

## BCLA Community-Led Interest Group Meeting

February 17, 2021, 10am-12pm,

Virtual meeting via Zoom

In attendance: Ann Johannes (CPL), Deanna Walker (RPL), Ilona Stachura (SL), David Kerr (SL), Michael Hunc (SL), Caitlin Ottenbreit (GVPL), Kelty Roberts (VPL), Mark MacKichan (VPL), Emily Aspinwall (VPL), Eleonore Shaffer (VPL), Isabel Stewart (VPL), Jorge Cardenas (BPL), Tara Thompson (ORL), Gordon Yusko (Read to Write BC), Janeen Parent (FVRL), Shideh Taleban (NVCL), Anita Fata (UBC iSchool student), McKelle Hansen (UBC iSchool student), Emily Gow (Western University student), Jessica Stol (Western University student), Owen Stride (YWCA TechLink, guest speaker).

This was our fourth 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. December 8, 2020 meeting minutes approved**

### **2. Community-Led Training Brainstorming: Jorge**

*Jorge* – As Manager of Community Development at BPL and one of the instructors of the Community-Led Libraries class at UBC iSchool, has been wondering where library staff are getting trained in the principles of community-led library work. Most of us haven't received any kind of formal training which is why we have groups like this – to have informal conversations about challenges and successes. Two questions:

1. Do we need formal training?
2. If we do, how do we do it? (e.g., One-time event or ongoing sessions? What resources are required?)

*Kelty* – Contacted Annette at BCLA about the annual Youth Services Institute (YSI) that is held the day before the conference. It is too late to do something similar this year, but encourages us to contact her in June if we want to host something for September.

*Jorge* – Mentioned that it could be more participant-driven like the [Code4Lib BC Unconference](#), which starts tomorrow.

*Eleonore* – Shared a link to the OLA's [Community-Led Think Tank](#).

*Gordon* – Suggested speaking to Ana, Director of Northwest Library Federation.

*Jorge* – Will be having a conversation with her tomorrow.

*Tara* – Western had a class. UWO: 9357 Community Development: Libraries Building Community with Bill Irwin.

*Emily* – That class is no longer offered.

*Gordon* – Carnegie Community Engagement (mostly for academic librarians).

*Caitlin* – Had some training when she started as a CL in Edmonton, but it was just employer specific (it was more applied/hands-on/mentor-based than general training).

*David* – SL is putting together an "Outreach Services Manual" for new staff (still in draft form but already 30 pages).

*Iлона* – Manual is divided by community specific situation (e.g., newcomers, schools, etc.). Will hopefully be done by the end of the year.

*Mark* – Had no training, but was part of the working group at VPL that developed community engagement training for staff, and is part of the workshop delivery team. This is the group that Christie Menzo and Heidi Schiller led when they were at VPL. It was a 3.5 hr workshop that started up early in 2019. It was fairly introductory and focussed more on engagement than actual community-led practices. Course documents can be found online via [Library Toolshed](#).

*Eleonore* – Community librarians at VPL are currently working on a service review. As part of the background research, they worked on an annotated bibliography about community work that was helpful for getting a broader perspective. Bibliography will be shared via email

*Deanna* – Didn't have any class at her school. RPL has some internal documents but from her understanding, they have not been updated in a while.

*David* – found the [Homeless Library Training courses](#) offered by Ryan Dowd really helpful, although more with respect to communication with priority communities than as a holistic approach to engagement.

*Shideh* – Recommends the [Harwood Innovators Training Lab](#), which generally is a 2 day course, but was offered as an 8-week program during the pandemic.

*Gordon* – Agreed that they are a good resource.

*Ann* – Thought the free courses were worthwhile.

*Caitlin* – Has taken trauma-informed and whole person training from [Niche Academy](#) (see also [Whole Person Librarianship](#)).

*Jorge* – Commented that we don't have a place to access all these different resources, like a subject guide with links. Also added that not all of the resources are free – both Homeless Library and Harwood Institute charge for much of their content.

*Anita* – If an online resource/web page would be useful to aggregate resources, Jorge could reach out to the iSchool about having a professional experience student work on this as a project.

