INTRODUCTION

The Kimberley Public Library has seen significant changes over the past year, and all have been exceptionally positive. Our Children’s programming has tripled due to the popularity of the new children’s programs, thanks to two talented and enthusiastic new staff members. We have increased our capabilities from serving mainly the 3-5-year-old group, to now providing learning and fun literacy opportunities for ages Birth to 12. Parents enjoy the programming with their children as well. STEAM club, Lego club, robotics, creative science and art programming has caused a shift in who comes to the library, and we are happy to say that children are getting a fair amount of exercise as well, as they run to the library after school.

Kimberley provides its community members and those who get the chance to visit with an intense experience – healthy living, amazing scenery, clean air, and awesome people. With 7425 people in the community, 11.6% increase from the 2011 Census, it seems that the regeneration after losing the main contributor to the economy (the world’s largest lead-zinc mine from 1917 to 2001) has been successful to say the least. Three championship golf courses, Nordic and alpine skiing, and hundreds of kilometers of trails offer numerous choices for the beginner to the expert, from easy strolls to thrill-seeking technical mountain biking opportunities. We have seen an increase in young families relocating to Kimberley, as careers often no longer require the brick and mortar presence in large communities, rewarding ingenuity and entrepreneurship. It is a delight to see the families mastering the work-life balance, as Kimberley has transformed into a tourism focused economy. A fun fact about Kimberley, is that we have 42 restaurants, and only one street light.

Like so many other communities, Kimberley faces a housing shortage. The City has been addressing this barrier, by first creating an Affordable Housing Committee to advise and provide recommendations to address the issue. The Kimberley Affordable Housing Action Strategy is now being put into action.

After determined efforts to keep job seekers resources in the community, the Library kiosk has moved to a permanent location in the community where the counsellors can hold workshops and receive clients without having to set up and pack up numerous resources (computers, printers, pamphlets, job board information, other resources). After several years of successful job counselling, it is great to see this advancement in planning for an ongoing service to the community.

Kimberley Library’s current strategic plan has continued to serve us for 5 years, and renewal is in progress.
LIBRARY PRIORITY 1

**FOSTERING EQUITABLE ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND SERVICES**

Library Goal that supports this priority: Providing easy and facilitated access to extensive resources and services relevant to patrons' needs throughout their lives.

**NNELS:** The National Network for Equitable Library Services, offers our community members with print disabilities the services they need to enjoy and to learn through audio-book format. In 2018 this service was utilized by a wider age range of patrons, with more diverse circumstances than in previous years. We continue to collaborate with CNIB, offering library services to our mutual clientele.

**EXTERNAL COLLECTIONS AND SERVICES:** Three senior's villages in the community receive outreach service regularly, with a continuously restocked book cart at one residence for item sign out and return, and door to door service at another local senior's residence. The Pines residence for individuals facing deeper cognitive challenges, receives specially selected resources, mostly audio. The program that offers this special group something to truly look forward to is a once a week reading by a dedicated library volunteer.

**OUTREACH/ SHUTIN SERVICE:** Addressing social, physical and other barriers for this under-served community. For patrons who are unable to come to the library, we bring the library to them. This ensures that the library continues to serve the needs of our less-mobile citizens, offering them the full compliment of resources that we have to offer. An ongoing conversation with the patron regarding their unique reading requirements and preferences provides us with the information we need to select the best reading material for each person.

LIBRARY PRIORITY 2

**DEVELOPING SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE**

Library goal that supports this priority: Provide resources and services to assist citizens of all ages in their pursuit of educational and recreational opportunities and social enrichment.

**STEAM PROGRAMMING:** has become an exciting after-school activity for ages 4-12. Ozobots, littlebits, lego, edisons, Marble run kits, biology activities, coding, all in a fun atmosphere. We have planned to add an additional STEAM programming day in 2019 due to the popularity of the program. Outcomes include increased participation and cooperation in all age groups, more advanced coding abilities, and noticeable leadership attributes. Comments and feedback include local teachers' appreciation for the library's curriculum supporting programming, as the participants skills are transferring to their classrooms.
**WILDSIGHT:** Working together with Kimberley’s WildSight organization, the library hosts a very popular seed sharing event each Spring. Seeds and knowledge are exchanged, and the seed library is once again refilled at the library for community members to ‘check out’ packets of locally grown seeds. This year, we plan to have another workshop in the Fall on the different processes of how to save various types of seeds, increasing our local bank of knowledge and locally climatized seeds.

