

# Burns Lake Public Library

## 2018 Provincial Library Grants Report



### INTRODUCTION

Burns Lake Public Library has been serving the Lakes District community since 1944. Burns Lake is located in the heart of Northern British Columbia on Highway 16 midway between Prince George and Smithers. The Village has a diverse population of around 2,800 residents and Electoral Area 'B' & 'E' within the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako, around 8,000 including the six First Nation communities: Lake Babine Nation, Office of the Wet'suwet'en First Nation, Ts'il Kaz Koh First Nation (Burns Lake Band), Skin Tye Nation, Nee Tahi Buhn Band and Cheslatta Carrier Nation, which is about 34.4% of the population of the area.

Burns Lake is a rural village that serves as a hub for the local logging, saw-milling and tourist industries. The hospital, School District No.91, Regional District office as well as the College of New Caledonia offers professional employment for many residents.

The average family income is 20% less than that of most British Columbians, with 26.6% of the population of Burns Lake considered low income. The Lakes District Food Bank serves between 90 and 110 families each week. With the depleting wood supplies, the damage done by pine beetle, and devastating forest fires last summer, we are looking at decreasing employment. Statistics Canada's 2016 census revealed that the population of Burns Lake has become older in the past few years. The unemployment rate is 4.3% higher than the rest of British Columbia.

Being aware of the needs of our residents is important to deliver relevant services and programs.

Our **VISION** is "to keep the Burns Lake Public Library an active and integral part of our community".

Our **MISSION STATEMENT** is "to provide a safe and inclusive environment, knowledgeable and helpful staff, and sufficient resources to provide learning and growth opportunities for all members of the communities we serve".

2018 was the first year of our new 2018-2020 Strategic Plan

### **1) Increase promotion of Burns Lake Public Library**

We increased the use of Social & Digital Media like Facebook to market library services and programs. Weekly updates on our events and additions to the library collection, gain us greater interest among our community.

### **2) Use programs and services to reach more citizens**

After school Book Club has been successful for quite some years. We decided to reach out to different age groups and facilitate youth and senior book clubs. Due to our significant staff changes in September this is still in early stages.

### **3) Collaborate with other organizations to create a connected community**

Burns Lake Public Library has also partnered with many community organizations including:

Lakes District Family Enhancement Society

Burns Lake Senior Society

Lakes Animal Friendship Society

Lakes District Museum

Lakes District Arts Council

We continue to collaborate with Lakes District Arts Council, Lakes District Secondary School, and the College of New Caledonia

### **4) Manage available resources and space for the best use by patrons**

The Youth Room in our library is strictly dedicated to our young visitors where they can read in a comfortable environment or conduct research for their school project or just use the available technology.

The puzzle corner has a great number of puzzles for all ages where the patrons can exchange them was very popular especially in the long winter months.



**5) Ensure library staff have the knowledge, skills, and abilities to meet the evolving needs of our communities.**

This will be our greatest focus in 2019. In September 2018 our library underwent significant changes in staffing. Many of us are new to the responsibilities and day to day operation of the library.

As we are getting familiar with our patrons and their needs, we wish to continue to offer top drawer service. Continued development of our knowledge and skills is a priority.

## GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES, GOALS, PROGRAMS AND SERVICES, PARTNERSHIPS

### Government Priority # 1

#### FOSTERING CONNECTED COMMUNITIES

Burns Lake Public Library is serving the Village of Burns Lake and its rural surroundings. Many of our rural residents have limited internet access and our library serves them as a center where they can connect, learn or conduct research. Currently our collection includes: printed resource materials, audio books, reference information, magazines, music CD's, DVD's of movies and television series, large print books and interlibrary loans. We also subscribe to several online services.

Many of Burns Lake's residents use the library for their communication. The summer of 2018 demonstrated how important the public access to internet truly is. The beginning of summer and hot, dry weather conditions brought the worst fire season ever recorded in this region. Hundreds of the rural residents were evacuated from their homes. The village of Burns Lake provided accommodation for many and the library became a center where the evacuees could get updates on the wild fire status and connect with their families.

