Introduction

The Castlegar and District Public Library is located in the city of Castlegar in the West Kootenay region of British Columbia. From its humble beginnings in the 1940s in the basement of the United Church, to the current building that expanded in 2000, the Library is supported and appreciated by the community it serves. Our Library often receives compliments for being an open, welcoming place where friendly staff and volunteers are ready to assist patrons with their requests and where citizens and visitors can meet to socialize and learn. We boast busy meeting rooms that host a number of community organizations as well as our own programs. We are happy to offer extensive outreach in the community, and continuously work towards being “your place in the community to explore, create, and share information and ideas.”

The Library serves a wide geographic area including the City of Castlegar, Areas I, and J of the Regional District of Central Kootenay (RDCK), with a service area population of nearly 14,000. Through a service agreement with the Nelson Library, we also serve residents of Area H South of the RDCK.

The major employers in the area include Selkirk College, Zelstoff Celgar, and School District 20. The major regional employer, Teck Resources, is located 30 kilometers from Castlegar.

For this reporting period, the Library was operating within the final year of its 2016-2018 strategic plan within which our major priorities were Funding, Human Resource Management, Technology, Facilities and Space Management, Collections and Services, and Communications and Marketing.

In the final month of 2018, the Library prepared an Expression of Interest for a Columbia Basin Trust Community Technology Grant. With the Expression of Interest now accepted, the Library moves forward with an application to create a technology enabled community space that promises to be an asset to our residents and create many learning opportunities for all ages.

Priority 1: Fostering Connected Communities: advancing access to information and resources.

Our 2016/2018 Strategic Plan outlines our desire to provide service based on:

✓ Service to community
✓ Universal access
✓ Lifelong learning
✓ Needs of individuals and families
✓ Patron fulfillment
✓ Promote home-bound delivery service more actively
✓ Work with senior serving agencies to enhance services to seniors
Describe one or two programs connected

**Nidus Personal Planning Month**

For a second year, our Library was a host site for the NIDUS Personal Planning series to highlight October as Personal Planning Month. In 2018, we opted to run the evening sessions to accommodate individuals who work. With the use of the Library’s Wi-Fi, laptop, projector, and screen, we were able to connect people with free live webinars from Vancouver to raise awareness around will and estate planning, representation agreements, joint ownership, consent to health care, and other planning for end of life matters. The live webinar format gave attendees the opportunity to ask the facilitator questions, which was very useful due to the complex nature of the material and discussions.

**Librarian Outreach**

Our Library offers outreach services to a wide range of folks within our community. Our Outreach Librarians visit 2 senior centres, 2 Strong Start programs, 2 public schools, 1 day care, 1 pre-school, 1 Family Service Centre, and homebound individuals. Librarians added a second elementary school to the roster in 2018.

During visits to senior centres and homebound individuals, the librarian takes personalized materials and spends some time connecting socially. These visits alleviate loneliness, promotes equal access to the Library, and helps seniors and other homebound people feel connected to their community.

Outreach to pre-schools, schools, family centres, and daycares introduces children and parents to the Library who otherwise may not enter our doors. Our librarian promotes the importance of early literacy to attending parents, and creates excitement among the children with her traveling box of books.

I believe that each of these programs “advances access to information and resources” one with technology and one through human connection outside of the Library.

**Name partnerships and support – who contributed what – who are they**

**Nidus Personal Planning Month**

We partnered with the Senior Citizen’s Association of BC Branch #46 President Bev Kennedy for the Nidus Personal Planning month series. She advertised the sessions to her membership and within her centre, and the Library advertised in its newsletter, and the Castlegar Community Events calendar. The Library provided the technology and the space and Bev provided her own expertise on the subject attending each of the events.
Librarian Outreach

The Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy (CBAL) supports our Library outreach programs with Raise-a-Reader and Forest Legacy grants. These funds go towards programing materials, travel costs and Librarian wages and help support early learning programs in our community. The Library provides the outreach librarian, books and expertise.

