INTRODUCTION
The Penticton Public Library has been serving the City of Penticton, in one form or another, since 1909. Penticton is a community of around 33,000 settled in the beautiful Okanagan valley between Okanagan Lake to the north and Skaha Lake to the south, on its west side the City shares a border with the Penticton Indian Band. The economy in Penticton is based around the tourism industry with wine tourism being a large percentage of the whole.

Like many communities in BC, Penticton has a large number of retired residents. According to the latest Statistics Canada tables 29% of residents are over the age of 65 and 11.9% are 14 years old or younger. Penticton is experiencing a housing crunch with less than 2% rental vacancies reported in November 2018, which is a small improvement over 2017; additionally, the cost of housing has increased in the past year.

Our Library is one of a very few truly free public places, in Penticton, where all are welcome. Our central location is on the edge of the downtown core, and on one of Penticton’s main roads.

Challenges for our library in the community include: a relatively stagnant tax base, limited capacity in staff members to expand on current work load, an aging facility too small for our population and needs, and the social pressures due to homelessness and addictions.

The Penticton Public Library is completed our current strategic plan cycle and we have made great strides towards achieving all our objectives. Strategic objectives were:

- Raise public awareness: tell our story
- Increase community engagement
- Put the patron experience first
- Foster lifelong learning
- Become Penticton’s gathering space

None of these strategic objectives are fully achievable in that there is always room to grow in these areas. We and engaged in planning through much of 2019 and we expect that the new strategic plan will build on these areas.

FOSTERING EQUITABLE ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND SERVICES

The promotion of our digital resources was one of the focuses for 2017 and in 2018 we carried on with this goal. As part of our strategic planning process, we developed the goal of increasing awareness of library services. This is doubly important in promoting digital services. Primarily using social media, we
began promoting many of our databases to the local community. Fostering local knowledge of our online services enabling residents to engage in lifelong learning. We have alternated between the databases that can be accessed and promotion of our internal resources and collections.

While the trend may be to go completely fine free, our staff investigation into this found that material damages increased and so the decision was made to avoid going that route for the time being. However, to further to promote equitable access to information services included a reworking of some of our procedures to allow residents who owe on fines beyond our “cut off limit” of $10 to continue using some services, the public computers or limited borrowing privileges, for example while paying down these fines. We examined our fine base and spoke to many patrons who are socially marginalized to discover why they were reluctant to come into the library and borrow material, or more specifically were paying $1 for computer use when they had a library card; and found that the many were simply not using the library due to their ability to pay for the fine. Staff were also freed to use their judgement also reduced large debts for over due fines.

Other resources that were promoted in this manner include the language learning database Pronunciator and Mango Languages. Again we were targeting the promotion of this service broadly, but specifically focusing on newcomers to Canada in the Penticton area. As this database includes an English as a Second Language course, we felt that it would serve to assist newcomers and supplement the ESL work that they were doing elsewhere. There have been several positive comments from users highlighting the value of this service. The Library continues to take an active role with the South Okanagan Immigrant and Community Services group, offering tours, programs and promoting welcoming initiatives.

DEVELOPING SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE
Developing skills and knowledge

STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Maths) based programing continued as a major focus for our Youth Services department in 2018. Both the Afterschool Coding Club and the STEAM Powered programs were assessed using the Outcome Based method and were found to be achieving their goals of fostering interest and excitement in STEAM subjects in the children who attended. For both these programs our target age group is the “tweens” or young people aged 8 to 12. They were the chosen focus because when we surveyed the community there was less offered to them, and most existing activities are sports-related. Further, this age group is still largely fearless, willing to make mistakes and explore. A coding club is a good fit for the community and for our goal of providing access and opportunity for young people. This allows tweens to experiment and discover something beyond the opportunities offered in school. Also, looking to the future, coding has become one of the most desired skills for many employers and the technology sector is one of the areas forecasted for highest growth in the Okanagan.

The assessment of this pilot highlighted the continued need for this and similar programs. Young people and their parents and caregivers told us that the value of the program went beyond introducing technology to young people, giving tweens the opportunity to work together and explore technology in a safe and fun environment. Our Youth Services Technician focused on pairing up very shy young people with children who seemed more comfortable in groups and guiding activities in a way that allowed each tween to learn and explore the technology. After each session, children were invited to provide feedback on what they had learned by asking them to recall their favourite parts of the day’s activities, what they found difficult and what they would like to do more of in the future. In exploring outcomes of the program we also asked what they would like to do again from previous weeks’ programs. By and
large, caregivers reported their child’s enjoyment of the program and that their tweens had been inspired to continue learning coding on their own.

