grouping repetitive moves together- an important concept in coding. With Cubetto, there are no screens to stare at and no reading to do, which means that preliterate children can create sequences to manipulate the robot with or without adult input.

### **Cubetto Outcomes:**

1. Reduced customer barriers for access to technology:
  - 88% of customers surveyed indicated that they were playing with Cubetto for the first time.
  - 82% said they learned something new. This indicates that FVRL succeeded in reducing barriers for access to technology.
2. Increased knowledge of computational thinking concepts for parents and children:
  - 62% of customers at Cubetto programs stated that they practiced problem solving strategies.
  - 34% said they would keep helping their children practice problem solving at home. This indicates that FVRL was successful in increasing knowledge of computational thinking concepts for parents and children.
3. Increased opportunities for customer play:
  - 77% of survey respondents stated that they had fun!
  - Qualitative survey responses frequently mentioned the words “love” and “awesome” which indicates that FVRL was successful in achieving this outcome.

- Staff observations of customer interactions with Cubetto were overwhelmingly positive, and many staff noted how appealing the Cubetto was for children and adults.
4. Promoted social learning for our customers:
- 75% of parents surveyed said they spent quality time with their child while attending a Cubetto program at an FVRL location.
  - Staff observations also noted that groups of children often began to work together spontaneously to solve Cubetto movement challenges.

### **Conclusion**

FVRL's introduction of non-traditional lending items that support the development of computational thinking skills has been a resounding success with staff and customers alike. Our customers appreciate access to technologies that they would not otherwise encounter, and staff feel supported in becoming conversant with these concepts so that they can share them with their communities.

FVRL has prioritized this method of getting our member communities future-ready after careful consideration and research, and we as an organization look forward to continuing to innovate in order to continue reshaping ideas about what public libraries can do. We are proud that our evaluation of our 2019 computational thinking initiatives indicate strongly that we have helped to position our libraries – and, by extension, all public libraries -- as leaders in innovative, accessible learning in British Columbia, and we intend to continue to work to strengthen the social fabric and sustainable economic growth of our province.

## COLLABORATING ON SHARED GOALS

### BIRDWATCHING BACKPACKS

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#### FVRL Program/Service

In 2019 FVRL partnered with two local groups to create a new lending initiative at the library, Birdwatching Backpacks. Each Birdwatching Backpack contains high quality Vortex binoculars, a bird identification book, a local birds brochure, an instructional sheet and an evaluation survey. Fraser Valley Regional Library members can borrow the kits for up to three weeks (one week if others are waiting).

In addition to the lending initiative, FVRL supported the initiative further, inviting birding experts to host workshops in the FVRL libraries for both staff and customers.

It began when Erin Clement from the Office of Climate Action and Environment at the City of Delta and James Casey from Bird Studies Canada (now Birds Canada) approached FVRL with an idea. They wanted to donate two birdwatching kits to the local Delta libraries. They hoped Delta residents would be able to borrow the kits to discover birds in the area.

FVRL however, wasn't prepared to offer a couple kits to customers. In fact, FVRL is well rehearsed in lending unusual items as part of its FVRL Playground, and wanted to ensure citizens throughout the Fraser Valley would have access to the resource. As a result, a beautiful partnership emerged between the three organizations, and grew to include a fourth - Wild Birds Unlimited Vancouver. Together these partners were able to launch an astounding 75 Birdwatching Backpacks, accessible to all residents of the Fraser Valley Regional Library's service area.

The project was launched at the Ladner Pioneer Library in Delta in July with much fanfare! Sprinkled amongst speeches and cupcakes were: the opportunity to try and borrow the new Birdwatching Backpack kits;

demonstrations by the Orphaned Wildlife Rehabilitation Society (OWL); and Wild Birds Unlimited Vancouver staff working with bird enthusiasts of all ages in a bird-box building make-and-take activity.

The Birdwatching Backpacks have been in constant demand since the launch, demonstrating strong support by the community. This partnership also resulted in all four organizations making strides towards stated goals, and revealed numerous synergistic values.

The City of Delta had recently produced a Delta Bird and Biodiversity Strategy, and the Birdwatching Backpack project enabled them to reach goals with regards to education and awareness, encouraging citizens to conserve habitats and species, and of course, partnerships and collaboration, by capitalizing on the pre-existing relationship with the library, as well as recognizing local knowledge and skills.

Bird Studies Canada was pleased the Birdwatching Backpack lending with FVRL enabled them to continue innovating conservation solutions, empowering champions for birds, and extending further their reach of education, connecting youth with nature and teaching bird identification.

