

LIBRARIES BRANCH 2015 PROVINCIAL LIBRARY GRANTS REPORT

Submitted 19 February 2016



CRANBROOK PUBLIC LIBRARY
expand your universe

Introduction

OUR COMMUNITY

Cranbrook is the largest community in the Kootenays, with a population of just under 20,000 in the city and approximately 6,000 in the surrounding region. It is the key commercial and service centre in the region, and home to the East Kootenay Regional Hospital and main campus of the College of the Rockies. It has a diversified economy with retail, hospitality, health and education sectors being major employers. A significant number of people are also employed in the Elk Valley coal mines and the Alberta oil patch.

- ◆ Median age of 44.6 years in Cranbrook is higher than the provincial median of 41.6 years
- ◆ 91.8% of people claim English as their mother tongue, with 97.5% of the population normally speaking English at home
- ◆ Visible minorities make up less than 2% of the total population
- ◆ Number of people with university degrees (11.4%) is well below the provincial average (24.1%)¹
- ◆ Student performance on standard exams is comparable to the provincial average
- ◆ Average value of a single-family detached home is approximately \$282,000²

OUR LIBRARY

The Cranbrook Public Library serves the almost 26,000 residents of the City of Cranbrook and Regional District of East Kootenay's Area C seven days a week from its central location at the northern end of the downtown core. 4 July 2015 marked the Library's 90th anniversary, a milestone marked by a number of special events. 2015 was the third year of its current five-year strategic plan. It focuses on adopting a patron-centric perspective both for evaluating existing services and developing new programs. Key to its success is building relationships with local



The adult colouring club launched in the fall proved immediately popular

organizations such as the Downtown Business Association, Cranbrook Social Planning Committee and the ʔaqam band. Other objectives include: the adoption of technological tools to enhance services and communicate with users, the creation of flexible public spaces to encourage a greater variety of social interactions, and offering a greater range of programs to foster lifelong learning for all ages.

Work on strategic objectives during the year was twofold. First there was a concerted effort to build on initiatives started in 2014 – increasing use of social media, seeking out outreach opportunities and creating a collaborative workplace. Secondly, two major projects got completed in 2015 – the successful establishment of a designated endowment fund and the launch of a new website.

¹ Data sourced from Statistics Canada National Household Survey 2011 and BC Secure Stats Socio-Economic Profile, Rockies Region: : <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo1=CSD&Code1=5901022&Data=Count&SearchText=cranbrook&SearchType=Begins&SearchPR=59&A1=All&B1=All&Custom=&TABID=1>
<http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/Files/b13d612e-9430-4310-a0ad-d19a452acc30/Socio-EconomicProfile-CollegeRegion5.pdf>

² City of Cranbrook Quick Facts Guide: <http://docs.cranbrook.ca/downloads/ecdev/Cranbrook-Quick-Facts.pdf>

Provincial Priority: A Focus on Equitable Access

GOALS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Strategic Plan Objectives

- ◆ Develop at least one outreach program for each targeted currently underserved group including seniors, the business community and marginalized members of our society.
- ◆ Actively build the Library's social media presence to engage with people and inform them of programs and services.

Accomplishments

For many years the Library focused on developing programs for children, youth and seniors, or for minority groups such as non-English speaking immigrants. After evaluating existing programs in 2014, staff realized that adults formed the Library's largest underserved group. Programs for adults consisted of sporadic author events and one-time programs on specific topics which met with limited success, although programs like the scrapbooking weekends and the knitting club indicated there was a demand for non-formal programs that gave people the opportunity to get together to socialize and create.

In 2015, the Community Outreach Coordinator redesigned the Summer Reading Club for adults, incorporating elements from the perennially popular children's version, such as tracking reading with the chance of winning prizes, offering regular craft programs, and a strong social media component to keep up interest levels. The revitalized Adult SRC proved extremely popular, with over 700 people signing up. Local businesses generously donated prizes that participants got quite excited about.

The successful launch of the Summer Reading Club for Adults means that the Cranbrook Public Library now offers a range of programs targeted at every age group, from newborns to seniors. Age groups form the primary categories staff used to develop programs because of the homogenous nature of the region's population and staff's limited capacity to deliver programs. As we commit more resources to programming, we will develop programs that meet the needs of specific audiences such as babies, the business community and First Nations' people.

PROGRAM/SERVICE

Summer Reading Club for Adults

A Summer Reading Club for adults had been attempted for several years with only moderate success. Originally it focused on encouraging participants to discover more about the services offered at the Library by completing tasks in a 'Passport to Reading', which ranged from using online databases to using the catalogue to find a book. Participants indicated that this felt too much like work, what they really wanted was to have fun.

