

## BCLA Community-Led Interest Group Meeting

December 8, 2020, 2-4 pm,

Virtual meeting via Zoom

In attendance: Ann Johannes (CPL), Adair Harper (RPL), Ilona Stachura (SL), David Kerr (SL), Claire Badali (SL), Caitlin Ottenbreit (GVPL), Kelty Roberts (VPL), Mark MacKichan (VPL), Emily Aspinwall (VPL), Eleonore Shaffer (VPL), Nicole Sousa (BPL), Mariah Gastaldo (BPL), Andrea Lukic (BPL), Janeen Parent (FVRL), Leila Meshgini (WVML), Shideh Taleban (NVCL), Sandra Mora (Quest, guest speaker).

This was our third virtual CLIG meeting after the pandemic, providing an opportunity to share and reflect on the current situation in a community-led services context. Shideh started with some quick Zoom housekeeping and then Kelty began the session.

### **1. September 23, 2020 meeting minutes approved**

### **2. Roundtable discussion of what is going on at the various library systems (current projects, employment situation, reopening progression)**

#### **Coquitlam Public Library (CPL)**

*Ann* – Work from home has been a struggle, low morale. Ongoing programs include Zoom storytimes, trivia nights, psychology workshops, advance care planning, Holiday Hellos (worked with schools to collect 2500 holiday cards and gifts and are going to distribute 600 care packages to three different care home). They've noticed that people are more inclined towards happier programming. They're not getting the same participation numbers as before. After masks became mandatory, it has been harder for staff working in the library due to patron non-compliance. They offered trivia nights for staff to help boost morale, but not everyone attended.

#### **Richmond Public Library (RPL)**

*Adair* – Lots of desk shifts and programing duties. Unfilled positions (maternity leave, retirements). No auxiliaries back yet. 5 Community Librarians:

- *Deana* – Intergenerational pen pal program (connecting teens and seniors through letter/Christmas card exchanges; originally an ELL program), SWIS, read with a dog, etc.
- *Millicent* – Richmond house shelter literacy program. Pandemic is putting pause on outreach visits. Black history month program coming up.
- *Jenny* – New hire, working with emergency response centre, computer lending/digital literacy, art project.
- *Adair* – On city's seniors team working on monthly newsletter and seniors strategy, multicultural grant for podcasting, primary care network, homelessness services. Will be

going on maternity leave, during which time Winnifred will be taking over the seniors' portfolio.

- *Winnifred* – Storytime with Santa.

### **Surrey Libraries (SL)**

*David* – Started in-person programming in the summer, twice monthly visits to the food bank at new location (better for social distancing). Also doing in-person modular housing visits. All other regular community visits suspended for now. Doing one-on-one computer training in library, lots of space, 2 laptops. ESL virtual tours very successful. Will be attending Ryan Dowd's upcoming webinar on Burnout and Stress: Strategies in Case 2021 is as Bad as 2020 [registration link shared in chat].

*Ilona* – Most regular and casual staff have been recalled, so feeling much more normal now. Limited services and limited hours in place until next March at least. Building new Clayton branch, which will open sometime between January and March. They are doing lots of virtual outreach. Another staff member is doing regular book club visit to a senior's home. Online presentation for early educators. City of Surrey came up with the idea of light display (wearing lights and visiting senior facilities). There might be notes for seniors too.

### **Greater Victoria Public Library (GVPL)**

*Caitlin* – In last stage of recalls. Offering digital help over the phone. The library is connecting with municipalities and Caitlin is connecting of art sector (Pacific Coast Opera). They did couple of outdoor story logs which happened during Pro-D days and were so popular they hope to bring them back in the new year. Offering digital help if needed and having some external partners helping with digital literacy. Still focusing on expanding hours and services. Is now working in the branch two days per week.

