INTRODUCTION

About the Library

The Terrace Public Library provides public library services to residents of The City of Terrace; portions of the Regional District of Kitimat-Stikine; and, the First Nations communities of Nisga’a, Kitselas and Kitsumkalum. The library serves a population of just over 20,000 people. We seek to offer programs and services for patrons of all ages that: entertain and inspire; celebrate our diverse cultures, communities and people; and, support lifelong learning, reading and enjoyment.

From the years 2013-2017 we saw a dramatic increase in the use of the library. In 2013 we had 115,542 in person visits to the library versus 151,182 in 2017. That is a 31% increase of in person visits. That being said in 2018 our in person visits went down to 144,277. We are uncertain as to the reason why but we are still one of the most heavily used public facility in Terrace. Our 2017 numbers surpassed the visits of the Terrace Public pool. We are the community hub where people gather to relax, gather, learn, and play (it is plain to see from our visit numbers) and we have people from all demographics of our community. In fact, a recent video made to recruit doctors to Terrace a statement was made by one of the doctors about the best places in town for entertainment we were listed up there with the following popular places: Shames Mountain, the local Brewery, the city sportsplex, and the city pool.

In 2015, the library completed the work on its five-year strategic plan 2015-2020. The plan has four strategic priorities: Partnerships and Collaborations, Technology, Advocacy, and Marketing and Promotion. Work on this plan was completed with the help of our board members as well we had input from the library staff and other community partners and
organizations. The library held three information-gathering sessions that informed the goals for the strategic plan. We had a session for the board members, the staff, and community partners and organizations.

Over 2018 we have been working on our advocacy plan (one of our strategic plan goals) and has been the major focus of our work on our strategic plan.

In 2019 the board will finalize our Advocacy Plan, one of our major current strategic plan goals, within the first quarter and then in the near future start to work on our strategic planning process as Terrace Public Library’s current Strategic Plan expires in 2020.

About the Community

Terrace is the retail and service hub for Northwestern British Columbia. Residents from surrounding communities and villages visit Terrace to shop and access services not available in their own communities. The library’s service area includes two Tsimshian communities (Kitselas and Kitumkalum) and the Nisga’a.

Industry in Terrace

Terrace, as mentioned above, is a service hub and has a lot of industry that services natural resources industry. The two largest and major employers here are the School District (and schools) and Coast Mountain College. The City of Terrace does not have “major” industry, at this point, in which to contribute to the tax base. The majority of the tax base is from property taxes.

Current Challenges

Technology
Our library’s efforts to maintain and improve technology are limited by staff resources and expertise. As the need for technology increases, the need for more opportunities for training and instruction alongside the technology will only increase. Our library has a technology piece in our strategic plan that outlines needs for staff training and a technology plan. This is something we are trying to come up with solutions for.

Our remote location continues to limit the participation of library staffs and board in library-specific training, participation in library organizations, and networking beyond our federation boundaries. The cost of travel and accommodations is a barrier that makes active participation unfeasible in most circumstances. Technology and occasional travel subsidies have improved the situation a little bit. Additional financial support/subsidies for travel would greatly improve the situation. The remote location also affects our cost of technology: Specifically, the maintenance of technology. If something breaks down and
needs servicing, we are paying large bills due to our remote location (for shipping, technicians, and travel costs). Subsidies for these huge costs would be great.

**Database Costs/Service Providers**

With the lower dollar compared to the USD and the increasing costs of databases/Service Providers (Bibliotheca, Bibliocommons, Collection HQ, etc.) and wanting to keep up with trends it is difficult to afford these with budgets that are static and cannot increase due to lack of economic tax base and provincial budgets with no increases for libraries. This continues to be a struggle even when cutting other databases.

**Staffing**

Despite going to council year after year for increases to add funds for programming (we have plateaued in the amount we can offer and there are still areas of the population we could service) we are denied and told to hold the line. As you can imagine our funding, from council, which is appreciated, is just increased to cover the cost of union wage increases and things that are out of our control (energy costs or maintenance costs). Over time our operating budget outside of these things is stagnant and with our staffing at minimal levels (just enough staff to cover the library being open there is no “fat” to trim or allocate to increase our programming). This is in spite of a need for barrier free activities for families and community members.