What was the outcome?

Nidus Personal Planning Month

The Library offered 4 sessions in total with 26 people attending. Those who participated commented on the quality of information provided by Nidus and liked that the webinars were live. Bev Kennedy, President of our local senior centre, is quite knowledgeable on the topic and was able to offer clarification when questions arose. People went away feeling they learned something valuable, and knew that they could find trusted information and forms for planning on the Nidus website.

Librarian Outreach

Seniors

Our Outreach Librarian Reports:

I often hear the seniors at Castlewood, especially, vocalize how thankful they are for outreach services in the winter months. With the icy sidewalks, snow, and cold they tell me how grateful they are that they don’t have to come out to get books.

I also frequently hear how they are amazed at our collection and how happy they are to have the books ‘weeded’ through for them. It makes selection easier, and they are often surprised at what we have to offer.

It isn’t something that I ‘hear’, per say, but something that I have seen. Every time that I come, there is always a little group of them waiting. They are chatting about everything from their past to the weather. After they have selected their books, a few of them stick around and chat throughout the rest of the hour that I am there. I have heard some amazing stories, and have formed some great friendships and bonds with these seniors through the library outreach program. It is sweet to see how they have also formed bonds and friendships with each other, through this program.

Kids Outreach

It is great to see parents at outreach that have come to other programs, such as library programs and ESL Family Time. I love being able to re-connect with these parents and develop
long lasting relationships with them and their children through literacy. I read about five or six books – the kids were very determined to get through the whole stack I had brought.

A few of my favourite things that have happened this past outreach period have been:

1) A little girl at Silly Monkeys Childcare just wanting to give me a hug and a kiss for coming.

2) A preschooler at Blueberry, who had come into the library with her mom, and telling me: ‘I’m so happy you come to my pre-school. I have so much fun.’

They don’t often tell me how they feel, but the above show how it doesn’t have to be something big that they are telling me – but the small things that really get to you.

Outreach at Elementary Schools

Librarian Reports

One of the kids at Kinnaird told me that she was having a good day because I came and read stories. The kids in Samantha Rigby’s ½ split class in Robson always cheer when I come in. Some of my story hour moms say Story Time day is the only day their kids jump out of bed and hurry to get ready to go.

Priority 2: Building Capacity: enabling inspiration and innovation

Our 2016/2018 Strategic Plan outlines our desire to provide service based on:

✓ Patron fulfillment
✓ Creativity and vision
✓ Lifelong Learning
✓ Create a technology lab plan

Describe one or two programs connected

Your Art (or Collection) in the Library

The people in our community have tremendous talent and creativity and a desire to share that talent with others. With wall space, and a large locked glass cabinet, the Library actively seeks artists and crafters to display and share their work in the Library. In addition to “Your Art in the Library,” we also display work from the Kootenay Camera Club, and are a venue for artists during the community’s annual “Art Walk.” In 2018, we included “Collections” in our glass cabinet and were able to display an amazing entomology collection from a local collector.

There are many benefits to this program for both artist and patron. Our local Art Gallery is located outside of the main community and can be difficult to reach for those without transportation. Others
may feel intimidated by browsing in a gallery and may never enter. Having art in our building exposes patrons of all ages to various forms of art and inspires creativity. Artists appreciate the chance to make some money from their craft, and the opportunity to share their work more widely in the community.

STEAM Integration within Children and Youth Programs

In 2018, the Kootenay Library Federation distributed further funds to help member libraries build up STEAM related equipment. This fund top up allowed us to purchase 2 Amazon Fire tablets, an Acer Chromebook, a launcher kit and creativity pack for our Dash and Dot robots, and STEAM building blocks. Our Children and Youth Librarian tried some new STEAM programing ideas this year including Tinker Time for 3-5 year olds, Full STEAM Ahead for 6-10 year olds and Double Digits for youth 10 years and older. These activities allow children and youth to experiment with a variety of different technologies, computer coding, science concepts, construction activities, mathematics and different mediums of art. In 2018, the Librarian tried to reach more kids and keep waitlists to a minimum by running a series of shorter sessions with new kids in each.