**CHILDREN’S PROGRAMMING:** Our new Children’s Programmer was hired in the Spring of 2018. Initially, Storytime was offered for ages 2-5 on Wednesdays 10:45-11:30am. Numbers varied, but the program was well enough attended that a second weekly session was added.

The success of this program can be seen in the high percentage of returning families, the enthusiasm of the children and in the number of books these families check out at the end of every Storytime.

Plans for Storytime in 2019 include puppetry and more varied activities between stories. Through Facebook, this program is well advertised, but we are always striving for a higher awareness of programming in the community.

**RHyme TIME:** For age birth to 3: a new program that has impacted the community in unexpected ways. Held concurrently with our popular “storytime” for 3-5-year-old children, the program’s initial goal was to reduce the number of participants and distractions in the story-time area, as well as provide a simpler, less structured version of storytime for those unable to sit for an hour. Toddler time has now developed into a song and story program that offers engaging activities throughout its 40 minutes. Our current direction is to provide a safe, warm and happy environment that allows infants and young children to take part in a free educational program that fosters an excitement for books. We have had a steady number of attendants with approx. 75% as returning guests. This early learning experience has been a welcoming first contact for new Kimberley families.

Outcomes of note: social interaction for children as well as parents has shown increased confidence in the children and information sharing for parents regarding other services and programs in the community as well as in the library. Also, a noticeable improvement in attention span and group participation in the children.

Participating in this program, are low income families, people at risk, and those with learning disabilities. We see children transition to the storytime program, and sometimes the reverse where children can choose the program that matches their comfort level. We expect to see an easier transition for group participants moving forward into Kindergarten, and are in the early stages of devising an evaluation process to measure this projected positive outcome.

**INCREASED CHILDREN’S PROGRAMMING:** Our library also has increased from one weekly storytime to two, both concurrent with Rhyme Time, effectively quadrupling our services to the under 5 age group.
**DARK MYSTERIES BOOK CLUB:** For ages 6-10 was another new initiative in 2018, encouraging disinterested non-readers to become engaged. Each week had a dark mystery theme: outer space, Halloween creeps, weird science, underground mysteries, etc. Different types of literature at all levels were used, non-gender specific. Two games were generally played and different areas of the library explored. The main goal was to encourage reading in an informal and fun way. Running parallel to the themes, activities included exploring fiction, non-fiction, poetry, finding the book you want, where to find the different books in the library, and how to order a book on the interlibrary system. As a drop in bi-weekly group, the commitment to attend each session was high. The interest in books for knowledge as well as entertainment increased during the book club’s four-month duration, which had a Christmas finale. Plans to revive this in the Fall are in motion.

**Outcomes:** By the end of the year all participants had the skills to use the library with confidence and were doing so.

One of the readers in grade 5 was reading at a grade 2 level, and developed her reading skills to a grade 4 level during her involvement with the club.

The reading group began with 3 returning members and grew to 7. 4 of the 7 members did not have a library card and initially had no interest or were too shy to take out a book. Outcomes include: All members are now actively participating in the CBAL partnership book mark initiative and have taken out books unassisted.

Parental comments:

“[My Child] took her first book out this evening and has already told me that she wants to come to the library after school more often. Books had caused her pain, embarrassment and fear and now a door has opened.”

“Thank you [Library] for opening the door that had been shut for years, my daughter is busy reading her book right now :0)”

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**LIBRARY PRIORITY 3**

**WORKING TOGETHER**

Library goal that supports this priority: Develop and nurture community partnerships, promote the programs, services and resources available

**CBAL COMMUNITY LITERACY PLANNING COMMITTEE:** These committee meetings with key partners in the community continue to effectively offer valuable networking opportunities. The brainstorming that occurs at this meeting has created opportunities for partnerships, increased awareness of community services and programs, and been instrumental in the creation of a viable community literacy action plan.
**RESOURCE SELECTION SERVICES:** The library is also excited to work with the daycares and other youth focused groups in the community. Library staff are given a subject, reading level or other criterion, and materials are sourced from our own collection, purchased when appropriate or borrowed through inter-library loan. We have noted that teachers and caregivers often have little time to spend sourcing materials, and without forethought leave no time to wait for interlibrary loans. Highly relevant book bundles that support and enrich learning are then available for teachers and daycares to pick up.

This service has been growing in popularity as the obvious enthusiasm of the children rewards teachers and caregivers for this enhancement to their learning and enjoyment of books.

**LIBRARY TOURS:** School teachers are encouraged to bring classes for theme-based curriculum supporting hands on learning tours of the library. These tours include learning to use the library catalogue, database searching activities, scavenger hunts to learn the library system, and a book to take home, signed out with their own library card.

