

Fraser Lake Public Library Association 2020 Literacy Grant Report

Introduction:

What a year!!! Covid 19 knocked us all for a loop this year creating unusual circumstances for all of us.

The Fraser Lake Public Library is the hub of our Community for several reasons:

- We offer free services to citizens of Fraser Lake, Fort Fraser, Endako and Nadleh and Stellaten our two local First Nations.
- We do not have any Government Agencies in town so the only public access to Government programmes or websites via computer is through us. IE. Employment Insurance, job boards, resume writing and more.
- As there is no movie theatre or video store in our area we have many DVDs for patrons to borrow. This provides entertainment for all ages.
- We normally provide programming for all ages.
- We provide access to educational material for teachers and students.
- We normally provide free space to user groups to hold meetings and offer their own niche such as supervised home visits, harmony sessions for seniors etc.
- The Fraser Lake Sawmills is the only industry left in our area and they needed to decrease their shifts by one which in turn has meant they needed to find new jobs. The taxpayer base is getting smaller, but we make do.
- With job losses and Covid all community services are in higher demand but with less resources we are all doing the best we can.

Please note that many of the Provincial Priorities and the Fraser Lake Public Libraries Goals often overlap.

Due to Covid 19 - On March 18, 2020 we were forced to shutdown the Library to the public.

Provincial Priority #1 &3

Improving Access for British Columbians & Advancing Citizen Engagement

Summary of Fraser Lakes Strategic Goals

Goal 1: Reach out to the community

Increase awareness of library services available to the community.

- Place short one or two-line articles regarding our services on our social media, in our local print media, school newsletters as well as grocery bag stuffers.
- Post Library events to Website, Facebook, Village Calendar & Heck Yeah Fraser Lake.

Between March 18 – May 31, 2020

Patrons could access our Library on-line and for those without cards we did a soft registration over the phone so they could also access our databases, e-books etc.

As books continued to arrive we catalogued them and put them on our shelves. ILL's and ILC's were not available during this time.

Wanting to continue services that were not available elsewhere in our small community we arranged drop off and pick-up times for photocopying or faxing important papers while they waited outside. This need increased due to CERB information needing to be submitted. This also meant we spent time helping some people over the phone while they tried to do it themselves from their own homes. However, due to the poor quality of the internet they often needed to use the Library to submit their information.

Patrons could phone and order books from our Library catalogue through Sitka or they could phone us and order specific books or let us help them choose. Like others we called this Curb-Side Pick-up. We would check out their books to their card and arrange a pick-up time. We have double doors in our foyer so the books were left on books shelves and we would unlock the door a few minutes before our patron would arrive. Then doors would be locked, and sanitization of door handles would occur.

June 1 – December 31, 2020

We re-opened to the public June 1, 2020 with limited hours. Instead of being open 5 days a week we were open Tuesdays & Thursdays 10 am to 6 pm and Saturdays 10 am – 2 pm.

Patrons and visitors were allowed ½ hour only in the library as we had a limited capacity as per Provincial Health and WorkSafe orders.

New protocols upon entry included hand sanitizing and signing in for Covid contact tracing purposes only. A plexishield was put in place in front of the circulation desk and as protocol changed face masks became mandatory. We were required to limit our public access computers to 2 and removed all our extra seating.

We strive to give our citizens the opportunity for lifelong learning through our various partnerships.

Unfortunately, any programmes that required in person activities were cancelled. We are hoping if vaccinations roll out and restrictions are lifted we can once again include in person programming.

Goal: Strengthen Partnerships

The following are some of the programmes we were still able to offer, and some are groups that we would normally offer programming with:

GALE Courses – These on-line courses continue to be popular with our patrons as the available courses are both fun and educational.

NCLF - North Central Library Federation – No joint programmes but more funding was received for Literacy materials.

STEAM – Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts & Math. This year the HR Macmillan Science was unable to partner with us for in person programming.

FLESS - Fraser Lake Elementary Secondary School (FLESS Grades 4-12) the Librarian was able to partake in a Virtual Science Fair but not do any in person or in Library programming.

RCL Branch #274 - The Library participates in the annual Royal Canadian Legion Poster Contest which again gives us a community presence. We also promote Remembrance Day and knowledge by ordering materials from The Ministry of Veteran Affairs. We still had the materials available but as younger children were unable to come into the Library the free materials were not taken as much. We did not participate in the poster judging this year.

Nechako White Sturgeon Recovery Initiative – This environmental programme educates local citizens and children as to how important conservation has become to ensure this species survives. The travelling educational programme from Vanderhoof did not travel this year.