To further this situation is that our programming position, in the last collective agreement (2018), was bargained into the CA. The predicament comes from the fact that the position is fully funded by the Provincial Literacy/Equity grant and the position has maxed out the grant. Thus, we have a problem where we have a very important role in the library that is solely funded by a grant, which has no more money for it, has been incorporated into the collective agreement to guarantee the position raises. Keep in mind in the past City Council has denied us funding for this position and we don’t have any reason to believe that will change. As well, there was the recent 2019 Provincial budget announcement from Carole James that did not include any extra funding for Libraries in BC.

**Methamphetamine/Fentanyl and Needle Drugs in Library**

In 2018 and continuing to this day we have seen large problem develop with people using the library to inject needle drugs (according to RCMP mostly Methamphetamine). AS well, we have had to ban patrons that we know were using the washrooms to inject as well as catching a person using the library to deal these drugs. We install needle disposal bins in our washrooms, trained our staff in safe disposal of needles, and lock our accessible washroom as people were able to go straight for it and lock themselves in to shoot up for long periods of time. Fortunately, we have not had anyone overdose but it could happen any time. We are worried about the safety of those who use the library as these individuals do not always use the needle disposal bins and toss the needle in the garbage bin or leave it laying around. We have also found needles in the park in which the library resides in. It is an ongoing problem (and I know we are not the only library in BC with this problem).
GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES, GOALS, PROGRAMS AND SERVICES, PARTNERSHIPS

Government Strategy 1: Fostering Connected Communities/Fostering Equitable Access to Information Services

Our Goals That Support the Priority

Build new partnerships and strengthen existing ones: Within this goal are specific actions outlining to discover new opportunities for collaboration and to meet the needs of the First Nations people in the area.

Ongoing Programs/Services that align with this strategy

First Nations Communities: The library adopts a pro-active reconciliatory approach to ensure that First Nations communities continue to have access to public library services. The library continues and fosters these initiatives.

1. Residents of Kitselas and Kitsumkalum continue to receive no cost access to public library services.
2. We started a pilot project with the residents of Gitaus (Kitselas First Nations) in 2015 where they are able to sign up for library cards in their community as well as take out books from Terrace Public Library that have been brought there by a community champion and who is the education coordinator in Gitaus. They are able to go to her office and check out books. So far, the project continues and the coordinator continues to check out and bring back books regularly.
3. The library has a strong partnership with the Nisga’a Lisims Government; residents and Nisga’a members received library services in 2015 through a partnership with Coast Mountain School District 92 (Nisga’a). This partnership is now in a formal signed service agreement that is ongoing unless either party decides the partnership should end. Our partnership has extended further and School District 92 has setup safe return boxes for people in the Nass to drop off their library materials. We are continuing to help support home literacy in the Nass by providing materials in the forms of information and activities that can be done in the home through School District 92.
4. The library routinely provides programs and services to First Nations community groups including Kermode Aboriginal Head Start, Kitwanga Day Care, Gitanyow School, and the Kermode Friendship Society.
5. Library staff travel to Nisga’a territories twice annually to: participate in local festivities and celebrations; engage with community members of all ages; and, share books and encourage reading and literacy. Trips this year included: attending the Salmonberry
Festival in Laxgalts’ap and Gitlaxt’aamiks and bringing literacy activities for those there. (pictured right)

6. As well, the library supported the summer reading clubs of Kitselas First Nation and the Nisga’a by providing reading journals and other materials to bolster their existing programs.

New Programs in 2018 that Align with Provincial Strategies

Nisga’a Family Celebration: This was our first time going to this event with the library. It is an event where Nisga’a youth who are under the care of families in town have a chance to get to know some of the activities and services available to youth and families. We brought our 3D printer and robotics kits to promote our services. We spoke with 65 attendees. We had a lot of feedback and excitement about wanting to come and use the 3D printer and borrow our robotics kits. We hope that this drives enthusiasm for learning about new technology and skills needed in today’s world.

Outcomes and Outputs

The Education coordinator’s office, in Gitaus, has become a hub where people are hanging out to read books instead of taking them out. This was an unexpected result and hope individuals will start to take books out eventually.

In 2018 we had a total of 3,797 items checked out of the library by people who live in Kitselas, Kitsukalum, and the Nass (Nisga’a). There is also 806 library cardholders in these areas. Both Circulations and Cardholders are up in these areas from 2017.

We are also having more visits from the Headstart program (from the Nass Valley) run by Liza Haldane in the library. This as well increased the opportunities for learning and literacy in the lives of these people.