The Community Outreach Coordinator looked researched other models, including the provincial Summer Reading Club and what libraries throughout Canada and the United States offered, to come up with a redesigned format that put reading at the forefront. Participants kept track of the amount of time they spent reading



One of the weekly prize winners from the Summer Reading Club for Adults

and got to enter their name for a prize draw when they hit certain thresholds. They could also take part in a series of craft programs held several times throughout the summer and closing ceremonies where grand prizes were awarded. As a result, participation rates remained high throughout the summer, rather than dropping off sharply after the first two weeks as had been the case in previous years.

To encourage staff to promote the club, they got a chance to win a prize each time they signed up a new club member. This led to friendly rivalry and a concerted effort to promote the club to every adult who came into the Library during the summer and helps account for the large number of participants, around 10% of all active adult members. It was interesting to note that the Summer Reading Club for children also had its highest participation rates ever, with almost 50% of all active juvenile members joining.

KEY PARTNERSHIPS

Local business community

- ◆ Provided donations for the adult SRC prizes
- ◆ Promoted the SRC in their stores and Facebook pages

Local media

- ◆ Provided extensive coverage of all forms of the SRC and covered a number of the events
- ◆ Offered suggestions on how to extend the reach of the promotional material

OUTCOMES

The objectives for the club were to increase adult membership levels and boost the Library's presence in the community.

The number of people who joined the Library in July was 19% higher, and in August 16% higher, than during those months in 2014, with circulation up 5%. The majority of this increase came from adults joining or renewing their membership after years of not setting foot inside the Library. Even residents of other communities joined because of this program. One patron, a BC OneCard member from a nearby community, said that she joined our library because both she and her child could both be members of the Summer Reading Club, giving them a reason to spend more time together and encourage each other to keep reading. Several adults stated that joining the club gave them permission to have fun just like a kid, and enthuse to their friends about the fact they were spending time reading.

Local media were very enthusiastic about both the Summer Reading Club for adults, approaching the Library with ideas on how they could help promote the program.

Perhaps one of the most telling signs that the Library had engaged the interest of the community was the fact that people approached library staff in stores and on the street to say things like 'I'm hearing that there are cool things happening at the Library, I'm going to have to see for myself.' In the Library it became a common refrain to hear, 'It's been years since I had a library card. I'm so excited to get one again.'



Participants enjoying a summertime program at Rotary Park put on by the RDEK, Library and local garden club

Provincial Priority: Increased Support for Education Transformation

GOALS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Strategic Plan Objective

- ◆ Collaborate with literacy-related institutions, cultural organizations, and subject experts to diversify and extend the number of programs available to inform and inspire people about topics that matter in their daily lives.

Accomplishments

The Library and local schools have worked closely over the years to support learning outcomes within the district, including local independent and First Nations' schools: from providing library tours, to supporting Red Cedar clubs, to taking curricula into consideration when acquiring collection material. We found we could most effectively support education transformation in BC by providing people of all ages and backgrounds non-formal opportunities to engage in lifelong learning activities. *Artistic Connections with Youth* presented such an opportunity with the added benefit that it gave us the chance to work closely with other cultural and literacy organizations and individuals to hold the program.

The original plan was to offer 7 workshops for children and teens. Attendance rates that exceeded expectations and positive feedback from participants resulted in a further two workshops being added. These were opened to all ages because a number of adults who saw posters of previous workshops, and parents who dropped off their children at the sessions, expressed regret that they could not participate.

PROGRAM/SERVICE

Artistic Connections with Youth

Experiential learning can be a powerful tool for young people to explore their innate creativity. This program sought to connect youth with local artists in an inviting, casual setting. Local artists taught participants about different types of artistic expression in a series of 9 hands-on workshops held Saturdays between September 2014 and May 2015.

Staff extended the potential impact of the workshops by making available topical books, videos online material and magazines that supported participants' practical experience with the art form. For example, the inukshuk-making workshop gave participants to learn about Inuit art and culture through books even as they made a piece of art to take home.

- ◆ Kids – clay sculpture, painting, mixed media and word art
- ◆ Teens – painting, zentangle and photography
- ◆ All Ages – rock painting, building inukshuks

For this program, staff felt it was important to support local artists by offering them an honorarium and to help raise their profile in the community. While they greatly appreciated the gesture, most artists donated their honorariums back to the Library, which in part made it possible to hold two additional workshops.



Rock art fun for all ages

KEY PARTNERSHIPS

Cranbrook & District Arts Council

- ◆ The council was instrumental in identifying local artists who could put on workshops aimed at children and teens.

Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy

- ◆ Helped to setup and run the workshops
- ◆ Provided additional funding to acquire supplies for some of the workshops
- ◆ Helped promote the workshops to local youth groups, and their own clients

Friends of the Cranbrook Public Library

- ◆ Without the Friends, the workshops would not have happened. They secured a grant from the Columbia Kootenay Cultural Alliance that funded the bulk of the program.