Name partnerships and support – who contributed what – who are they

Your Art in the Library

In 2018, our Library increased its artist showings and added “interesting collections” to the mix. We partnered with 9 local artists who each showed their work (or collection) for a two month period. The West Kootenay Camera Club rotates member photographs every two months offering a variety of images from local photographers. The Library participates in Art Walk each year from late June to mid-September. Art Walk is organized by the Castlegar Arts Council and matches businesses with artists.

The Library has a track system along our walls equipped with adjustable nylon hooks for hanging art. We also have a locked glass cabinet for art that best fits that space. The Library offers staff time to retrieve items that people wish to buy, and receives a 20% commission on all sales.

STEAM Integration within Children and Youth Programs

The Kootenay Library Federation (KLF) is our STEAM purchasing partner. This year the KLF contributed $573.80 to our Library and provided a list of suggested items for purchase. Our children and youth librarian researched and ordered items, and takes the time to learn how each of them works. In 2018, she developed new programing ideas around the equipment as mentioned above.
What was the outcome?

Your Art in the Library

In 2018, we were able to display some beautiful acrylic landscapes, Chinese paper cutting, watercolours, photography, gorgeous pastels, handmade jewelry, rock paintings, miniature creations for dollhouses, and beadwork. The entomology display was of particular interest fascinating many people of all ages and sparked connections between the collector and interested community members. When the display went home in January, children continued to ask me where the bugs were.

Many of our artists have never shared their work in public, so it was exciting to give them the opportunity and share in their excitement. This year we featured our first teen artist and the Friends of the Library are considering an Art Auction Fundraiser tapping into budding artists in our community.

STEAM Integration within Children and Youth Programs

Our young participants are fascinated with the activities offered to them. Children flock to the Library’s STEAM programs. They especially love Dash & Dot and Sphero. In 2018, they made goo, observed and drew nature, built things with construction blocks, learned basic coding, etc. The Librarian who runs these programs is encouraged by the friendships that form during the programs with girls and boys exploring things together.


Our 2016/2018 Strategic Plan outlines our desire to provide service based on:

- Service to community
- Community Partnerships: Continue to build and nurture strong relationships with key community partners

Describe one or two programs connected

The Library worked with many community partners in 2018 sustaining previous friendships and making new connections. Our partnerships included the Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy, Senior Citizens Associate of BC Castlegar Branch, Community Harvest Food Bank, Castlegar Artwalk, Donna Schmidt Lung Cancer Prevention Society, and the Celgar “Be Seen...for Safety” Campaign.

Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy

Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy (CBAL) is a valued partner of our Library. In 2018, we offered three Parent Child Mother Goose Sessions together and each contributed funds to purchase Books for BC Babies. Books for BC Babies are distributed through Interior Health to families with new babies. The Library offers free meeting space for all CBAL programing including Adult ESL classes where adults
improve their reading, writing and conversation skills, the Community Learning Place offering one-on-one help with technology, and the Scrabble Club, which combines language and spelling skills with fun.

Senior Citizens Associate of BC Castlegar Branch

In Priority 1, I outlined our relationship with the Senior Citizens Association of BC.

Community Harvest Food Bank

In November, the Library started a “Food for Fines” and “Giving Tree” campaign to collect food, personal hygiene items, hats, mitts, scarves and socks to be distributed to low income individuals before Christmas. This year we filled the back of a pick-up truck with food, and decorated two Christmas trees with warm things. The Community Harvest Food Bank has a collection weekend at one of the local hotels. Organizations and businesses drop items off and then everything is packaged into a Christmas Hamper. It was very rewarding for the Library to contribute to the community in this way.