Our partnership with the Nisga’a L.E.L.P has led to an increased ask from them to attend more meetings in the Nass and other events which we cannot accommodate due to funding. They have seen how valuable the services we provide are to their community and their literacy needs and thus the request for more outreach and programs.

How Has Funding Helped Address this Strategy?

The provincial Literacy grant pays for our programmer. Our programmer is a key component to the library and without the programmer; we would not be able to meet these priorities. In fact, if we did not have the literacy grant we would not have a programmer due to budget constraints with provincial funding not having increased in a long time and city council who is unable to provide funding for programs and outreach.

Our Goals That Support the Strategy

The closest goal the library has in its strategic plan is for staff training to ensure that library staff are knowledgeable about new technology so that they can assist patrons with said technology.

Ongoing Programs/Services that align with this strategy

Over the course of 2018 we ran eighteen 3D printing Certification workshops. These entail teaching the community about 3D printing, its applications and uses, and ensuring they understand how to use the library’s 3D printer.

• Two of these workshops were delivered to a grade five and six class from one of the local elementary schools. Since then we have had more requests from teachers to teach their students about 3D printing. We taught a total of 27 grade fives and 27 grade sixes about 3D printing.
• One of these eighteen workshops was delivered to 16 UNBC Bachelor of Education students. The professor reached out to see if we could deliver a workshop. We educated them on the uses of 3D printers in classrooms and its applications to teach various topics in class (frankly, it is endless).
• One of these workshops was delivered to a local Scouts group. They used the workshop to fulfill one of their badge requirements. We had thirteen Scouts.
• As well, we had our Summer Reading Club Teen Volunteers go through the workshop. We had ten teenagers learn about 3D printing. (In picture to right)

Outcomes and Outputs

Our 3D printing certification workshops have reached 194 people in our community. We are providing an opportunity, in our community, to those who may not otherwise have access to 3D printing.

The library is seen in a different light as providing access to innovative technology.

The library is reducing the barriers to technology by making it accessible and easy to use and providing these valuable learning opportunities.

Our policy for use of the 3D printer is that you must have a library card. For anyone who does not already have one they must sign up for one. This helps to build the value in having a library card in our community.

The UNBC Bachelor of Education Class decided to pay it forward and offer, at the library, their services to our patrons. They put on a morning of one-on-one tutoring sessions for those who
needed help with: Computers; personal devices – tablets and phones; social media (including privacy settings); email; internet safety, learning about “apps;” researching credible and authentic indigenous materials; researching in general; completing forms; and assistance in scribing or reading a letter. They also offered to read culturally inspired indigenous book materials to kids, as well as do story times. We had thirty-three people take advantage of these sessions.

We have a student who has taken a heavy interest in 3D printing. This student went through our workshop and is now designing their own objects to print and has become quite an expert in 3D printing. This student now volunteers their time twice a week after school to help people design objects to print. We do not have the extra funds to offer this extra help to our patrons. This student volunteers their time and we provide reporting to the school district of their volunteering for their high school graduation credits.

How Has Funding Helped Address this Strategy?

The purchase of the 3D printer and accompanying PC was possible with a donation by a private donor. The provincial funding provided the opportunity for some of the 3D printing workshops that were geared to the youth (grade fives, sixes, and Scouts).

Government Strategy 3: Working Together

Goals That Support the Strategy

One of our Strategic Plan goals is to explore ways to involve more staff in community engagement as well as a goal to build new partnerships and strengthen existing ones with First Nation’s communities.

Programs/Services that align with this priority

Outside of Strategy #1’s list of programs and services (with regards to First Nations communities) we have for a long time worked with local literacy groups (by attending quarterly literacy meetings). At these meetings there is sharing about ongoing initiatives, services, programs, as well as planning large literacy events that are held annually.

A lot of our work with other organizations happens organically as it is a small community. It is about whom you know and whom you meet in the community. In 2018, we have had 136 outreach meetings with various organizations to partner and work together with in the community.
Every year we are strengthening our relationships with the schools in the area by providing programs at the library, at the schools, and materials/kits for their classrooms and “libraries.”

We collaborate with libraries across the province in circulating book club sets for adults. We have expanded on the idea and provide YA book sets to the local high school for reading circles in classes. Once the high school is done with these books, they are available through BC Interlibrary Connect for other libraries to use.

