



## PROVINCIAL LIBRARY GRANTS REPORT 2019

### Introduction

The Hazelton District Public Library is located on the bank of the Skeena River in historic downtown Old Hazelton. Although the population of the Village of Hazelton is only 300 people, in fact the HDPL provides library service to a great number of communities scattered across our region, from residents of the Kispiox Valley living up to 40 kilometres north of the library, to those in Witset, 40 km to the east, all the way west to Gitwangak and Gitanyow, 75 km away, and all points in between. The region's population is made up mainly of indigenous people of the Gitxsan and Wet'suwet'en nations, with the remainder being made up largely of the descendants of European settlers.

As in most northern communities, stable and fulfilling employment continues to be scarce for many people here. The main sources of employment in the Hazeltons are the service industries (education, health care, some government offices) and resource extraction. Of those who have work, a large number of them work away from home for long stretches, generally in forestry and mining. There is very high unemployment across the region, as well as low high school graduation and adult literacy rates. These issues, combined with the impacts of colonization, are important factors in other difficulties that many families in our area face, such as addictions, food security, a scarcity of affordable and safe housing, lack of transportation and often stressful home lives.

As a small town in an economically depressed area, Hazelton has limited recreational opportunities and few community gathering places. The library, a welcoming place for those of all stripes and where entry and services are free of charge, plays a crucial role in the community. We are a source of education, entertainment, and of stimulation for children and adults alike. HDPL is also a much-needed access point to information and Internet service in a rural place where connectivity is often limited and where many cannot afford a computer at home at all.

In 2019 HDPL planned and presented several public events with focuses on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics), reconciliation and family literacy. Our Board of Trustees is growing and changing as members retire and new members are recruited.

## Discussion and Examples

### *Provincial Strategy #1*

#### *Fostering Equitable Access to Information and Services*

<b>Outreach Services:</b> Provide and promote library services throughout HDPL's catchment area
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HDPL's 2019 outreach activities continued to bring library services and literacy training to as many people as possible in our very spread-out catchment area.

- As in previous years, our Assistant Librarian traveled to Kitwanga, Gitwangak, Gitanyow, Gitsegukla, Anspayaxw, Sik-e-dakh, Hagwilget and Witset to participate in toddler fairs for new parents, for summer reading club training and for club sessions and partnership discussions. She led literacy activities, showcased library materials, signed kids and parents up for library cards, informed families and school staff alike of library services and programs, and generally strived to build a library presence and trust in all communities.
- Connecting with our local credit union and receiving newer computer equipment from their upgrade has enabled the library to upgrade our computer equipment as well. This upgrade has improved the speed and availability of our public internet connection, something that patrons have commented on.
- Replacement of our old photocopier with a new online copier / printer has reduced our printing costs, streamlined our internal business processes and allowed us to offer new services to our patrons such as scanning and emailing of forms direct to government offices. Reducing the cost of copying, faxing and printing in the office has offset the annual increases in costs to offer these services.
- **Partnerships:** Using our community connections and partnerships (see Strategy #3), HDPL has continued to advocate and support literacy education, access to library materials both in the library building and online through our databases and online library services.
- Aligned with **HDPL objectives:** "To provide opportunity and encouragement for children, young people, men and women to educate themselves on a continual basis," and "To seek to identify community needs and to provide programmes of service to meet such needs. To cooperate with other organizations, agencies, and institutions which can provide programmes or services to meet community needs."
- **Outputs & Outcomes:** HDPL outreach provides communications and information awareness in each of our partners, connected community groups and other organizations on a regular basis.

## *Provincial Strategy #2*

### *Developing Skills and Knowledge: enabling inspiration and innovation.*

Many of the 2019 HDPL events encouraged participants to learn new skills and knowledge. Our Summer Reading Clubs in various communities allowed young readers to improve their literacy skills and participate in STEM activities. Science Day and Space Day with our partners at the HR MacMillan Planetarium (and more) added more STEM learning for our young patrons. Spring break was a time for our young patrons to try new ideas and complete exciting STEM / STEAM projects. Our writing workshops and author talks advanced our youth and elder education in the area of the arts.