OUTCOMES

The original scope of the project was to offer 7 workshops. Two more got added, as previously mentioned, due to overwhelming positive feedback from participants and consistently high participation rates. The successful completion of this program encouraged further encouraged staff to develop further programs inspired by the maker space ethos, and reliant on community involvement, to support the non-formal learning objectives of the public we serve:

- ◆ Preschool Storytime with members of the Kootenay Ice, the local Western Hockey League team
- ◆ *Crafty Saturdays* program
- ◆ An adult colouring club

Staff created a program development/evaluation template inspired by the one used in the Fraser Valley Regional Library to ensure that programs that at first glance may not appear to fit the Library's mandate or strategic plan, in fact do. Furthermore, it will streamline the evaluation process for all programs.

Provincial Priority: Support for BC Jobs Plan by improving outcomes for job seekers in BC

GOALS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Strategic Plan Objectives

- ◆ Develop at least one outreach program for each targeted currently underserved group including seniors, the business community and marginalized members of our society.
- ◆ Work with our City to create new spaces specifically designed for quiet study and small meetings.

Accomplishments

The start-up phase of providing an exam proctoring service is complete. Government agencies, such as the EK Employment Services Centre, refer people to the Library for many job search related tasks, from printing resumes to submitting job



Making inukshuks during Spring Break 2015

applications and proctoring exams. Continuing education institutions inform students that libraries can provide proctoring, and are the other main source of referrals.

PROGRAM\SERVICE

Exam Proctoring

In seeking out opportunities to support job seekers, the Library wanted to complement work done by other local agencies, such as WorkBC's EK Employment Services Centre. We already did this by offering one-on-one assistance with printing resumés and completing online job applications for many years, but we wanted to do more. Staff discovered there was a significant demand for exam proctoring by those taking distance or online education courses. While the College of the Rockies offers this service, it does so only on weekdays during the daytime. Our library was in a fortunate position to have an accredited librarian working almost every hour it is open, including evenings and weekends.

Many taking online courses already have jobs and are upgrading their skills, or are parents with young children, or volunteer around the community. Some juggle a number of these responsibilities. These people appreciated that they could schedule their exam around their other commitments rather than vice versa. They also valued that the associated cost is a donation of their choosing, with no minimum amount. The Library Board recognized that people taking online courses have many pressures on their life and that a proctoring fee should not hinder them from pursuing their career or personal growth goals. Also, as the Library lacks study rooms or dedicated quiet zones, the Board decided that it should not charge for a service for which it had inadequate facilities nor should it get widely promoted.

Despite these limiting factors, the service proved very popular, with staff proctoring 30 exams in 2015. The full service includes receiving the examination material, scheduling and invigilating the exam, completing all the paperwork and returning the exam to the issuing institution.

KEY PARTNERSHIPS

Service Canada & BCWorks EK Employment Services Centre

- ◆ These agencies refer individuals to the Library for exam proctoring, as well as other services such as printing resumés, completing online job applications and accessing job seeking resources.

OUTCOMES

Based on an initial assessment, staff anticipated that there might be one or two exams per month. Actual demand exceeded expectations almost from the start, although it was not advertised. A number of learners thanked staff for the service, saying that it was a very positive experience and that they would recommend it to others. Several of the institutions now advise their students to take their exams at the Cranbrook Public Library.

The success of this service adds impetus to the need to create a quiet study space within the facility, as identified in the strategic plan. Future public computer upgrades will take into account the software, hardware and accessibility options job seekers need so the Library can better serve this user group.



Supporting job seekers by providing specialized services

Provincial Priority: A focus on collaboration between libraries and other partners

GOALS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Strategic Plan Objective

- ◆ Create a designated Cranbrook Public Library Endowment Fund so that the Library can pilot innovative programs to rapidly respond to emerging trends.

Accomplishments

The Library's 90th anniversary provided a perfect opportunity to complete the drive to establish an endowment fund: 'looking to the past, building for the future.' Work began on the project in 2013 when the Library partnered with a local coffee shop to raise the funds needed to create an opportunity fund at the Cranbrook and District Community Foundation (CDCF), the first step in creating a designated fund.

A project coordinator was tasked at the end of 2014 with the ambitious goal of raising the \$10,000 needed to establish a designated library endowment fund in only one year, although the Library had 10 years in which to reach this target. Through the coordinator's dedication and innovative, at times unorthodox, fundraising activities, she exceeded that goal: in December the Library contributed over \$13,000 to the CDCF to establish the Cranbrook Public Library Endowment Fund.

This was the major project at the Library in 2015, influencing nearly every aspect of operations.