*Jorge* – Talking about so many different things (community engagement, community development, outreach, EDI, trauma-informed practice, etc.), hard to focus. Also, each organization has a different understanding of what is meant by various terms. At BPL, they are taking a focussed, “radical” approach. This means going outside the library and seeking out underserved communities in particular. They are also budgeting 3hrs every other week for staff for 6 months to learn about community-led work (content is the same as the iSchool class he teaches). It has three parts:

1. **Community Work:** What community librarians do *outside* of the library to support underserved communities.
2. **Lenses:** The various community approaches/lenses taken *inside* the library. Justice, equity, diversity, inclusion, anti-racism, etc.
3. **Tools, Strategies, and Procedures:** Useful resources for staff at all classifications.

These sessions are recorded so one possibility would be to put them online for anyone to watch. Another possibility would be to hold a formal community-led institute type of session, similar to the annual YSI event. A third option would be for this group to host additional online (monthly?) panel discussions with guest speakers about CL topics.

*Ilona* – Wondered if this could take the form of a BCLA session (similar to last time), and we could aim for the 2022 conference.

*Kelty* – Anyone interested in working on a project of this sort, please let us know before June. Gordon and Ann both expressed an interest during the meeting.

*Jorge* – Reminder to do this type of work on paid time. If there is resistance within your organization, he can get Beth Davies to talk to your boss about why it is important work to do on work time.

### 3. BCLA 2021 Conference plans

*Jorge* – BPL is involved in 4 sessions this year, including 2 that he is personally on:

1. [Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in Children’s Services: A Case Study on Connecting with Newcomer Families in Burnaby](#)
2. [Transgender Inclusion at Burnaby Public Library: An EDI Roadmap](#)
3. [Unexpected Partnerships: Community Work in a Pandemic](#) – session delivered by Jorge on how BPL pivoted their community work as a result of COVID-19 (increasing their CL team, resisting the online programming shift, etc.).
4. [Colourful Perspectives: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Across Libraries](#) – a panel discussion that Jorge is on.

*Kelty* – Added that Heather (SFU) and Nick (UBCLE) are doing a presentation on the [DTES Research Access Portal](#) and that Jenny (SL) is doing one on the [mental wellbeing of staff](#).

#### **4. Guest Speaker – Owen Stride, Program Manager, [TechLink](#) & CFI Tech Support, YWCA Metro Vancouver (11 am)**

*Owen* – TechLink provides virtual tech assistance to those who need it in the Lower Mainland by pairing them up with a practicum student, usually a young immigrant who has IT skills but is struggling to find employment opportunities. There were 11 practicum participants in the first cohort (6 months), 9 of whom have since landed jobs in tech.

TechLink is currently funded until next June, but they are working on a grant to extend the program and expand the service to all of BC. Thus far they've had over 3000 interactions and produced more than 200 webinars in a range of languages.

*Shideh* – Asked about library partnership opportunities. Owen said that they are open to that; anyone interested can send him an email directly.

*Mark* – Mentioned that the Skilled Immigrant InfoCentre has partnered with Owen previously and found him really helpful and great to work with.

*Ilona* – Gave kudos to Owen, saying that it was a godsend when SL got the posters. Asked what kind of partnerships opportunities are available. Owen replied that they have offered webinars and documentation in different languages.

*Shideh* – Offered to share the TechLink poster by email for anyone who doesn't already have it.

*Kelty* – Asked about what kind of clients they get, and if any demographics data is kept. Owen mentioned that it's all over the place, but mostly seniors and immigrants needing help navigating government websites. Added that they get lots of referrals from VPL.

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

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

*Deanna* – City of Richmond received a Poverty Reduction Grant from the province, so she and Millicent are reaching out to different community partners to decide how the city should use this money. Ginny is in the process of selecting an artist for their 2021 year-long artist-in-residency, the purpose of which is to capture the stories of various communities during the pandemic. They received another grant for a dial-in service to call seniors to check-in on them as combat social isolation – Winnifred is working on this project. Adair is on maternity leave. RPL is currently holding interviews for two new, youth-focussed community librarian positions.

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

*Caitlin* – GVPL has reopened public computer service, including printing, at sx<sup>w</sup>eyx<sup>w</sup>əŋ təŋəx<sup>w</sup> James Bay branch, and are working to expand this service to other locations. They have expanded their open hours at certain branches as well to provide some evening hours. Discontinued their “seniors and immune compromised” hour because they were finding that the first hour of the day was by far the busiest so it was better for folks who felt more concerned to come mid-afternoon. Still working out some tech issues with their virtual programs, but are hoping to get virtual baby time programming off the ground soon. From her Arts, Culture & Heritage portfolio focus, has lots going on with reopening communication with other GLAM organizations, and is planning virtual programs with Pacific Opera Victoria, Royal BC Museum, and Intrepid Theatre (who runs Victoria Fringe Festival). GVPL has started filling long-standing vacancies, and almost all staff who were laid off are back.