Wild Birds Unlimited Vancouver's goals are simple – to spread the love for birds, and sell supplies to support these birds. The Birdwatching Backpack project at FVRL certainly helped this organization raise the profile of these very accessible hobby, enhancing citizen appreciation for backyard birds and birding.

Further, FVRL was able to satisfy stated values of partnership, innovation, lifelong learning, (bio)diversity and open access, while contributing to Strategic Plan goals of inspiring its membership through non-traditional library experiences.

### Outcomes

Preliminary evaluation results indicate the Birdwatching Backpack lending initiative at FVRL has been successful in achieving the following intended outcomes:

- Increased customers' access to tools for personal growth and learning:
  - Customers from all 25 libraries have borrowed Birdwatching Backpack kits,
  - Customers from all 5 FVRL regions completed evaluation surveys,
  - Because of the FVRL Birdwatching Backpacks,
    - 54% of survey respondents tried birding for the first time
    - 27% of survey respondents tried binoculars for the first time
    - 67% of survey respondents learned something new about birds and birdwatching
    - 49% of survey respondents learned something new about plant and animal variety in their area (i.e. biodiversity)
  - Partner Testimonials:
    - "We have received positive feedback from naturalists young and old about how this program has allowed them to introduce birdwatching to friends and family using high quality equipment that ensures a positive experience the first time out." ~James Casey, Birds Canada
  - Customer Testimonials:
    - "These backpacks are an awesome way to get kids involved in birding and get excited about nature." ~Customer testimonial
    - "The backpack was light and comfortable and I was pleasantly surprised by the high quality of the items contained within the backpack." ~Customer testimonial
- Increased customers' opportunities for play!
  - Because of the FVRL Birdwatching Backpacks,

- 71% of survey respondents had fun!
- Customer Testimonials:
  - “That is was really fun! I saw a Great Blue Heron! I saw lots of Anna's Hummingbirds & Rufous Hummingbirds!” ~Customer testimonial
- Increased customers’ sense of social connection:
  - Because of the FVRL Birdwatching Backpacks,
    - 49% of survey respondents spent more quality time with family or friends
  - Customer Testimonials:
    - “Great time at Campbell valley with my grandchildren birdwatching.” ~Customer testimonial
    - “Spending time outside with my family. I didn't encounter many birds, but I did see river otters.” ~Customer testimonial
    - “Love to have time to birdwatch with Grandchildren. Where can I get the Folding "Pocket Guide to Familiar Species"?” ~Customer testimonial
- Increased awareness of library services:
  - Because of the FVRL Birdwatching Backpacks,
    - 81% of survey respondents would recommend FVRL to friends or family
    - 56% of survey respondents learned something new about FVRL library services
    - 5% of survey respondents became new library members
- Increased popular perception of FVRL as an innovative organization:
  - Because of the FVRL Birdwatching Backpacks,
    - 81% of survey respondents discovered FVRL is doing new and interesting things
  - Social/Media coverage:
    - ['Birdwatching weekend in a backpack' on offer at Fraser Valley libraries](#) ~CBC
    - [B.C. libraries lending out 'birder backpacks'](#) ~Global News
    - [Breakfast Television video and tweet](#)
    - [Fraser Valley Regional Library introduces 'birdwatching backpacks' for checkout](#) ~CTV
    - [There's going to be a Birdwatching Backpack launch party in Ladner](#) ~Delta Optimist
  - Produced [Birdwatching Backpacks at FVRL](#) video. YouTube Views at 1300+ January 2020.
  - Partner Testimonials:
    - “Since launching the initiative I have been in contact with bird clubs from Alaska to Florida asking how they can execute similar programs.” ~James Casey, Birds Canada
  - Customer Testimonials:
    - “That this is a really cool idea. I think FVRL has lots of awesome things to borrow and use” ~Customer testimonial
    - “I posted about the birdwatching backpacks on my Instagram and FB. Such a great idea! Thanks!” Marilyn Belsham, FVRL Customer
- Increased library customer borrowing behaviours:
  - Because of the FVRL Birdwatching Backpacks,
    - 76% of survey respondents expect to borrow more materials from FVRL
- Increased awareness of the value of biodiversity and environmental stewardship:
  - Because of the FVRL Birdwatching Backpacks,
    - 35% of survey respondents expect to support pollinator insects by planting native or heirloom plants at home

- 32% of survey respondents expect to support birds by installing a birdhouse or birdfeeder at home
- Strengthened community partnerships
  - Community contacts say working with FVRL was a positive experience:
    - “It is the staff at the Fraser Valley Regional Library that really made the Bird Watching Program a success. They have really embraced the program through attending bird themed events and inviting Birds Canada into the libraries to provide education and training to library staff and patrons....Overall, implementing the Birdwatching Backpack program was one of my most enjoyable pieces of work in 2019.” ~James Casey, Birds Canada
  - Blog article posted by partner with pride!
    - [Birdwatching Backpacks Flying Off Library Shelves, Thanks to Partnerships](#)