PROGRAM/SERVICE

Endowment Fund

The Library heavily relies on donations and project grants coming from outside normal funding streams to launch programs and services that meet changing needs within our community. Toddler Storytime, lending ebook readers and subscribing to Ancestry.com are just a few of these initiatives that have since integrated into regular operations. The administration of this process means that there is at times a significant lag between when an idea is proposed and its implementation. The Library Board decided to establish a designated Cranbrook Public Library Endowment Fund to act as an innovation fund that will let the Library rapidly pilot services and programs. This will make the Library more responsive to our community's changing information and literacy needs.

The Library undertook a number of special fundraising events to raise the \$10,000 required to establish a designated endowment fund under the auspices of the CDCF, affiliated with the Vancouver Foundation.

These included:

- ◆ 'Donate-a-Wreck' car donation campaign where people could get their old vehicles towed to the auto wrecker in return for a tax receipt issued by the Library for the value of the vehicle.



Celebrating the Library's 90th Anniversary in 1920s style

- ◆ A barbeque held as part of the local Sam Steele Days festivities in June
- ◆ Craft and trade fairs.
- ◆ A donation jar at the circulation desk.
- ◆ Bake sales conducted by the Friends of the Library.
- ◆ An online auction conducted on Facebook with items donated by local businesses, including fishing trips, camping getaways, restaurant gift certificates amongst many other items.
- ◆ Volunteering at large-scale special events at the City's Western Financial Place, including a monster truck rally and Bare Naked Ladies concert.
- ◆ A 1920s-themed 90th Anniversary Gala at the Cranbrook History Centre's Royal Alexandra Hall.

KEY PARTNERSHIPS

Cranbrook & District Community Foundation

- ◆ Manages the Cranbrook Public Library endowment fund
- ◆ Helped to plan, promote and stage the 90th Anniversary Gala

Sam Steele Society

- ◆ Let the Library host an officially sanctioned Sam Steele Barbeque
- ◆ Promoted the barbeque in its promotions and on its website

Farbrook Auto Wreckers

- ◆ Accept and process the donated vehicles
- ◆ Deal with all the associated paperwork

Community Businesses and Entrepreneurs

- ◆ Generously donated items for the online auction and gala silent auction
- ◆ Participated at the craft and trade fairs

OUTCOMES

We succeeded in the primary objective of establishing an endowment fund by the end of 2015.

The fundraising activities resulted in extensive coverage of the Library and its activities in local media, creating a definite buzz. The activities were developed around the idea of giving people something in return for their contributions rather than just making an outright monetary donation. It gave us a way to change peoples' views about what a library is, the services it offers and its relevance in their lives.

We forged relationships with organizations and businesses we hope to develop in the future. For example, in 2016 the Library will provide a judge for the Chamber of Commerce annual business awards. This furthers our vision of being an integral part of the community we serve..

Finally, raising \$13,000 in such a short period was not an easy process, with staff and Board members having to learn to take risks and accept a certain level of chaos. With this experience, we are in a better position to balance risk-taking ventures with more tried-and-true methods of connecting with Library patrons and the broader community.



Library staff and Friends members volunteering at a bake sale

Summary

2015 was a very busy year at the Cranbrook Public Library. In addition to the programs detailed in this report, the Library staff and Board worked on a number of other major initiatives:

- ◆ Continued to develop the concept of a collaborative workplace model where future decisions on programs and services will focus on the benefit to the end user and be made using a suite of collaborative competencies;
- ◆ Launched a new website using BC Libraries Cooperative LibPress service;
- ◆ Redesigned the Library Board meeting processes and structures to streamline meetings and provide trustees with the information necessary to make informed decisions in a timely manner.

We strengthened our relationships with community businesses and organizations, learned to take more risks, engage at a more personal level with those we serve, and focus on creating a patron-centric library of the future. A number of key strategic goals and objectives were addressed over the course of the year that moved the Library forward.

LOOKING FORWARD

Over the next year, Library Board and staff will build upon the work done in 2015:

- ◆ Conclude the change management process to have the library adopt a collaborative workplace model that will then enable staff to make decisions about programs and services based on the needs of our community.
- ◆ Recommence the work with the Community Outreach Coordinator to explore the different models for a café service and pursue the most feasible option.
- ◆ Develop a proposal on available options for migrating to an automated circulation system in 2017, including a revised patron service plan.
- ◆ Conduct an in-depth policy review
- ◆ Prepare for the next strategic planning cycle that starts in 2017

Challenging and exciting times lie ahead at the Cranbrook Public Library.

This report was reviewed and ratified by the members of the Cranbrook Public Library Board at their regular meeting held on Wednesday, 17 February 2016.

Original signed by

Denine Milner, Chair



A Kootenay Ice player reading to a crowd of preschoolers at Storytime