We had difficulties accommodating all of the residents in the building. The Library truly was a hub of activity for this displaced community. Community members were meeting together to exchange the news about their neighbours, pay their bills online or just spend some time reading. We felt like the whole community came closer together in these difficult times. The biggest challenge was our outdated computer equipment which was malfunctioning daily.

The library is open six days a week and has extended hours for three of these days. Outreach programs are very important and include service to senior's homes and weekly preschool visits. Thanks to our partnership with Lakes Literacy we continue to deliver remote services to the Southside of



Francois Lake. The WOW (Words on Wheels) Bus is filling requests for books, DVD's, CD's, audio books and other library resources, bringing all of it across the lake. Patrons from this remote area are able to meet the bus and collect their items or drop off the materials to be delivered back to us.

## Government Priority #2 BUILDING CAPACITY

### FamCon

The Burns Lake Public Library celebrated Family Literacy Day with the second annual FamCon event, a mini comic con. The highlights of the FamCon were Cornish Pixie scavenger hunt and a LEGO free build. As in the previous years, all the crafts and activities were free and included button making, themed crafts and superhero costume making. Because the event was scheduled for a Thursday, there were some challenges setting up around normal daily routines and library use.

## Story Time

Regular programming and story time were affected by the heavy snowfall in early February, where there was a two-day school closure. After that, programming for Woyenne Kindergarten, Grade 1 & 2 and Grade 2 & 3, Community Story Time and outreach to Strong Start and Ashust Children's Centre resumed.

In 2018 the library did not receive funding for a summer student, as a result we didn't have a Summer Reading Club Coordinator. The Children's Librarian visited the schools in our district, William Konkin Elementary, Decker Lake Elementary, Francois Lake Elementary and Grassy Plains Elementary. She also spent time at the Kindergarten Circus at the Southside Wellness Center. Summer was very busy with the highest ever number of registrants and equally high attendance. One afternoon session we recorded the attendance of 33 children.

## Christmas Craft Fair

November 17, 2018 we held our 36<sup>th</sup> Annual Christmas Craft Fair Fundraiser. We changed the date for a week earlier so more of our residents could attend the event.

That was a good decision for our community. Even though some of the vendors had to cancel, because they were attending other craft fairs in different communities, we still had an excellent turnout. The best way to ensuring a quality fair is to keep it exactly as we promote it- handcrafted. This year we had 40 different vendors presenting their handcrafted items. We had a family friendly area with crayons and colouring pictures where parents could leave their children and have the time to hunt for Christmas gifts.



The senior friendly corner with tables and chairs between the Christmas trees offered a place to have a coffee or tea with a little snack. Santa Pictures were very popular for families with little children. We decided to add a space for a used book sale from our weeded and donated materials. The whole event was accompanied by wonderful live Christmas music, donated by our local Tweedsmuir Fiddlers. The atmosphere of the fair was festive while people visited with friends and families. In 2018, we had over 300 people attend and raised \$2,635.45. This is one of the biggest events in our community after the Fall Fair, and Burns Lake Public Library is proud to continue organizing.



Burns Lake Vendors with their wonderful products

### Government Priority #3

## WORKING TOGETHER

An important goal from our Strategic Plan is to: actively seek out partnerships and conventional and innovative funding opportunities that will increase its resources to meet the evolving needs of the communities we serve.

In 2018 we started to work closely with the Lakes District Family Enhancement Society. After meeting with the Lakes District Food Bank (LDFB) and Community Kitchen Garden (CKG), we identified an opportunity to provide more accessible service to our most at-risk residents. We were able to set up a small library at LDFB and CKG (working under the umbrella of Lakes District Enhancement Society). The library contains books for all ages, magazines and DVD's. Also, we decided to cancel some of our late fines and give our patrons the choice to pay them in non-perishable foods which are delivered regularly to the local Food Bank. November was our fines-free month. All patrons with late fees were able to start with a clear account after bringing non-perishable foods to the library. As this proved to be a success, we would like to continue with this partnership in 2019.

