

PROVINCIAL LIBRARY GRANT REPORT 2018

STEWART PUBLIC LIBRARY



INTRODUCTION

Stewart Public Library has served the community of Stewart B.C. for over 51 years by providing free access to library materials, programs and services that enable the people of Stewart to stay connected and informed.

The town of Stewart is a small town of approximately 400 people and is situated at the head of the Portland Canal. It is fueled by growing industries in mining, forestry and tourism and is home to Canada's most northerly ice-free, deep-sea port making it the gate-way for cargo ships. It has a rich mining history and colourful past. Modern day Stewart is still highly influenced by its past and boasts its history through the structures and artifacts that still exist today. Every year and in every season, tourists come from all over the world to experience the towering mountains, pristine glaciers and abundant wildlife that make Stewart so special.

The library is located on the main street of Stewart making it highly visible and accessible for all. In 2017 we relocated to our new location after being situated in the local public school for many years. This has proved to be a very good move for the library and the feedback from the community has been very positive. We have been able to serve our community better by offering longer operating hours and increased days of the year that we are open.

Stewart Public Library faces challenges that come with living in a remote area. We are over 300 km to the nearest big town and planning ahead for essentials such as office and program supplies is imperative to a smooth operation as not everything can be bought in town. The high costs associated with heating, internet and shipping are just a few examples that can make operating expenses high. We are grateful for the provincial funding as well as other grants that assist us in these costs.

2018 marked the last year of our five-year Strategic Plan. With support from our objectives, partnerships and stake holders outlined in our plan, we worked hard to achieve the goals set out and look forward to focusing on developing a new Strategic Plan for 2019-2022. This report outlines the value that the provincial grant has on our goals, programs and services that align with the provincial government's strategies and commitments. With help from this grant, we are able to support access to quality services and resources in our community.

Provincial Priority:

Fostering Connected Communities: advancing access to information and resources:

SPL Goal: *To build and deliver a diverse collection of print, electronic, video and audio collection which will meet our community needs and support our users growing informational needs.*

*Based on our objectives this goal has been met, however, we will always continue to incorporate this into our operations.

Some of the initiatives the library undertook towards this goal are the following:

- We are a small library (2000 sqft) and one of our challenges is our lack of space and ability to keep a large collection. The efficient resource sharing between libraries allowing our patrons access to resources beyond our doors is an invaluable service in our small town. In 2018, we lent 437 items to other libraries while our patrons borrowed 398 items through interlibrary connect.
- By implementing our objectives to meet our strategic goal, we were able to increase our circulation of interlibrary loans by 74% and in branch circulation by 45% compared to 2017.
- From 2013 to 2018, our strategic plan period, we discarded 3926 items from our library; 648 in 2018. During 2018 alone, we added 664 new titles to our library and a total of 1450 items throughout the strategic plan period.
- We continue to subscribe to databases that are free for our patrons to meet their informational needs.
- Increased our collection of books that provide information on indigenous issues, cultures, customs and law.

We have seen an increase in trend of the circulation of materials as a direct result of updating our collection. If our library does not have what our patron is looking for, we can almost always receive it through the interlibrary connect network. This has proved to be a very important resource for our community and is used often.

The use of all of our resources is free; making it affordable to read the latest book, have access to hundreds of databases and up-to date information.

“Love interlibrary loans and even more that it is a free service!” (SPL patron)

“As a truck driver, having access to audio books is a real need!” (SPL patron)

SPL Goal: *Create effective communication channels with the library users and use technology as an opportunity to engage patrons.*

*Based on our objectives, this goal has been met and we will continue to use these strategies as we move forward.

Some of the initiatives the library undertook towards this goal are the following:

- The creation of an Instagram account which showcases the programs and services available at the library
- In 2018, we updated our Facebook page and website weekly (or as needed), to keep the public connected to the library’s activities and resources
- This has been our first full year mailing a quarterly newsletter to every residence in Stewart, with thanks to the District of Stewart who provided photocopying in-kind
- We purchased 11 refurbished laptops through the BC Tech for Learning that are available for patron use at the library and used in our programs to teach digital literacy. By making this technology available to everyone regardless of income, we strive to make life more affordable and remove the financial and social barriers that can hinder some from accessing resources and services that they need.
- This is the very first year we have offered free Wi-Fi to patrons. This has been an extremely important service that is widely utilized by the public. Tourists often come in to use this service as do the members of our community; this has paved the way for us to expand our digital literacy services by enabling us to offer help with devices, programs and online resources that we offer.

SPL takes into consideration that not all of our community members have internet or use the internet which is why we don’t just promote what we offer through digital means. We also advertise our services, programs and resources through our library’s quarterly newsletters, our community’s monthly newsletter and posted flyers. Through these initiatives we are able to foster a connected community by making everyone aware of what is available at the library.

The library is often the first stop to anyone who has a question about computers, programs or apps. By promoting the library as a place to seek answers for technological questions, we have created a service people can count on for answers.

Provincial Priority:

Building Capacity: enabling inspiration and innovation.