**STEM / STEAM Workshops:** Encouraging imagination and inventiveness in our communities

HDPL planned and presented several STEM / STEAM events in 2019:

- Science Day and Space Day were both big hits. In celebration of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first Apollo moon landing, kids designed, built and tested a “Lunar Lander”. Although the “occupant” (an egg) did not survive in many cases, the ingenuity shown and the excitement that the participants expressed had them wishing for more events like this!
- Rube Goldberg invented wacky devices to perform ordinary tasks and our children did this too! Thinking through a task, identifying the elements in that task and preparing a device to perform those elements had them drawing, gluing, cutting and testing their inventions for hours longer than the planned event. They even came back the next day to finish up.
- Pi Day had young children making paper chains to represent Pi. The colours of the links (electronic colour code) indicated the numbers in the sequence. The goal was to make a long chain and the winner was well over 50 links long. Circles of all sizes were examined and pies were sampled on this special day.
- Paper circuits were the theme of our Christmas craft (and STEAM) event held in conjunction with the Village of Hazelton “Christmas in Old Hazelton” event. We were overwhelmed by people of all ages wanting to learn about electricity and make electric Christmas cards. It was one of our best attended events for 2019.
- Aligned with **HDPL objectives**, “To provide opportunity and encouragement for children, young people, men and women to educate themselves on a continual basis,” and “To seek to identify community needs and to provide programmes of service to meet such needs.”
- **Outputs & Outcomes:** Attendance in the space and science day events was limited to 30 each time and we were full both days. The Rube Goldberg and Pi day events were attended by 20 families, some bringing more than one child.

### *Provincial Strategy #3*

#### *Working Together: creating lasting and sustainable partnerships.*

In 2019, HDPL added direct connections with the education coordinators in several First Nations villages, sharing our own network of education and literacy contacts as well as events with these communities. We continue to partner with the Gitxsan-Wet'suwet'en Early Majagalee table (GEM table), local Community Economic Development (CED) committee and the Community Health Awareness Committee (CHAC), Storytellers Foundation, Upper Skeena Development Center, Coast Mountain College and many other individuals and organizations.

**Community Connection Expansion:** connecting with education coordinators in various communities

Connecting with the education coordinators in various First Nations villages has expanded HDPL's reach to more rural communities and connected us with other local organizations and businesses.

- Tse-Kya (Hagwilget) and Sik-E-Dakh (Glen Vowel) bands have welcomed us as partners in literacy and STEM education.
- We have now trained five more literacy tutors for Sik-E-Dakh to allow them to offer a children's literacy and high school science tutoring program starting in 2020.
- Tse-kya partnered with the library in 2019 to provide their children and youth STEAM and STEM activities on an ongoing basis.
- Access to the education coordinators and their local contacts continues to improve our Summer Reading Club (SRC) successes. HDPL ran 10 clubs in 2019, an increase over the previous few years. We offered SRC in 9 outlying locations with one club in the library building.
- **Partnerships:** Bulkley Valley Child Development Center (BVCDC is a CHAC member) took the lead in finding funding to replace the Success by Six grants available through the GEM table that ended in 2018. This cancellation of funding jeopardized our literacy outreach program. We are happy to report that the BVCDC were successful in obtaining funding that allowed us to continue our Summer Reading Club literacy outreach to our remote communities in 2019.
- This work reflects **HDPL's goals:** "To provide opportunity and encouragement for children, young people, men and women to educate themselves on a continual basis;" and "To seek to identify community needs and to provide programmes of service to meet such needs. To cooperate with other organizations, agencies, and institutions which can provide programmes or services to meet community needs."
- **Outcomes:** By working with funding available through the BVCDC, HDPL can continue to provide the Summer Reading Club outreach to the communities outside of Hazelton in our catchment area. HDPL also can provide literacy training in more of our remote First Nations villages.

## *Provincial Strategy #4*

### *Enhancing Governance: sustaining our success and demonstrating impact.*

<b>New Trustees from diverse communities:</b> Several new trustees being recruited and trained.
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HDPL's Board of Trustees continues to enhance governance in 2019. Activities included:

- There have been a few retirements from our board of Trustees at HDPL mainly due to personal workload issues. The board has recruited some new members from the Hazelton area and is continuing to actively recruit in the western region of our catchment area. We have created a Trustee recruitment document for our library that we are using to inform any prospective trustees of the tasks involved.
- Training sessions for our new trustees will be scheduled in 2020 as they assume their board responsibilities.
- HDPL's 5-year plan is now in place with a positive response to our regional district funding increase. We are going forward with plans to request funds from additional communities and funding agencies.
- Aligned with several **HDPL goals**: "To seek to identify community needs and to provide programmes of service to meet such needs. To cooperate with other organizations, agencies, and institutions which can provide programmes or services to meet community needs." Also: "To serve the community as a centre of reliable information;" "To provide opportunity and encouragement for children, young people, men and women to educate themselves on a continual basis."
- **Partnerships**: Working with our Regional District, Provincial supporters and local villages continues regularly.
- **Outputs & Outcomes**: A new, refreshed Board of Trustees will enable HDPL to continue the service to our communities.

## Summary

2019 was a time of growth in our connection to our communities. Working with our community partners, we have collectively identified STEM and STEAM as an area of focus to increase knowledge and employability. Starting with the younger members of our community, training and play in STEM and STEAM activities is increasing the knowledge and skills of all participants and their parents in addition to providing an exciting and rewarding introduction to the library as a safe and informative place to be. We are working on more exciting events and projects for 2020!