Mouse Mountain School – Literacy and use of the Library is another important aspect of our Strategic Plan so the Fraser Lake Public Library usually collaborates with Mouse Mountain Elementary School (K-3) to participate in several programmes. These include: Ready, Set, Learn, Welcome to Kindergarten, Drop Everything and Read, Family Literacy Day and Librarian visits. However, these programmes did not happen this past year in a way that we could participate.

Normally from these programs we have several children, and their parents sign up for library cards but again this did not happen this past year.

Northern Health – We continue to distribute our Books for Babies packages through the health nurse who drops off packages with new Mom's. Our packages promote the Library by including a list of Library resources available to help them throughout all stages of raising children.

Home schooling - Home schooled families who normally meet once a week in the Library just ordered materials over the phone. Once Inter-library Loan or Inter-Library Connect was available we would order materials they required for their curriculum.

Game Nights – Cancelled. Normally once a week 10-12 young adults as well as 4-8 youth meet to play role playing games.

Storytime's and Lego - Cancelled. Normally presented at the Library on Thursdays and Fridays by an Infant Development Consultant from the Nechako Valley Community Services. - They are very popular as they are drop in and parents can bring their children when it suits them.

Goal: Promotion of Library

- Make downstairs available to local groups to use (free of charge or for a small fee) Not able to have user groups.
- Promote Library Cards – key chain attachments. Many patrons like have the Key card as it is one less in their wallets.
- Implement surveys to users and non – users. Did not do this.

Provincial Priority #2 & 3 Between March 18 – Now

Building Capacity & Advancing Citizen Engagement

Goal: Senior programming:

- Develop a senior at home programme working with Better at Home, Autumn Services & Silver Birch.

As our Autumn Services (Senior Centre) was closed our most vulnerable seniors felt the most heavily out of place as they had no where to go and socialize. This was very hard on them and we could not work with Autumn Services and Better at Home to do joint programming.

- Work with Village of Fraser Lake to have Community Bus pick up seniors and bring them to the Library.

The Community Bus was shut down as they could not pick up and drop off seniors as they mostly stayed home, and our drivers were concerned about being in such proximity to anyone – especially the seniors as they require help and close contact for getting on and off the bus.

- Work towards offering movies and other programmes at Silver Birch Seniors Complex.

This was a very successful programme in 2019 and continued into 2020. Audrey – Our Chief Librarian went every Friday night and showed a movie at Silver Birch Lodge (Senior Home). It was enjoyed by many and we received a lot of positive comments. Unfortunately, again, this programme had to cease but once restrictions are lifted Audrey will re-start movie night.

Goal: Children's programming

- Summer Reading Club, Lego, Story-Time, and others.
- Offer Programmes in conjunction with other groups - the Village of Fraser Lake, The North Central Library Federation, the Schools etc.
- Work with Literacy Groups to offer more programming for pre-Schoolers and their families.

We were unable to offer any in person programming and although we received a Canada Summer Jobs Student Grant, we were unsuccessful in hiring a summer student to help with creating and delivering an online SRC of our own. However, we had a few children sign up for the Provincial SRC online.

As we colour code our children's books – parents could order books at an appropriate reading level for their children and use curb-side pick-up.

Staff created what we called "Busy Bags". These contained several activities children could do. We advertised that these kits were available on our website and Facebook page. Parents would phone and let us know how many kits and at what age range (3-10) they wanted and then use curbside pickup to get them. These kits included Crayons, colouring pages, mazes, puzzles etc.

Goal: Improve Facility

- Enhance book banks upstairs by putting Dewey numbers on the ends
- Use bookends at the end of shelves.

Fortunately, our Library Board kept us all working while other Libraries closed. During this closed period, we cleaned every nook and cranny, removed everything from every drawer, every book from every shelf and wiped them all with cleaning solutions. We were able shelf read and weed our whole collection. We organized our storage room, and everything was spick and span for when we reopened to the public.

Once shelf reading and weeding occurred we were able to label all our shelves properly and add book ends.

Provincial Priority 2, 3 & 4 Between March 18 – Now

Building Capacity & Advancing Citizen Engagement & Enhancing Governance

Goal: Enhance Services

Professional Development

- Encourage staff development and excellent service through continuing education.

As we were only open to the public half time. Staff was able to spend more time on preparing book and bulletin board displays as well as keeping our patrons informed about what was happening at the Library during this time of Covid.

All staff completed performance reviews to help them work towards their personal goals.

- Create and implement a Library Board Development plan and increase the participation by the board.

The Board spent numerous hours creating policies.

1. Covid 19 – For WorkSafe & Northern Health to comply with Provincial Health Orders.

2. Working Alone Policy for both Staff and our Janitor.

Succession planning

Discussions took place but none of our current staff are interested or ready to step up into the Chief Librarian Role.

We hired an on-call Library Assistant to fill in when one of our regular Assistants are unavailable.