### **Vancouver Public Library (VPL)**

*Kelty* – Opened levels 3-6 of the Central Library to the public on November 30<sup>th</sup>; expansion of services has been very difficult on information staff, who do the bulk of the twice daily deep cleaning duties. Auxiliary staff are back, but for the purposes of contact tracing, are limited to 3-branch/department cohorts. Connection to Kith and Kin (Indigenous genealogy program) has resumed weekly session over Zoom.

*Eleonore* – All community librarians back at work (half time working from home, half time on-site). Doing far fewer in-person community visits. VPL got a Computers for Success federal grant to hire 8 interns (students 18-30) in the new year (focus is on youth, BIPOC, and LGBTQ2S+) and 2 of them will be joining the CL team. 1200 applications were received and it's paid. No education requirement.

*Mark* – [Skilled Immigrant InfoCentre](#) on Level 4 now open to public again. They still offer lots of job search workshops over Zoom and customize workshops for organizations such as MOSAIC, BC Immigrant Services, NSMS. Received funding to expand the How to Use

LinkedIn workshop so that it is open to everyone. Held an all-day Zoom conference called Technology Together (750 people attended). They are small team of three colleagues who run the sessions.

*Emily* – Everything is on Zoom now. Mostly working from home. Inspiration Lab creation stations on Level 3 now open. Doing lots of partnership programs (Vancouver Family Services, Canada Learning Code, Statistics Canada). They realized programs such as how to host a Zoom workshop was more popular than how to use Zoom workshop. Drop in style. Recently finished a successful run of financial literacy programs. Wrote a report – Program Planning to address Community Needs during COVID – to address a number identified community programming needs. This report has been shared via the CLIG listserv.

### **Burnaby Public Library (BPL)**

*Mariah* – Most staff are working onsite. Staff at BPL are not responsible for daily cleaning duties; patrons are just provided with Lysol wipes. Update on program template pilot (jobs, ESL, etc.). Maintaining community connections with Indigenous organizations.

### **Fraser Valley Regional Library (FVRL)**

*Janeen* – All branches open, all auxiliary staff back since August. Still doing Library on Tour weekly in-person visits to Indigenous communities, etc. and started doing outreach at flu clinics. Some virtual tours for mental health group. Getting back to treatment centre and making library cards. FVRL has a lengthy health and safety protocol checklist. Drive-through X-mas program.

### **West Vancouver Memorial Library (WVML)**

*Leila* – Added evening hours. In a hiring freeze, but currently down several staff positions. Doing virtual programming instead of in-person outreach. Currently, working entirely from home. Climate Future event with Bob Joseph was a success.

### **City of North Vancouver Library (CNVL)**

*Shideh* – Update on hours of operation, Persian Book Club, weekly computer sessions, digital literacy, ESL, online security program. Not doing one-on-one tech appointments, but will help patrons in person if needed. Offering lots of virtual outreach (NSMS, Queen Mary Family Literacy Program). Going to offer Citizenship Preparation Workshop with MOSAIC in the new year, planning CRA tax clinic for 2021. Going to plan programs with Kelty Dennehy Mental Health for newcomers in 2021. NVCL recently had teen short story contest (received 15 submissions).

## **3. Guest Speaker – Sandra Mora – Community Development Manager, [Quest Food Exchange](#)**

*Sandra* – Provided a demo of the website and explanations of their service model (clients are by referral) and 5 grocery markets (2 in Vancouver, 1 in Surrey, 1 on the border of Burnaby/New

Westminster, and 1 in North Vancouver). Since 1989, QUEST has worked with the GVFB and other food donors (~150+ organizations) to provide low cost food items to those in need. They always have lots of volunteer opportunities, and most paid employees (~90%) started off as volunteers; around 50% of their employees have disabilities. Won the 2018 Open Doors award for equity. Currently working on Christmas Hamper campaign. They accept clients through referrals by organizations. Sandra mentioned that librarians can refer people if they know of anyone in need. Referring organizations need to know if these individuals are for sure in need of these services.

