

2019 Provincial Literacy Grants Report

Vanderhoof Public Library

Introduction:

Vanderhoof is the geographical centre of BC and has a population of 4,500, but the Vanderhoof Public Library provides services for nearly 10,000 people, including nearby the First Nation community of Sai'kuz.

Vanderhoof relies heavily on the forestry and farming industries, and in the last year has faced challenges in the local economy.

The Vanderhoof Public Library provides a safe, open space for people of all backgrounds, ages and interests. It is a place of community and connection, offering free Wi-Fi, public-use computers, and various programs of interest, in a welcoming atmosphere. We are quickly outgrowing our space as we become an active community hub offering much more than books and digital resources.

We have a new 3-year Strategic Plan for the period of 2020 - 2022. We reached out to the community with a survey to identify perceived gaps within our library and community. The valuable input we received allowed us to look at our services from the public's point of view, helping pinpoint ways to better meet our clients needs and interests.

We continue to be committed to offering meaningful services to each individual in our community.

Library Priority 1:

Improving Access

To meet our Strategic Plan's goal of cultivating an accessible and welcoming environment for patrons:

1. The library offers an in-home service for the elderly, ill and those facing circumstances that make coming to the library difficult. In the last year, we have continued to identify and reach out to members in our community that would benefit from this service. We are now bringing library material to homes on a regular basis.
2. We have added a time-watching program to our public access computers that only allows an hour of usage for each person. This allows many more people to access computers in a day. We have also set up a new "Express computer" with a 15-minute time limit, ensuring timely access for all.
3. We have been working to prevent overdue fines from causing individuals to avoid returning to the library. This year we set up two periods of time each year during which a donation, of any size, to our community's Neighbourlink program (food bank) will

remove all fines from that patron's account. This is appreciated by both patrons and Neighbourlink.

4. We have increased our after-school programming to appeal to children who may not always think of coming to the library. Hosting more fun events has facilitated greater access to a safe and positive space for children to spend time.
5. The library is handicap accessible. It is a one-level building with ample room for maneuvering a chair or walker through the shelves and spinners. One of our patrons, new to a wheelchair, says the library is an easy place for her to get around.

Library Priority 2: Developing Skills

To meet our Strategic Plan's goal of supporting life-long learning and outreach to the public:

1. We offer free online Gale courses to the public that have become increasingly popular.
2. We offer free one-on-one computer help for all patrons.
3. We have held several sessions on how to access our Overdrive and RB Digital online resources, which has increased the number of people accessing them.
4. We offer free tech support for phones and other devices to the best of our abilities.
5. We offer a Summer Reading program to maintain and build reading skills throughout the summer, one of our most popular library programs. We see about 80 children of varying ages each week. There are four programs held each week for 6 weeks during the summer.

Library Priority 3: Collaborating on Shared Goals

To meet our goal of gaining partnerships to enhance literacy within our community:

1. We had a valuable opportunity to collaborate with the local CALP program run out of the College of New Caledonia. We brought in new literacy kits for families through a grant given to us by the CNC. These included several geocaching kits, birdwatching kits, coding kits and ukuleles that can be checked out and enjoyed by everyone. This continues to be very popular.
2. In the past year, we partnered with Kopar to hire a young man with physical and intellectual disabilities, who joins our staff team for 2 hours a week. This has been a very meaningful experience for him and as well as the library.
3. We continue to reach out to homeschooled children and families in our community and have formed various book clubs for them throughout the year. These clubs continue to grow.

4. Our library works alongside the North Central Library Federation to offer joint programming and consortium purchasing.

**Library Priority 4:
Enhancing Governance**

To meet our Strategic Plan's goal of enhancing governance within our library this past year:

1. We had a strategic planning session with the representative of our library federation, during which we learned many valuable tips on making and delivering a plan going forward into the next 3 years.
2. All board members were invited to a TOPS training session.
3. All staff were able to go to a library conference held in Prince George. Each of us left feeling we had gained valuable skills that could be used in our everyday jobs.
4. Our library federation put on a workshop specific to enhancing governance within the Board, with Ken Hycok. The library director and board representative were both in attendance, and brought back helpful information and ideas to the rest of the board.
5. As a new library director, I was able to go to the 2019 BCLA conference. This was very helpful in making connections with other directors, and learning from the many great things that are happening in libraries across our province. I was able to bring home many ideas that we have implemented in the workplace.
6. Monthly library statistics are given to the board for their review.

Libraries in Action- Success stories from BC's Public Libraries:

In 2019, we added a new monthly program that we call "Book Appetit" Cookbook Club. Every month we choose a different cookbook to make available to the public. Once a month, participants each bring one dish from the cookbook to a potluck at the library for a luncheon. This has been a very fun, tasty program and provides a place to connect and meet with others in the community who share similar cooking interests. It has been fascinating to see that we rarely have duplicates of recipes, but rather a well-rounded meal with food for everyone to share and take home. We have received much positive feedback regarding this program, and are considering opening up a dinner potluck as well, so that people who work over the lunch break can also access this opportunity.

Summary:

Libraries store the energy that fuels imagination, they open up windows to the world and inspire us to explore and achieve and contribute to improving our quality of life.

– Sidney Sheldon

2019 has been a great year at the Vanderhoof Public Library. Nearly all of our weekly and monthly programs continue to grow, along with our resource usage. This is a direct illustration of community needs being met with absolutely no cost to the individual.

The library is a place that fosters life-long learning and skill-building. It is a place where all can develop literacy skills and feel connected to something bigger than themselves. This, in turn, contributes to the well-being of our community and a strong, sustainable economy that works for all.

Thank you to the Libraries Branch and the Ministry of Education for your support of our community. Our annual grants play a very important part in providing both traditional and evolving library services. Our library would not be what it is without this support.