Collections

- Increase funding to improve collections.

We did increase our funding for materials as we were able to use Literacy funding from both the Province and the North Central Library Association. We used these monies to also enhance our First Nations Children's book collection

- Examine collection and technology to keep it current and in good repair.

Weeding helped us discard old and ratty books.

Buying new Computers with our Technology Grant helped us catch up technologically.

As we were unable to present in Library literacy programming we used our Literacy Grant money to enhance our children's fiction and non-fiction collections which included many First Nations books.

Thank you for these funds as they are very important to us.

We are hoping that Covid restrictions will be lifted a bit more by summer and we can start offering in person programming again.

Cheerfully Submitted by the Fraser Lake Public Library Association.

**Libraries will get you through times of no money
better than money will get you through times of no library.**

Fraser Lake Public Library Association Library Technology Report

The Fraser Lake Public Library has had computer issues for some time but have not had the funds to upgrade our computers.

Our computers were last purchased in 2011 when we completed our library renovations.

Our operating systems were slow, and some programmes were no longer supported. This had become very cumbersome to do many things such as submitting SOFI, E-mail, Sage Accounting etc.

With this Provincial Technology Grant, donations from local groups & individuals as well as what we had saved, we purchased 8 new computers and 3 new printers.

This allows us to be up to date and current.

The Fraser Lake Public Library Staff, Board and Patrons thank you for making this possible.

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Area of Need

Staff and Public Access Computers were last purchased in 2011. Very outdated and no longer supported a number of software programmes.

Outcome

New computers are quicker giving better access to staff to use Sitka and other staff programmes. Our new computers are also providing quicker and better access for our patrons trying to access government websites and updated programmes to complete personal use of e-mail etc.

Librarians computer was unable to upgrade when Windows 10 free update occurred so she was still using Windows 7 which no longer supported a number of important programmes. This has made it very difficult to complete many tasks which should have been quick and easy but were now very time consuming

Metrics

Increase efficiency by a huge percentage. Allow the use of programmes previously blocked or extremely slow and once the bugs have been worked out as they are so new increase accuracy.

Letter writing and any Board Packages will be delivered without having to go through a lot of rigmarole. Documents could not be attached and sometimes would not save but had to be scanned and sent or printed first so it could be retyped if it was lost while trying to save.

Having a new computer for the Chief Librarian will save time and be more efficient for almost everything she does and of course less frustrating.

Strategic Links

As we do not have any Government Agencies in Fraser Lake and the closest one is 40 minutes away in either direction it will be great to have newer upgraded computers. Our patrons can more efficiently access Government websites and be more expeditious when reporting to the Province of British Columbia.

Personal computer use for e-mails, downloading files etcetera will also be more speedy and efficient for our patrons and they will be less frustrated while waiting for old programmes to react.

Actions

We have been saving for computers for sometime now and received donations from patrons and other donors. Once we received this Technology grant we could afford to get new computers and printers.

We put out “RFP” in Vanderhoof, Burns Lake and Fraser Lake. We did not ask computer places in Prince George as it is too far for them to come to set up and service them.

Once a decision was made by our Board ad hoc computer committee we purchased 4 new staff and 4 Public Access Computers for the Fraser Lake Public Library. Also too, as we were having problems with our Printers which were also from 2011 we purchased 2 new printers for staff and 1 for our public access station.

As the computer company is trying to save us money we are not yet set up with Microsoft 365. This is the bug I am referring to as the old system does not allow me to do a lot of written tasks yet. However, once downloaded tasks will be efficient and easier again.

Purchasing new computers will save us money for a few years to come as we will not need to upgrade for a little while.

Collaborative Links

By speaking to local service groups, patrons and others about the importance of having updated computers for our citizens resulted in donations from our local Men’s Shed, a donation from a Prince George company on behalf of 2 Fraser Lake Contractors and more.

Continuing to promote the Library gives us a higher profile within the community as we are now more than just books.

Time Frame

Once we received our Technology Grant – We confirmed that it could be used for the purchase of computer equipment. We looked at other options for

spending this wonderful grant but realized our desperate need for computers was essential and anything else did not make sense.

As I previously stated we put out requests for proposals, a company was chosen and then we ordered and received our new computers. They were set up and we are using them already.

Mid April – Mid September 2020

Project budget

\$14,000.00 - \$15,000.00

Computers, Printers, Software, Anti Virus, Installation, On-going software support

In-Kind/Leveraged Funds

We had planned on using our funding saved and our donations as leverage but did not need to do so once we received the Technology Grant from the Province.

Comments

Once again, thanks millions for this fabulous Technology Grant. If you consider giving another grant in the future we would also put it to good use. We would look at upgrading our internet speed and other technologies that would benefit our staff and patrons as well as look at training for staff and patrons.