## ENHANCING GOVERNANCE

### \$20M IN 2020

#### How FVRL Supports Provincial Plan

6. FVRL Strategic Direction: Partnerships – Our libraries are integral to sparking the potential of individuals and their communities through meaningful connections and relationships.
7. FVRL Goal: Build a strong partnership infrastructure.
8. FVRL Goal: Support community partnerships.
9. FVRL Strategic Direction: Engaging Staff – Our staff continue to grow their expertise and confidence needed to meet evolving customer needs.
10. FVRL Goal: Promote an environment that supports staff in doing their best work.
11. FVRL Strategic Direction: Know us. Love us. – We are known and celebrated for providing a broad and dynamic range of services. Our customers appreciate the friendly and personalized Fraser Valley Regional Library experience. Those who know us, love us.
12. FVRL Goal: Increase public awareness and delight with our services.
13. FVRL Goal: Enhance the reputation of Fraser Valley Regional Library and the value of libraries.
14. FVRL Value: We value development that invests in the enjoyment, lifelong learning, literacy, and the vibrant health of communities.
15. FVRL Value: We value open access to library services and materials that remove barriers associated with education, technology, culture, economics, and physical disadvantage.
16. FVRL Value: We value and celebrate diversity as integral to an inclusive, vibrant community.
17. FVRL Value: We seek collaboration and partnerships to maximize our potential to serve our customers and communities.

#### FVRL Program/Service

The provincial government provides approximately \$14.4 million in funding to public libraries in BC. In 2009, the funding was much higher. That year, funding was cut to \$5 million, then restored to \$14.4 million after a large advocacy campaign. It has since remained at this level without any inflationary increase. In adjusted dollars today, the funding level prior to 2009 should be at least \$20.6 million, using the most conservative possible estimates of inflation and population growth.

Since 2010, multiple resolutions have gone to the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) asking that library funding be restored. In 2019, a major advocacy campaign rapidly gaining traction called “\$20 in 2020”, for which FVRL produced a video for the Library Partners. The [BC Public Libraries 2020](#) video inspires and points to the unique role of public libraries in their communities.

#### Key FVRL Partnerships

FVRL worked with the Library Partners (British Columbia Library Association, British Columbia Library Trustees Association, BC Libraries Cooperative and Association of British Columbia Public Library Directors) to create an advocacy video to restore library funding.

#### FVRL Outcomes

- The Library Partners, on behalf of their memberships, spoke with over 600 convention delegates from local and provincial government.
- The delegates were enthusiastic about BC public libraries and overwhelmingly supportive of the \$20 Million in 2020 campaign.

- All ten of the proposed public library funding resolutions passed! (Resolutions B28 - 29 and C27-34) Working with local government, the Library Partners built an understanding of the importance of provincial funding for equitable services in BC.
- Delegates agreed with restoring public library funding and over 500 took the time to add their signatures to the \$20 million in 2020 campaign.



## LIBRARIES IN ACTION: SUCCESS STORIES

## LITERACY AND INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES IN THE FRASER VALLEY

**How FVRL Supports Provincial Plan**

1. FVRL Strategic Direction: Welcoming Place: Fraser Valley Regional Library is an essential destination connecting people living, working or studying in our communities. We provide a fun, friendly environment focused on knowledge, creativity, and experiences that transform lives.
2. FVRL Vision: Improving the quality of life for our communities through knowledge, ideas and experiences.
3. FVRL Goal: Increase Public Awareness and Delight with Our Services
4. FVRL Value: We value and celebrate diversity as integral to inclusive, vibrant community.

**FVRL Program/ Service:**

In respect of the Indigenous neighbors and communities, Fraser Valley Regional Library used the Truth and Reconciliation Report as inspiration and guidance for incorporating cultural awareness within library services and programs. While recognizing diversity and creating connection in 2019, FVRL's relationships with Indigenous communities ranged from hosting author events, becoming a partner with UNESCO through the International Year of Indigenous Languages (IYIL), as well as collaborating with neighboring communities and participating in various outreach opportunities.

The process began when FVRL provided staff with First Nations 101 training presented by Lynda Gray. The training encourages staff to play active roles in bringing about true reconciliation between First Nations and non-First Nations people.