December 2018 our library staff started to work closely with Lake Babine Nation on building their own school library. Lake Babine Nation School is located in a remote area. For the last few years we have hosted afternoons for this school in our building but the weather condition do not always allow the students regular access. The list of aboriginal literacy resources, Kindergarten through Grade 7, was prepared together with Truth and Reconciliation resource list. Ordered materials should arrive in the beginning of 2019. To enable the school make the best use of their finances and provide long-lasting

materials, the library staff will work on laminating all the books before they reach the school shelves.

The College of New Caledonia is another of our yearlong partners. We offer their students a quiet space to work along with literacy and numeracy resources to facilitate Power of Words programming sponsored by Community Adult Literacy Program (CALP). We conducted a “meet and greet” session where the volunteer tutors were able to meet with the future students. The program gives an opportunity for struggling adults to work one-on-one on their reading, comprehension and numeracy skills.

Burns Lake Public Library is constantly looking to identify opportunities to partner with other organizations. That keeps the library in front of mind in community and among a circle of influential movers and shakers in our community. Together we are better.

#### Government Priority #4 SUSTAINING OUR SUCCESS

The best way to sustain the library’s success is to have well-trained staff and board members that have the skills, knowledge and creativity to continue to grow the library as a meaningful cornerstone in our community. In September 2018 our new staff and all the board members attend a professional development session with Michael Shoop from The Shoop Group Consulting Ltd. They specialize in Development Coaching and their goal is to help acquire the capacity to continually generate insights into the performance, motivation, behaviour and responses so that the group, in this case our staff and board, can take control of their own growth and development. We worked together on identifying and acknowledging current challenges, existing strengths, our long term aspirations and skills we wish to develop. It was a very fruitful session to all the participants.

Our Strategic Plan has provided the trustees, staff, and the patrons with vision, goals and objectives that will ensure continued success for the Burns Lake Public Library. Library staff continue to seek out funding opportunities that enable us to deliver unique, innovative programs to meet the needs of our communities, with a particular focus on Indigenous populations, youth, and seniors.

## SUMMARY

2018 saw many changes in the Burns Lake Public Library. Thanks to the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako, who helped with the installation of Fibre, we are happy to offer our patrons a high-speed internet connection. The next step will be to seek funding to exchange our outdated tech equipment. Our patrons' computers are so overburdened that we often cannot run intensive programming (like GALA Courses) with patrons. With a static budget where there is no allotment for a Tech support position who can mentor staff and keep up with the broken equipment, we are offering less and less computer service/space in a time when it is becoming increasingly important to our patrons and community.

Staff computers are not in much better condition. All three small printers for return slips quit working a while ago and we have to use the Xerox to print them which is not very cost effective.

We were challenged this year by significant staff turnover and shortages, higher workloads and a tightening budget. There is not much room in the budget for professional development for staff and board members. The changes in staffing call for more training to be provided so we can satisfy the evolving needs of our community.

We are getting busier, particularly with interlibrary loans and increased foot traffic. To keep innovating and offering the great services and programming for our community, we need to continually find ways to streamline our behind the scenes work and/or find more funding for extra staff hours.

## LOOKING FORWARD

Over the next year, the Library Board and staff will build upon the work done in 2018.

- Support staff in training and learning opportunities
- Explore programs that can integrate different demographics working together
- Develop education sessions for different age groups in collaboration with other community organizations
- Conduct an in-depth policy review



We are thankful for the generous support we've received from the Regional District of Bulkley Nechako, the province of British Columbia, the Village of Burns Lake, granting organizations, local businesses, and, of course, our wonderful library patrons. We couldn't exist without your support.

## Burns Lake Public Library Team



*This report was reviewed and ratified by the members  
Of Burns Lake Public Library Board at their regular  
Meeting held on Tuesday, February 19, 2019*

*Respectfully Submitted,  
Monika Willner, Library Director*