**COMMUNITY EVENTS:** The community celebration “First Saturdays” and the successful Farmer’s markets begin in June every year and continue through to October. Local families as well as celebrants from afar, join in the events, partake of the spoils, and enjoy the atmosphere in Kimberley. The library supports these community initiatives and celebrations with theme based, literacy-building activities that entertain the children and inform the adults of the services that the public library has to offer. Crafts and entertainment keep the children looking for our booth each time.

**CBAL:** Kimberley Library works collaboratively with different groups throughout the community, and is always willing to increase its partnerships. In 2018, we continued to partner with Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy (CBAL), to offer reading incentives for reluctant readers. Our Outreach Coordinator developed a bookmark incentive program for the 7-13 age group. Participating children were given a “punch-out” bookmark and could receive up to two “star punches” when they signed out books. After their bookmark was completed, they could choose from a selection of new books as a prize. These book prizes were funded by CBAL and Friends of the Library.

Feedback from parents of children who participated in this initiative has been exceptionally positive. Comments have included:

- “the program had my children eager and asking to go to the library”
- “The time they spent reading at home increased”
- “My oldest child enjoys using the catalogue to find specific books. He also enjoys requesting inter-library loans and does so independently of his own accord”
- “The CBAL/Library program has expanded my children’s literacy skills, but also found them accessing other aspects of library services they have found useful and exciting”

**WILDSIGHT:** with several of Wildsight’s resources already added to library shelves, we continue to work together to increase availability and awareness of their diverse collection of books. In 2019, we will once again gather their resources and catalogue them, but this time the collection will be held at their office. These books will be available through interlibrary loan to the Province.
**CENTRE-64:** Our partnership with Centre 64 continues successfully. Each month a volunteer installs a display in our showcase of a local artist’s work. This increases awareness for the gallery, for the artist, but also of the outstanding amount of local talent that Kimberley has. The beautiful displays are a draw for patrons and featured in the local newspaper as well.

Local Media is also a partner, providing us with free space for our weekly booklists, and quick to include any library events or program updates for community awareness.

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**LIBRARY PRIORITY 4**

**ENHANCING GOVERNANCE**

The Library is currently undergoing strategic planning.

Our City representative stepped out of Municipal Politics in the Fall of 2018, and a new rep has yet to be appointed to the Kimberley Public Library Board of Directors. Our library is fortunate to have a very talented and diverse group of Board members, and the retention of these members is remarkable and noteworthy. As members come upon their eighth year of service, it is normal for these members to continue as non-voting members. This is currently the case with two of our members, Jack Ratcliffe who has been on the board and intermittently supporting the board as a non-voting member for about 40 years. Greg Bradley who recently attained his eight-year status, stepped into a non-voting position after serving as Board Chair for 6 years and is still actively attending meetings and advocating on behalf of the library. It is this experience and dedication that helps the library move forward and continue serving the community to its best ability.

Our ongoing involvement with CBAL’s community literacy planning committee, provides the community with measurable results. These meetings inform the wider community and help identify unnecessary duplication or gaps in services throughout Kimberley. Actions, programs, services and initiatives are documented and results reported and shared.

Communications with the City of Kimberley has increased, and discussions continue to inform Council of the value of libraries, and our mutual commitment to a thriving community.

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**SUMMARY**

The STEAM programming has taken off in a huge way, supporting our youth in learning how to understand and influence digital advancements of the future.

Challenges were marketing, and getting the word out to the community in an impactful way, what the library really has to offer. Through an improved online social media presence, the library is experiencing an increase in patrons coming out for programming and events. Taking the library into the community with our enhanced Community Outreach, from festivals and events to small community meetings has modernised the community’s understanding of what libraries have to offer. This marketing has made a noticeably positive difference in awareness and usage of the library.
Technology is always a challenge to stay current with. The rapid changes and wide variety of available devices, software, user requirements, upgrades, etc. makes assisting patrons more challenging each day. With a ‘troubleshooting’ mentality, we can usually find an answer to people’s technology needs. As tech-savviness becomes more and more necessary for everyday life, it is more essential that the library include a wider variety of technology for public use and learning. With this, it is also essential to have a fully trained and knowledgeable staff member, willing to constantly learn and upgrade their own skills and abilities to assist patrons and other staff.

The Staff, Board of Directors, and dedicated volunteers continue to be extremely proud to serve the citizens of Kimberley, visitors from other parts of British Columbia, and the world.