FVRL's author events intend to celebrate diverse identities and backgrounds while providing opportunity to enhance an individual's experience in their community. In Fall 2019, FVRL hosted local Sumas First Nation author Elaine Beatrice Silver who visited two FVRL libraries and shared her memoir, "Lexèywa - I Pass the Torch to You". The memoir speaks to resilience and perseverance amid a childhood at residential school. Abbotsford libraries also hosted an Author Reading by Cecelia Reekie, a member of the Haisla First Nation.

As a library system, FVRL became a partner with UNESCO through the International Year of Indigenous Languages to celebrate the revitalization and preservation of Indigenous culture and languages. Three FVRL libraries hosted showings of the documentary, "Keep Talking" which follows four Alaska Native women fighting to save Kodiak Alutiiq, an endangered language. The showings were received enthusiastically and audiences requested similar events in the future.

FVRL's marketing department also invited Indigenous customers to participate in a photo shoot, and uses the photos in promotional material such as posters, website banners, social media and brochures. In this way we're making our Indigenous communities more visible, helping us produce more representative material, and creating a more welcoming space for Indigenous customers.



*Beatrice Elaine Silver speaks at FVRL's Chilliwack Library*

Individual FVRL libraries collaborated with a variety of Indigenous service providers and communities to connect with community members, share knowledge, and encourage the library as a welcoming space for everyone.

- The Maple Ridge Public library and Fraser River Indigenous Society (FRIS) collaborate both in and outside of the library. FRIS hosts a bi-monthly drop in housing resource table set up in the library foyer, and vice versa, the library hosts info tables at Indigenous Peoples Day celebrations and Wellness Fairs hosted by FRIS.
- In Pitt Meadows, library staff visit the Katzie First Nation to connect with their children's early literacy groups.
- On a monthly basis, Sardis library staff visit the Sto:lo First Nation to provide storytime. In June, the Sardis library hosts an Indigenous Storyteller.
- Staff from the City of Langley library visit the Little Feather Playgroup, hosted by the Lower Fraser Valley Aboriginal Society. Library visits include monthly storytimes during the school year.
- The Clearbrook and Abbotsford Community libraries participate in events at Mamele'awt Indigenous Education Centre including Family Nights and the Aboriginal Parents as Literacy Supporters (APALS) group to read stories and provide library information.
- Abbotsford libraries also participate in two National Indigenous Peoples Day celebrations, one organized by School District 34 and another organized through the Heritage Abbotsford Society.
- Library Live and on Tour (LiLi) frequently partners with local library staff to attend special events and celebrations hosted by Indigenous communities and organizations. LiLi participated in Sto:lo Nation's Suicide Prevention Day, Leqamel First Nation's Addiction Awareness evening, as well as health fairs hosted by Kekinow Housing and Skwah First Nation.

### **Key FVRL Partnership:**

FVRL works with local Indigenous communities and local community partners to coordinate events and services. FVRL also works with publishers and Indigenous authors to craft library experiences to meet the needs of both the author and library customers.

Participation in events *outside* the library space allow library staff to network and engage with members of the community, as well as community service providers to build new relationships. Service providers can learn about community services and build new partnerships to extend reach and opportunity.

### **FVRL Outcomes:**

- Raising awareness about Indigenous languages
- Raising awareness about Indigenous peoples and history
- Increasing partnership and connection between the library and local Indigenous citizens
- Increasing awareness of library services among local Indigenous communities
- Encouraging early literacy skills with local Indigenous children and families
- Increasing a sense of a welcoming space for our Indigenous customers

### **Notable outputs include:**

- 1 UNESCO Partnership
- 3 Film evenings
- 2 Author events by Beatrice Elaine Silver
- Participation at dozens of outreach events

## SUMMARY

Fraser Valley Regional Library has continued its efforts to support our communities with strong leadership, transformative programming, and innovative services and collections. We focus on both traditional and new literacies that are key to knowledge creation and creativity as our communities increasingly engage with the new economy. Partnerships are a key foundation to supporting successful initiatives, and we continue to be heavily engaged with all levels of government, community organizations and our municipalities.

In the second year of our Strategic Plan, FVRL continues to focus on Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math (STEAM). Notable additions to our STEAM initiatives included birdwatching backpacks lending and Launchpad programming. Programs and collections such as these represent a constant challenge to traditional library operations, requiring continuous infrastructure and process evolution, but offer amazing opportunities for our communities.

Underlying all our efforts is a continued emphasis on improved impact measurement, effective governance and increased business efficiency. All of these were built into FVRL's strategic plan, itself an example of our commitment to stronger governance and better management practice. Funding for libraries and other public services remains at a premium, and is expected to remain so through the duration of FVRL's next strategic plan. To provide the services that our communities need, FVRL will continue to work closely with local and provincial government to ensure that we successfully meet the challenges ahead.