



Valemount Public Library

“Encouraging a spirit of learning and discovery”

2018 Library Grants Report

Introduction

The Valemount Public Library Association was established in 1964 and is currently operating in a 1,600 square foot log building which was built in 1988 with Expo '86 funds. The building is owned by the Village of Valemount who are responsible for maintenance of the grounds and building. The library serves a population of approximately 1,800 people.

Valemount is a small rural mountain community with a population of approximately 1,000 people. Valemount is located on Highway 5, 320 km north of Kamloops, 300 km east of Prince George and 120 km west of Jasper, Alberta. The nearest communities are the small villages of Blue River and McBride, each approximately 100 km away.

The local economy is steady with some visible growth. The tourism industry continues to have potential for economic growth with the proposed Valemount Glacier Destination ski resort, which has been approved.

Newcomers to the area include retired persons, entrepreneurs looking to set up small businesses, and young families with work-away fathers - all looking for the small-town lifestyle. There are many volunteer activities that are very fulfilling and plenty of fresh air and outdoor recreational activities to enjoy.

As in any small town, there are limited resources available, so the library plays an important role in the community. It serves as a resource hub for educational and recreational materials both physical and digital. The library offers free Internet access, computer training and assistance, exam invigilating, and copy/fax/scan services. The meeting room and activity space is available, at no charge, to non-profit organizations and groups wanting to meet and hold free workshops. The library provides storage space for the Valemount Historic Society's archival materials. Playground equipment and a giant outdoor chess set are available for community use.

Fostering Connected Communities (advancing access to information and resources)

Our goal – To strengthen library services

The library undertook several activities to support this goal:

- Maintained the Little Free Library (built in partnership with the local high school and located in the main commercial area of Valemount) by providing materials and maintaining the structure
- Introduced divergent collections: over 50 jigsaw puzzles, 15 snowshoe kits, and 6 new outdoor games available for loan
- Consulted with library board members and staff to develop a vision statement: “Encouraging a spirit of learning and discovery”
- Participated in Inter-library Connect (ILC) and Inter-library Loans (ILL) with other BC libraries

The Little Library has helped to remove financial and social barriers by offering access to books “with no strings attached” and has provided a venue for people to share materials. Our new and interesting collections offer diverse experiences and opportunities and have already inspired interest in healthy, active lifestyles. New patrons, attracted by these resources, has been a bonus. Development of the vision statement has given board and staff members a simple, positive statement to share and will be useful in promoting the library’s goals. Sharing resources with other libraries is essential to enhancing our patrons’ access to resources. The ILC and ILL programs are very popular, with hundreds of items being sent and received each week through the library.

This goal will be ongoing with opportunities being sought and introduced to offer new materials and experiences to our patrons and to the community. We also continue to look forward to a future expansion of the library in order to better meet the needs of the community.

Building Capacity (enabling inspiration and innovation)

Our goal – To strengthen library services and enhance technology-based services

- The library continued to subscribe to a variety of databases, including Gale Courses, Ancestrylibrary, and Canadian Subsidy Directory
- We hosted a monthly Book Club, weekly Crafty Stitchers, Summer Reading Program, author readings, Armchair Travel series (presented by locals who have traveled recently), Legal Skype sessions, Kids Craft Days, supported a local “Amazing Race”, and provided space for the Valemount Quilters Guild to display their creations

These activities promoted the library as a hub of activity and a place where people can come together to share ideas, experiences, and learn new things. Patrons access a wealth of information on a variety of subjects, some from the comfort of their home, using their library cards and our databases. The opportunity to access courses through the Gale Course online resource allows patrons to further their educations for both work and recreation.

We will continue to utilize grant funding and group pricing to provide access to physical and electronic materials that educate and entertain and are pleased to be able to offer free and welcomed space for programs and events. In 2019 we will be working with the Columbia Basin Trust “Community Technology Programs” to develop a technology-based “maker space” within the library.