Donna Schmidt Lung Cancer Prevention Society

The Library met with Dana Schmidt of the Donna Schmidt Lung Cancer Prevention Society (DSLCPS) to discuss loaning Radon Detectors through the Library. Created by Dana, after the death of Donna, the society purchases and distributes radon detectors to help homeowners detect high levels of radon within their home. The DSLCPS donated 10 electronic radon detectors for loan and the program quickly took off with upwards of 75 holds on a waitlist. We soon added an additional 10 devices and shortened the loan period to keep up with demand.

Zellstoff Celgar “Be Seen” Campaign

Each year our local pulp mill, Zellstoff Celgar, runs a “Be Seen…for Safety” campaign to raise awareness around pedestrian safety. The Library, along with our local recreation complex, acts as distribution points for reflective light up armbands. This year the Library gave out 5,000 armbands between Halloween and Christmas. Residents who are “caught” wearing the armbands by Celgar employees are given a ticket for a prize that can be picked up at the Library.

Name partnerships and support – who contributed what – who are they

Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy (CBAL)

Books for BC Babies

This year Castlegar was the distribution point for the Kootenay Library Federation. The Library purchased 50 Books to top up the supply in our community. CBAL picked the books up and prepared the bags to be distributed through Interior Health.

Adult ESL
CBAL runs two weekly Adult ESL classes at the Library. The Library provides the meeting space free of charge as well as tables and chairs. We also store CBAL’s whiteboard and flipchart. The Library holds story time for preschoolers at the same time so participants with small children can attend Adult ESL and not worry about childcare.

**Community Learning Place**

CBAL runs this weekly drop-in program for those who need help with technology. People bring in their phones, iPads, tablets, etc. and learn how to use them, or use them more effectively. The Library provides our meeting space free of charge and computers when needed.

**Parent Child Mother Goose**

The Library and CBAL each contribute one staff member to the Parent Child Mother Goose program. In 2018 there was funding for three 8-week sessions.

**Castlegar Food Bank**

The Library forfeited $2 worth of fines for every 1-food or personal hygiene item collected from November 1st to December 13th. We also put up two “Giving Trees” in December for the collection of warm items and advertised for both programs. The delivered all items during a donation round-up.

**Donna Schmidt Lung Cancer Prevention Society (DSLCPS)**

The DSLCPS purchased and calibrated 20 electronic radon detectors and brought them to the Library. The DSLCPS wrote a press release and the Library edited it and sent it to the local paper. The Library catalogued the detectors and advertised the lending program in its monthly newsletter. We also provide basic instructional information on how to use the detector and record readings.

**Zellstoff Celgar “Be Seen” Campaign**

Zellstoff Celgar supplies and delivers all of the armbands to the Library. They provide the Library with logos for advertising as well as posters and bookmarks to distribute. The Library offers space to store the armbands and staff time to distribute them.

**What was the outcome?**

**Books for Babies**

In 2018, almost 100 babies were born in Castlegar. Books for BC Babies were distributed to all new parents in our community through the health unit. Public health nurses give them out either during their first home visit, or at the two-month immunization.
Adult ESL

From Winter 2018 to Fall 2018 there were 73 individual sessions in the Library and 28 participants. CBAL is very appreciate of our free space and we benefit by having group members use the Library’s resources. The group is very lively and it is wonderful to hear them coming together and having so much fun learning.

Community Learning Place

From Winter 2018 to Fall 2018 there were 28 individual sessions in the Library and 35 participants. We often see repeat participants who love coming weekly with different computer questions. The Library is seeking a Community Technology Grant in 2019 that will make laptops available to this program and we will provide a staff member to assist with online Library resource related questions during the Community Learning Place drop-in. This growing partnership and added resources is something that will be a huge benefit to the community and our ability to assist those with technology literacy.

Parent Child Mother Goose

In 2018 the Library and CBAL ran 23 individual PCMG classes with 229 parents and babies in attendance. We often see parents and babies repeat the sessions and transition into our toddler story time session. Our staff member who delivers the program reports the joy at seeing babies grow and start to respond to the singing and rhymes. She also notices that parents build relationships with each other, share parenting knowledge and meet with each other outside of the program.