SPL Goal: Provide an open and inviting space with patron focused staff where every individual can meet their informational needs

*Based on our objectives, this goal has been met but we will continue to evaluate our services on a regular basis

Some of the initiatives the library undertook towards this goal are the following:

- Monthly adult reading club with nineteen registered members
- Weekly early literacy program for children under five and their caregivers and is delivered through song, dance, puppets, stories and art. This program ran for 15 weeks in 2018 with 114 attendees.
- This was the first full year offering our weekly home school program which is directed at children who are not in the public school system. This program focuses on group work and critical thinking. Our home school program had a total attendance of 214 children over 23 weeks. This is a program that is the first of its kind in Stewart and was initiated based on the need in the community for a place that the children who are home schooled can connect and share their learning.
- 2018 was the first summer that the library was open to the public which allowed us to run the Summer Reading Program. Weekly themed art projects which aligned with the Summer Reading Program were offered to the participants.
- Hosted Magician Leif David (May) and Science World (August) as part of the Northwest Library Tour.

2018 was the first year for many of our programs; Book Club, Knitting Club and the Summer Reading Program were all introduced to the public for free, making them affordable to all demographics. We hosted various informational sessions from agencies such as Work BC, Canada Revenue Agency and Service Canada which provided the community with valuable information regarding employment, benefits and income tax. This is an initiative that will continue into 2019.

By partnering with Bear Valley School and the District of Stewart, we were able to utilize their spaces to host the Northwest Library Federation's tour. Magician, Leif David's show was presented in the school gymnasium-allowing every child at school to attend. The Science World tour was presented in the local park, attracting both the community and tourists. The facility for that was used for this show was donated by the District of Stewart in-kind. Both of these shows were well attended by both children and adults.

SPL Goal: *Foster professional development for staff and the Board members.*

* Based on our objectives, this goal has been met however professional development will always remain a priority for our staff and board members.

Some of the initiatives the library undertook towards this goal are the following:

- library director attended the BCLA conference in Richmond
- The Northwest library federation conference in Houston was attended by both the library director and the relief librarian
- On-line workshops were attended in a variety of subjects such as STEAM, Programs in Small Spaces, various Sitka webinars as well as Early Childhood Literacy programming.

The library director attended the BCLA conference in Richmond which was a wealth of information, connections and networking. By using the training subsidy provided by the Northwest Library Federation, it allowed this to be a more affordable expense. Online workshops were attended by all staff to update their skills in the different databases and programs they use on a daily basis. Webinars were attended as often as possible to create inspiration in programming and library management.

Provincial Priority:

Working Together: creating lasting and sustainable partnerships.

SPL Goal: *Create a strong relationship with educational, early-learning and government organizations and secure funding for the library.*

*We will integrate this goal into our 2019-2022 Strategic Plan as it remains important to secure our funding

Some of the initiatives the library undertook towards this goal are the following:

- Work with government agencies to deliver services and funding for the library
- Create a partnership with other community organizations to deliver services
- Continue to subscribe to Outlook Online and Library2Go
- Member of the Northwest Library Federation

We continue to maintain partnerships with many organizations that assist us in delivering functional programming. This year, we partnered with the Stewart Historical Society which enabled us to deliver programs beyond our walls. Those registered in our home school

program attended the museum to learn about Stewart history through the museum curator. We also partnered with Bear Valley School for fundraising opportunities and program delivery. We continue to receive grants-in kind from the District of Stewart for use of their facilities and resources as well as an annual grant for operational costs. Seabridge Gold has been a large contributor to our children's programs over the last couple years, helping to fund the delivery of the program.

The Northwest Library Federation is an integral part of our operations. Partnering with other libraries has helped make it feasible to bring presentations and resources to Stewart that may otherwise be too costly. Engaging in on-going dialogue between the libraries is what makes it possible to share best practices and further our opportunities.

Provincial Priority:

Sustaining Our Success: enhancing governance and demonstrating impact.

SPL Goal: To pursue the opportunity for the new Library Building

*This goal has been met

Some of the initiatives the library undertook towards this goal are the following:

- Relocation to a new building which has allowed us increased visibility and accessibility to our community, helping us achieve our objectives for our strategic plan and to meet our goals

2018 was the first year that the library has been in its new building and the response from the public has been extremely positive. The small, intimate atmosphere brings people back as it is a relaxing place to meet their needs.

Goal: Provide open and inviting space with customer-focused staff where every individual can meet its informational needs.

Some of the initiatives the library undertook towards this goal are the following:

- Monthly board meetings to assess our policy and strategic plan to ensure informational needs are being met
- Develop a daily framework from which to record data of library usage
- Annual reports are submitted to the government and to the public to show transparency
- Library stats are published in the quarterly newsletter as a measure of success

Through ensuring that our community can meet their needs in an inviting space, our public has begun to see the services that the library provides as valuable and reliable. They have become to trust the quality of our programming as shown through their repeated visits and increase in patrons and program registrants.

During 2018, we had 4507 patrons walk through our doors and registered 66 new library card holders. This is a big increase since 2016, our last full year open, which saw 2888 patrons and 14 new users registered. This increase can be attributed to longer operating hours, being open during the summer months and an increase in the amount of programming being offered.

“Amazing place, informative and extremely helpful staff, the smell of books, coffee and a heritage building is like a slice of heaven for this bookworm” (SPL patron)

CONCLUSION

2018 was a year of many firsts for the Stewart Public Library; a new building, new programming and new resources. All of this has equated to more in-library visits than we have seen in the last five years. This is a huge success for our small library and makes it apparent how important the library is to keeping the community connected, serviced and informed.

We look forward to developing a new Strategic Plan for the 2019-2022 period that will reflect our community’s needs and move us forward in an innovate way. We recognize and acknowledge the commitment it takes from the BC Provincial Government, The Regional District of Stewart and the various organizations and patrons that financially support us. We are thankful to have supportive partnerships we can rely on to ensure our community receives quality library services.