We continue to share information amongst the libraries in the region, organically, and on occasion more structured. We commonly have staff from other NWLF libraries come to visit and learn from something we are doing here. In the fall of 2018 we sent two staff members and a board member to the two day NWLF Conference in Houston, BC.

**Outcomes and Outputs**

Our partnership with the Nisga’a L.E.L.P has led to an increased ask from them to attend more meetings in the Nass and other events which we cannot accommodate due to funding. They have seen how valuable the services we provide are to their community and their literacy needs and thus the ask for more outreach and programs.

We have over the past few years seen an increase in asks from schools in both district 82 and 92 for class visits and programs. We have plateaued in the amount of visits and school programs we can accommodate due to a lack of increase in funding.

Our outreach has been effective in having the library partner with organizations that we would not generally/traditionally think of collaborating with. An example of this is our collaboration with the local mall to setup a space for Family Literacy Day where we handed out free books to people of all ages, highlighted our Library of Things and 3D printer. We saw a total of 150 people; a lot of which don’t traditionally go to or think about the library. A common response we heard was “we didn’t know the library offered...” which helps us to realize we need to get our message and services out to a wider base and that these outreach initiatives in non-traditional spaces is beneficial in getting our message out.

**How Has Funding Helped Address this Strategy?**

The provincial Literacy grant pays for our programmer. Our programmer is a key component to the library and without the programmer; we would not be able to meet these priorities. In fact, if we did not have the literacy grant we would not have a programmer due to budget constraints.

**Government Strategy 4: Sustaining Out Success**
Goals That Support the Strategy

We have a current strategic plan and there is no a goal in the plan that supports this strategy.

Programs/Services that align with this priority

Every year, the board and library director, looks at our strategic plan to ensure it is meeting our needs and the needs of the community as well as checking in to ensure we are meeting the goals of it. In 2019, we will be starting the strategic planning process as our current plan expires in 2020.

Every board meeting, we review library policies to ensure they are relevant and up to date. As well, new policies are created in a proactive manner based around organizational and community needs.

Regularly we evaluate our programs, services, and the needs of the community. We use statistics that we gather as well as qualitative feedback we get from our community partners and patrons. Some of the evaluation comes through solicited feedback with passive programs where patrons let us know what they think of the library or said program. As well, we have a suggestion box where patrons can leave feedback and other suggestions. We also solicit feedback at the end of our programs. We use all of these to evaluate services and communicate our successes to our municipal funders. In 2017 we conducted a large survey soliciting feedback from patrons regarding our services. We will conducting another one in 2019 most likely as part of our strategic planning.

Our board is a strong supporter and sees the value in having a workable strategic plan created from gathering feedback from our community, partner organizations, local government, as well as staff.

We report to our funders annually on how we are moving through our strategic plan. We could probably do a better job informing our partner organizations on our progress through our strategic plan.

Terrace Public Library is part of the NWLF which on occasion puts together workshops for its member libraries that has included governance workshops.

Outcomes and Outputs

Our municipality appreciates updates we give during our budget presentation regarding our progress on our strategic plan. We have heard from our council representative that it is something the municipality values. We are going to be moving towards a proactive model with our council and RD liaison as well as presenting to council more often going forward.
Our community, in general, sees the value in the library. We recently were mentioned, in a video created to attract doctors to Terrace, by a doctor as a place to go in Terrace (right up there with the local ski hill, the brewery, the pool, and sportsplex) – a huge win that showcases how important the library is (to the municipality). Our proactive nature ensures we meet the needs of our community and stay relevant!

*How Has Funding Helped Address this Strategy?*

We are greatly appreciative of the funding provided to the NWLF initiatives from the provincial government.

**SUMMARY**

The library continues to seek out various opportunities and partnerships to ensure its relevancy while meeting the needs in the community it serves. However, without the continued support from the municipality and regional district this might be a bleak situation. This is why in Terrace Public Library’s strategic plan, 2015-2020, we have put advocacy as a major goal to address. The plan document is coming to fruition and nearing completion. This document will be helping to steer the library in new directions in order to ensure we reach a wider audience.

As stated in the introduction we still face challenges around increasing costs of technology and the needs, of our community, for low barrier programming in the face of static funding budgets from the municipality, regional district, and provincial government. These are challenges that are common across libraries of all sizes in BC and we know libraries have always been institutions of frugality and adaptation. If libraries were not known for these then we might be a little scarcer in existence.