Castlegar Food Bank

Collecting food, personal hygiene items and warm things for vulnerable people in our community is an easy thing for the library to do and creates goodwill. Patrons often knit throughout the year in anticipation of decorating our “Giving Trees” and people bring food items regardless of having fines to pay off. We receive a lot of positive feedback from patrons for these programs and in turn a lot of support through donations.

Donna Schmidt Lung Cancer Prevention Society (DSLCPS)

As stated above the DSLCPS donated 10 electronic radon detectors for loan and the program quickly took off with upwards of 75 holds on a waitlist. We soon added an additional 10 devices and shortened the loan period to keep up with demand. This has been a very popular addition to the Library, and it has sparked questions of what other “things” the Library can offer for loan. This question will be explored in our upcoming Library survey and will inform our next strategic plan.

Zellstoff Celgar “Be Seen” Campaign
Zellstoff Celgar is located on the outskirts of our community so without the help of the Library and other community partners, distributing the armbands and prizes would be difficult. As with other partnerships outlined in this section, our relationship with the “Be Seen” campaign shows our willingness to be a space that participates in programs that contributes to the betterment of our community.

**Library Priority 4: Sustaining Our Success: enhancing governance and demonstrating impact.**

2018 was the last year of our 2015-2018 strategic plan. Towards the end of the year, our Board engaged a local consultant whose expertise is leadership, board development and nonprofit development. In the latter half of 2018, we began the development of a new community survey with input from both Library staff and board. The survey is wide ranging and asks questions about the Library’s virtual and physical space, as well the value of the library within the community. We are also asking people to share how the Library has changed their life. The community is our largest stakeholder. From the survey we will find out what we are doing right, what can be improved upon, the impact the Library has on individual lives, and get a sense of where people want to see us go in the future. The information gained from the survey as well as conversations with staff, board and volunteers will ensure we have a solid map going forward.

In late 2016, the Library, under the previous Director, participated in a Non-profit Advisors Program through the Columbia Basin Trust. Acting on the advice of that report, the Library undertook a major policy review this past summer. The result was the creation of two manuals. A revised public facing Policy Manual and a brand new Staff/Board manual.

**Name partnerships and support – who contributed what – who are they**

**Strategic Plan**

Thus far, our strategic planning has been a partnership between our consultant, staff and board members as we all finalized the development of the survey. Once the survey gets underway the community, funders, Friends of the Library and Library Volunteers will get involved culminating in a day of planning for the development of the new strategic planning document.

**Policy Review**

The Library Director, Board Policy Committee and Staff were all involved in the policy review.

**What was the outcome?**

**Strategic Plan**

The Strategic Plan is still in process.

**Policy Review**
The chair of the board policy committee, and I went through each of our policies revising wording, adding sections, and moving sections to a new staff manual. As we went, we discussed changes in practice and updated outdated sections. We then brought our draft to the whole policy committee for review and comment. The board approved the new policy manual in December. The new staff/board manual is compiled and a full review will take place in summer 2019.

**Summary**

The Library had a very busy 2018. Aside from the events listed above the Library hosted six local authors offering a range of interesting topics including:

- A cookbook celebrating its 30th edition
- A Japanese author whose family was interned during the Second World War
- A pair of crime writers discussing how they build their mysteries
- A woman who built an remote cabin on the West Coast
- A niece writing a fictional mystery series about her plucky Aunt in Montreal during the 1940’s

We were fortunate to receive both Young Canada Works and Canada Summer Jobs grants fully funding two Summer Reading Club Coordinators. The Summer Reading Club continues to be a popular program in our community with available spaces filing up quickly. Our goal in 2019 will be to accommodate all children who want to keep track of their reading by providing reading records and incentive prizes for milestones met.

In 2018, we entered into a new three-year contract with the City of Castlegar with a 2% increase in our funding in each of the three years. This continued support is essential if we are to maintain current services.