*Kelty* – Asked if hours are back to normal yet. Yes, but has been a struggle as around 30% of staff and most volunteers opted to stay home in March.

*Shideh* – Asked about the price range for food. About 80% lower than No Frills prices.

*Shideh* – Do they accept donations from individuals and organizations? Yes. They don't receive much federal funding, so rely mostly on donations and grants.

*Leila* – Asked if they were the final link in the chain. They donate to other organizations (e.g., GVFB, food insecurity groups, etc.) if they have too much of something to sell or if products are about to expire.

*David* – Asked if QUEST is more responsive to specific dietary restrictions than the FB. Yes, for example they have far more vegan food options.

*Leila* – Asked if part of Sandra's position involves reaching out to communities to make sure they are getting culturally appropriate food options for clients. Yes, as Community Development Manager, she ensures that they bring in lots of ethnic (Indian, Chinese, etc.) foods.

*Eleonore* – Can librarians refer clients directly? Depends on whether they are in a position to know that an individual really needs to be part of the program. CLs who are visiting homeless shelters for example would be able to do so.

*Kelty* – Asked if the referral form is still online. No longer need a form, just email as per the [instructions online](#).

*Adair* – Are Richmond residents accepted as clients? Yes, anyone from any city could be referred to them.

*Leila* – Asked if QUEST is always taking volunteers? Yes, they rely heavily on volunteers in order to stay open. They are particularly short-staffed right now.

Multilingual QUEST handouts (PDF) and Sandra's email address will be shared via email.

#### **4. BCLA 2021 Conference plans (deadline for submissions: December 31, 2020)**

*Kelty* – Asked if anyone is planning to submit a proposal for the [2021 BCLA Conference](#) which will be held virtually from May 3<sup>rd</sup> to May 7<sup>th</sup> next year. The deadline for submissions is now extended to January 8, 2021.

Topic themes for the upcoming conference include:

- Libraries and Anti-Racism
- Mental Wellness and Library Staff
- Indigenization in Libraries
- Library Values (Intellectual Freedom, EDI, and Privacy)
- Libraries, Inside and Out (Climate Crisis, Public Space)
- Libraries and Children's Services: Visiting and Revisiting BC Summer Reading Club

*Ann* – Is considering writing a proposal about CPL's recent **library card blitz**.

*Eleonore* – Suggested that **mental health** might be a topic of interest.

*Leila* – Interlink mental health?

*Ilona* – At SL, they hold weekly staff chats (outside of work time) to promote staff wellbeing.

*Adair* – The mental health of staff (as provided by the employer?) would be an interesting topic to pursue.

*Shideh* – Suggested that we reach out to different library systems in LM and see how they have approached their staff well-being during pandemic.

*Adair* – Suggested that **anti-racism** might be a topic of interest.

*Leila* – Also interested. Was the only employee to engage in anti-racism work at WVML this year. Asked if anyone else would want to work on a proposal on this topic?

*Kelty* – Suggested Ravi at SL.

*Shideh* – Suggested Emily at BPL.

*Adair* – Richmond equity and diversity?

*Ann* – Multicultural grant for anti-racism speaker.

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*Eleonore* – CLs at VPL are working on a safety plan and would be interested in hearing from other organizations about what protocols/plans they have implemented. Ilona is going to share their COVID-19 Outreach Health and Safety plan with us to share with the group.

*Ann* – Asked if anyone has suggestions for resources in support of the position that it is important for schools to have libraries. Received a number of helpful suggestions including consulting a school librarian, checking in with BCLA's YA/Children's interest group, and consulting the academic literature. Caitlin mentioned that some schools at Edmonton were having the same problem and there might be some resources there.

<http://www.ilovelibraries.org/school-libraries/why-are-school-libraries-essential>

#### **5. Next Meeting – Date? Guest speakers?**

Next meeting will in February, most likely on Zoom again.