Also along these lines, the Library was successful in applying for a Community Foundation of the South Okanagan Similkameen grant to purchase a 3D printer. While the primary target group for the 3D printer programs (at least initially) were adults and providing them with the access and opportunity to explore 3D printing design and technology. The printer was unveiled at a Teen Popup Makerspace, further promotion to a largely senior aged group was hosted as part of our Learning at Lunch series and was filmed by Shaw TV. The device was also featured in the Summer Reading Club that year. From there we held several 3D Boot Camps were held introducing registrants to the technology and troubleshooting design snags in order to successfully make their first 3D printed project. Participants were enthusiastic and the demand space at the Boot camps was high. This workshop also caught the attention of Castanet, a local online newspaper, who wrote favorably on our initiative. https://www.castanet.net/news/Penticton/236150/Hot-tech-at-the-library We believe our efforts made a strong impact on our community. By running these programs, we helped many people learn new technical skills while also building their confidence. We will be launching drop in 3D printing in April 2019.

WORKING TOGETHER

The Penticton Public Library has a number of long-term partnerships which support our work, the partners and the community. As a rule, due to the limitations on staff capacity, we do not seek out new partners every year but seek to enhance our current relationships and develop new ones as community needs and opportunities dictate.

The second STEAM based program series for tweens developed in 2017 and continued in 2018 provided the opportunity to further develop our partnership with the Penticton Museum and Archives. STEAM Powered takes a broader approach to STEAM programing and promises to deliver programs in all five of the different areas – science, technology, engineering, arts, and maths. Again, the focus is on tweens between the ages of 8 and 12, with the Library and Museum sharing responsibility for planning, promoting, and presenting the program.

The partnership with the Penticton Museum and Archives is a natural one as we share the building and are both interested in developing programs for tweens that target this area of interest. We are still in the process of developing this partnership to its best potential as we do struggle to coordinate schedules, goals, and desired outcomes that meet the needs of both organizations.

Other organizations that we worked with to present programs or assisted at special events in 2018 include: Penticton’s Peach Fest Society, and Farmers Market group, the Penticton Art Gallery, and various organizations and individuals who presented at the Library’s Learning at Lunch program.

ENHANCING GOVERNANCE
In 2017 the Penticton Public Library began developing an outcome-based assessment model adapted from the Project Outcome system employed by the Public Library Association division of the American Library Association. Project Outcome is a “toolkit designed to help public libraries understand and share the impact of essential library services and programs by providing simple surveys and an easy-to-use process for measuring and analyzing outcomes.

Early stages of this assessment were done with our STEAM Powered and Afterschool Coding Club programs series as the initial test area. We initially struggled with encouraging responses from caregivers. The Library’s Youth Services Team were able to overcome this using a range of methodology to reach out to caregivers and participants. Overall, they found that the program series continued to be impactful for participants with several caregivers reporting that they found their children to be inspired by the STEAM based programing and that the children were developing an interest in STEAM beyond school or attending the library program. Overall the goal of this program series is to provide access and opportunity and to inspire further exploration in the subjects presented. We feel that the programs have achieved the outcomes we set as goals.

Going forward we plan to improve and expand the use of the outcome-based model for assessment. As mentioned above we have struggled with implementing this methodology and are currently investigating other options that may improve our patron response rate. The Library Board feels that this method will improve their ability to discuss library services with stakeholders, demonstrating both qualitative and quantitative value to the community.

SUMMARY
Overall the staff and board spent much of 2018 building on the success of the previous year. We are undergoing an assessment of all services but have found that they by and large remain valuable to our members. As the outcome-based assessment model is much more labour intensive than other, more statistic based assessment, we are being selective in which services we assess. Capacity remains a major challenge for the Library both in terms of staff time and space, however we have managed to do some shuffling of duties and will be continuing to advocate for a new facility. Further, when we assessed the achievements of the 2014 to 2018 Strategic Plan we found that while the plan itself was very ambitious we had managed to achieve quite a lot towards our goals.