

PROVINCIAL PUBLIC LIBRARY GRANT REPORT (PLGR)



INTRODUCTION

The Greenwood and District Public Library serves the City of Greenwood and a portion of the Regional District of Kootenay Boundary Area E. The population served is around 945 people.

The library is a welcoming and safe place to come in out of the weather and use the washroom and/or free wifi. Many individuals use the library as a meeting place, and others come to the library as a social outing, to visit with other community members, share ideas, and feel less isolated. Some browse the shelves, read for a bit and use the wifi. Some patrons use the public computers to get up-to-date on their banking or emails. In the winter, the library acts as one of very few indoor places in town open for residents to come to interact with others. In the summer, the library sees more tourists as they pass by on the highway and chose to stop in to pick up new books or browse the shelves while stretching their legs after a long drive.

The Greenwood and District Public Library provides access to computers, printing, copying, scanning and fax services as well as free wifi. We have outlets for charging devices and sitting areas for people with laptops or tablets. Many people use the library for school or work, to check emails, or even to watch a movie. As office services in the West Boundary such as copying, faxing, scanning and printing are very limited, the library plays a key role in providing these services. Students use the library as a quiet place to complete school work when home is too distracting or they need take a test. The library staff act as exam supervisors when needed.

With a collection of award-winning books, new releases, classics, large print books, magazines, and local papers, there are plenty of print materials to choose from. In addition, the library has a collection of audiobooks and DVDs to lend out. The library collection includes a variety of online databases, e-books, e-audiobooks, online magazines, and independent films available via our website.

The community of Greenwood and area consists mainly of retirees, working adults, and families with children. There is a high unemployment and poverty rate in Greenwood. Many community members are on income assistance or disability pensions. Although there is no major industry in Greenwood, some residents work in the forestry industry in neighboring communities or at our local ski hill. Others are involved with tourism, retail businesses, ranching, farming, mining, service industries, and municipal government. A large proportion of community members are self-employed. Many community members have chosen to live in the Greenwood area due to the lower cost of housing.

The main challenge faced by the community is the lack of a large tax base. The City of Greenwood is very limited in the support it can provide to our library as well as other community agencies; as such, it has been challenging for the library to expand programs and services with limited financial support and rising costs. Library board members and volunteers continue to work hard to raise funds and in 2019 raised approximately 16 % of the overall budget, which is 12-14% higher than most other public

libraries' fundraising. This is a significant and invaluable amount of money raised, and due to financial constraints it has been necessary to use these funds for daily operations, which included training hours in 2018 and 2019. The goal of the library is to obtain increased and sustainable funding that will cover operation costs so that fundraising monies may augment the budget instead of being a part of core funding for the library.

The biggest challenge in 2019 was in staffing, as the Library Director resigned and a new Director had to be hired. This process put stress on the Library Assistant, Board, and volunteers to cover Library Director responsibilities until the new Library Director was in place in October 2019. The staffing change also created increased financial challenge as training of new staff and paid staff overlap was necessary during the transition.

In 2019, the Greenwood and District Public Library created a new strategic plan covering 2019-2023. The central vision of the Strategic Plan is for the Library to become a community hub for culture, learning, and social connection. The Strategic Plan has four goals. Goal One focusses on increasing services in order to engage and support community members. Goal Two focusses on strategies to create community connections: developing strong relationships with other community organizations, local government, and the local business community. Goal Three concerns sustainability, meaning advocating for more secure core (operational) funding. Goal Four addresses making the existing facility more accessible and functional.

Since approving the Strategic Plan in July 2019 the Library has taken many steps to reach the Library's vision and goals.

For Goal One (Community Services), a survey was completed in fall 2019 asking patrons for feedback about current programs and input on what kinds of programs they would like the library to offer. In addition, patrons are being asked which books and other resources they wish to see in the library. The Library has increased its advertising of library services over a wider geographical region and online through Facebook and the library website. Partnerships with other agencies to help in getting the word out about library services has increased program participation. Additionally, in 2019 the Library responded to community request for meeting space for a homeschooling group once per month and started a Lego group.

For Goal Two (Community Connection), the Library has welcomed the local elementary school for an orientation to library services. We collaborate with local schools and other local libraries to run the annual Reading Link Challenge, a program that encourages literacy through a reading competition for grade 4/5 children. Local small business owners often access the Library's office services for printing, copying and scanning documents.