Working together (creating lasting and sustainable partnerships)

Our goal – *To improve partnerships*

The library continued to partner with the following organizations:

- North Central Library Federation, for author tours and collections, staff education opportunities, joint purchases and other initiatives
- BC Libraries, for collection sharing through ILC and ILL
- Valemount Food Bank, by hosting the Christmas Angel Tree and as a drop location for food donations
- Valemount Community Literacy Planning Committee, by contributing to community literacy planning, identifying gaps and creation an official community literacy plan
- Northern Health, for Healthy Community initiatives, Health Fair displays, and Books 4 Babies distribution
- Valemount Learning Centre, for ESL and Adult literacy materials support
- Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy (CBAL), for programming and materials for Family literacy day, Books 4 Babies co-ordination and distribution
- Robson Valley Community Support (RVCS), by offering free Legal Skype sessions
- Multiple post-secondary institutions, for exam invigilation

These collaborations provide a high quality of programming in the community and support the development of services through the sharing of resources, and the identification and recognition of current and potential partnerships. These collaborations also allow us to identify gaps and raise awareness of other local organizations’ efforts, resulting in less duplication. Results of an RVCS partnership has removed financial barriers by enabling free access to private

legal advice sessions in the library meeting room using our laptop and Skype services.

Meeting the needs of the community and establishing ways in which we can partner is ongoing with the goal of identifying gaps and seizing opportunities for new initiatives.

Sustaining our success (enhancing governance and demonstrating impact)

Our goal – *To increase awareness of the library and its value*

- The library continued to use social media, newspapers, posters, and school flyers to promote new collections and programs
- We continued to participate with the Valemount Community Literacy Planning Committee in order to share our value and programs with other organizations and to explore ways to work together to provide literacy support in our community
- We participated in the Valemountain Days parade, entering a Dr. Seuss themed float (which won first prize) and handing out free books, along with candy and bouncy balls, to kids along the route
- We invited local government and community members to celebrate our 2017 renovations with a presentation, ribbon cutting, refreshments and travel presentation in January 2018
- The outcome of these activities was an increase in new people coming to the library and the ensuing opportunity to introduce its resources, as well as a general increase in community awareness of the library. As always, our library is eager to promote reading and remains an important component of community literacy plans. The renovation celebration provided another excellent opportunity to celebrate with members of the community and showcase the library and its resources

We will continue to seek new ways to participate in our community and to promote library services.

Our library also:

Makes life more affordable – The library offers free services and programs including Internet access, exam invigilation for post-secondary education, and use of space for other organizations to meet. Our Summer Reading Program offered seven weeks of activities, crafts, food and draws with special events, at no charge. During 2018 we offered meeting space for many non-profit organizations including Sparks, Brownies and Guides, Valemount Community

Church, Book Club, Crafty Stitchers, Toastmasters, Chamber of Commerce, Valemount and Area Museum, Valemount Seniors Club, Foster Parent Training and Valemount Sports Day Committee.

Delivers reliable services - Our experienced and knowledgeable staff is available at the library 36 hours per week and online access to patron accounts and library catalogues is available 24/7.

Builds a strong economy – We offer internet training and assistance, resumé templates, access to educational materials. We use local businesses for supplies for programs, and local labour and materials for renovations. We offer exam invigilation services to assist with educational goals which results in better employment opportunities.

Has a commitment to First Nations – We continue to develop a collection of First Nations materials for educational and entertainment purposes, and by working with local First Nation members to provide programming.

Summary:

Through provincial public library grants we continued to maintain, enhance and offer quality library services, programming and events.

We strived to develop new and strengthen existing partnerships that benefit the community and raise literacy levels and awareness in all its forms.

In 2018 we welcomed 73 new library patrons, had 1,146 members registered, and circulated 17,035 from our collection of 16,359 items.

A challenge for any small library is to balance being an active hub with offering quiet space for study and reading. Our long-term goal of an expansion of the library will help us address the issue of providing adequate space for a variety of activities. We are optimistic that the growth of the community will result in the opportunity for the library to also expand and grow.