For Goal Three (Sustainability), the Library staff, board and volunteers have been working hard to explore additional funding options to create more secure core funding. This work has included talking with local municipal and regional governments explaining current Library needs. Fundraising has continued with successful completion of the annual Christmas Market in December, call of donations from the public (Bakeless Bakesale), and ongoing book sales. New fundraising ventures included volunteers working the admission gates at the local Rock Creek Fair in exchange for a stipend. Applications for additional grant funding are in progress and further options are being explored.

For Goal Four (making the existing facility more accessible and functional), the Library has partially met this goal. We have collaborated with the Legion (with whom we share the street-level floor of our facility) to share the kitchen and bathroom spaces, which allows for an expansion of programs for both the Legion and the Library and ease of use. Library office and storage spaces are being reorganized to allow for more functional office space for Library staff and Treasurer to work. The Library collection is in the process of being re-organized to display as many items as possible for patrons to view. We are creating step-by-step guides to use of online resources to increase the access to online databases and resources. We are exploring grant possibilities to support new shelving as well as accessibility to bathroom and entrance.

Overall circulation at the Greenwood and District Public Library has increased in the past year. Overall circulation has increased by 25 % including an increase circulation of children's materials, adult materials, items borrowed and loans to other libraries through ILC and BC One Card usage. Internet usage at the Library has increased by 45 % with many patrons using their own devices in the library. The number of patrons accessing online services over the past year has decreased, which we hope to address by educating staff, volunteers and patrons on how access these services.

PROVINCIAL PRIORITIES

PRIORITY 1 - IMPROVING ACCESS

Our Goal – To engage and support community members by becoming a community hub for culture, learning, and social connection.

The library undertook many several activities to support this goal:

- Provided one-on-one instruction to patrons on how to access materials and use Library resources.
- Promoted new materials through the Library website, Facebook, paper posters around community, as well as on local radio and local newspapers.
- Completed a survey of current library patrons to determine what kinds of additional programs were of interest to patrons.
- The number of items borrowed by patrons from other libraries has dramatically increased through the staff/volunteer one-on-one help in ordering materials.
- A Knitting and Crocheting Club was started to provide a community meeting place.

The outcome of these activities is that our patrons are accessing a wider array of services. We are offering more programs, which has increased the number of community members coming into the library. Patron survey feedback indicated that a Lego Club and separate Games night would be welcomed. A Lego Club for children was started in 2019 and ran for two separate sessions. Games night is planned to start in early 2020. The Knitting and Crocheting Club meets weekly and is open to a wide range of ages and abilities. It has a regular group who attend and use the time to socialize, learn new skills, and check out new books at the same time.

The Library has continued to maintain a Facebook page and update the website regularly to inform community members of services and programs offered. In addition, some events have been advertised by radio and local newspaper and we plan to continue expanding advertising of the Library to reach

more people. A presence at many local events such as Founder's Day, the Rock Creek Fall Fair, and local craft markets provides further visibility.

We hope to obtain funding to follow through on the recommendations of the Rick Hansen Foundation accessibility report, completed in 2018, to upgrade the bathroom and entrance to be accessible to everyone.

PRIORITY 2 - DEVELOPING SKILLS

Our Goal – To enhance overall skills of community members through programs to increase the Library's role in the community as a place for information- and skill-sharing.

- Ongoing staff, volunteer, and board information sharing and training when available.
- We provide daily support to patrons in the use of computers and technology.
- We provide a quiet environment to support learning and education.
- We provided a Storytime Program for preschoolers and their families to encourage early literacy.
- School-aged children accessed the Lego and STEAM programs to develop their problem-solving, fine motor, and social skills. These programs ran for 29 weeks.
- We offered the Summer Reading Club to school-aged children facilitated by a local secondary school student.

The Greenwood and District Public Library is run by two part-time staff, around a dozen volunteers, and up to nine board trustees. Training of staff and volunteers as well as updating procedures and policies is an ongoing priority. In 2019, a new Library Director was hired and extensive training overlap was provided to ensure a smooth transition. Regular contact with staff and volunteers, along with monthly board meetings, helps keep everyone up to date. The Library Director passes on all information about training opportunities to Board Members, staff, and interested volunteers. In 2020, the hope is to have some focussed training of volunteers to update skills. We continue to look for ways to develop our staff and volunteers skills through webinars, online courses, and workshops.

Staff and volunteers support patrons using technology and staff/volunteers answer questions on a daily basis and help with a wide variety of computer tasks such as accessing email, finding government forms online, and printing business labels for small businesses. As high-speed internet is limited in the community, the library provides a key service by offering this capability. Some patrons access the high-speed internet and library support to complete their distance education requirements; students also come to the library for a quiet place to work, watch school-related webinars, or have an exam invigilated.

The preschool Storytime program ran for 18 weeks throughout the year. This program focusses on early literacy as the children listen to the Library Director read picture books, participate in creating felt stories, sing songs, and make crafts. A regular group of parents and children attended this program, often borrowing multiple library materials at the end of each session.

The Summer Reading Club had 21 participants in 2019 and was facilitated by a local secondary student who was able to increase her skills in group facilitation and gain work experience in the library setting. School-aged children accessed the Lego and STEAM programs to develop their problem-solving, fine motor, and social skills. The STEAM and Lego programs ran for 29 weeks. The increased number of

programs and services in 2019 helped to bring a wider variety of patrons to the library. We hope to continue to develop our programs and services to provide community members as well as staff, volunteers, and board members with multiple opportunities to develop skills.

PRIORITY 3 - COLLABORATING ON SHARED GOALS

Our Goal – To develop strong relationships with other community organizations, local government, and the local business community.

- Ongoing partnerships with local schools to increase literacy for children and gain exposure for the library.
- Ongoing outreach to local agencies by Library Director and Board to inform community members about services offered at the library and discuss possible partnerships.

For the tenth consecutive year, the Greenwood and District Public Library partnered with Midway Public Library, Fraser Valley Regional Library, the Kootenay Library Federation (KLF), and local schools including, Greenwood Elementary School, Midway Elementary and Hutton Elementary to put on the Reading Link Challenge. Grade 4/5 students each read six books, formed teams, and then competed for prizes, based on their knowledge of the books. This program, as well as a class visit in fall 2019, provided elementary students with exposure to library services while maintaining partnerships with community agencies. In 2019, 71 children and 17 adults attended the Reading Link Challenge events.

We partnered with the Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy (CBAL) to provide one of the Lego Club sessions in 2019. In addition, there is an ongoing partnership with the Kootenay Library Federation (KLF) that supports programs and trainings. In 2019, the KLF supported the preschool Storytime programs and STEAM programs by sharing resources and supplies.

The Library Director and board members continue to reach out to local agencies to ensure that community needs are being met and gaps in services addressed. This outreach takes place through attendance in local area meetings such as the Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy (CBAL) meetings and regular contact with overlapping services such as CAPC, Family Connections, and Childcare Resource and Referral. The Board chair is in regular contact with the City of Greenwood and the local Regional District of Kootenay Boundary director representative. The plan for 2020 is to inform local government about services offered at the library and challenges with maintaining services and to discuss possible partnerships.

PRIORITY 4 - ENHANCING GOVERNANCE

Our Goal – To fulfill the goals of the new Strategic Plan and explore options for addressing funding shortfalls.

- A new Strategic Plan was created and approved in 2019; it will guide the Library's activities through 2023.
- We have begun to explore options to support long-term financial stability for the Library.

The Library staff, board and volunteers began to reach out to community agencies and discuss the need for additional funding to support library operations. In 2019, we reviewed our financial procedures and worked with our book-keeper/Treasurer to make several changes to protect against any possibility of fraud. The Board chair continues to educate herself about Board procedures and responsibilities and to educate the rest of the Board in turn.

SUMMARY

The Greenwood and District Public Library has had another year of significant changes. These included the resignation of a new Library Director, and the hiring of her replacement, which increased staff, volunteer, and Board stress in managing the library. The Greenwood Library is fortunate to have a group of very committed volunteers, Board members and the Assistant Librarian who were able to get through this period without a reduction in daily services offered. Programs and services offered to patrons and community members greatly increased in 2019, with the implementation of the Knitting Club, Scrabble Club, and Word Nerd Night in addition to ongoing regular programming. Circulation of materials has increased, both to Greenwood patrons and to other libraries. Throughout 2019, we began to plan a reconfiguration of the Library's physical space to improve staff work areas and to update equipment. We purchased a new printer and hope to buy new computers and a backup printer in 2020 to support staff to work more efficiently. We are looking forward to continuing to build partnerships with other community agencies to gain more financial stability. Our primary goal is to be able to expand our role as a community hub that is a safe, welcoming place.