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

*Ann* – Big focus for the summer is to have more outdoors outreach. Story walks (every 3 weeks) are very popular. Starting in April, they’ll have two storytimes per week and continue throughout the summer. They are planning to have SRC outside by having pop-up libraries. Most adult programs are going to continue to be online, with kids programs being outdoors as much as possible. Kids are so excited to see other kids during outside programs. Expanding seniors programs.

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

*Janeen* – FVRL started offering Zoom programs for adults and are getting good feedback. Is still doing both virtual and in-person outreach visits (e.g., treatment centres for youth, First Nation communities, mental health groups). She also offers an Armchair Travel program and other book clubs. Will keep doing in-person visits as much as possible.

### **Okanagan Regional Library (ORL)**

*Tara* – ORL focussing on its strategic directions. Two open full-time librarian positions currently. All programs still on Zoom. Doing lots of work on accessibility right now.

### **UBC iSchool and Western University students**

*Anita* – Is happy with Jorge’s Community-Led Libraries course and hopes that it will be offered more frequently in the future (currently, only offered once per year). Is also a UBC Learning Exchange student working on metadata at the [Downtown Eastside Research Access Portal](#).

*Jessica* – Thanked Tara for her talk as a guest lecturer for a very helpful Readers’ Advisory course that she took.

*McKelle* – A student librarian at the UBC Learning Exchange working on community-based digital literacy assistance. They have Tech Cafes twice a week in partnership with DTES community ambassadors.

*Emily* – Great to hear how everything works in practice, since school is all theory.

## **Write to Read BC**

*Gordon* – Working with Indigenous communities around BC to support their libraries and learning centres (currently, there are 20 of them). Just applied for a grant to support strategic planning around promoting discussions with mainstream public libraries. The group has been nominated by two of the communities they work with for the first ever [BC Reconciliation Award](#). Working on refreshing their collections after receiving funds to do so from a foundation in Ontario. Looking into getting library students to do some professional work on updating their website.

## **Surrey Libraries (SL)**

*David* – Is the only person doing in-person outreach visits right (twice monthly at the food bank; once monthly at a modular housing facility). Also offers, with safety precautions in place, one-on-one tech help in the library. Virtual outreach at ESL classes are very popular; lots of enthusiasm about the ESL library tours. [Phoenix Society Food Truck](#) might be a great outdoor opportunity this summer, as they go to lots of outreach events (not just in Surrey) to provide food for people in need while also teaching employment skills to those in their program.

*Michael* – Fresh graduate from iSchool and working as an on-call librarian at SL for a few weeks now. A big part of why he became a librarian is to do more community outreach. This meeting has given him lots of great ideas.

*Ilona* – SL is looking at expanding their services, including more weekend and evening hours, starting in May. Also working on a Chromebook lending project to community organizations and are expecting to get more Chromebooks to expand the project.

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

*Mark* – On Jan 28<sup>th</sup>, Skilled Immigrant InfoCentre partnered with [Jumpstart Refugee Talent](#) to offer “Career Readiness” about how to find meaningful employment in Canada for refugees. On Feb 4<sup>th</sup>, partnered with Statistics Canada on “Finding Business Data” on Statistics Canada’s website. On Feb 24<sup>th</sup>, is offering “Boost Your Employability as an Immigrant” in partnership with a variety of WorkBC service providers such as MOSAIC and YWCA. On Feb 25<sup>th</sup>, will be presenting with Shideh at the [BCSIS Virtual Summit](#) (BC Settlement & Integration Services) about “*BC Public Libraries: Supporting Community Resilience During the COVID-19 Pandemic*”. Still partnering with lots of different community organizations (e.g., SUCCESS, Neighbourhood House, [Red Fox Healthy Living Society](#)) to provide job search workshops to their clients. Was recently a guest in a podcast by [AMSSA](#) about informal support for English language learners. Also presented at MOSAIC’s [Immigrant Professionals Conference](#) last month on “*Networking with Curiosity*”.

*Isabel* – One of the new VPL digital interns. It is for 3 months (Jan-Mar). Working with the community librarians to learn more about the work they do and is learning lots about VPL as an institution.

*Kelty* – VPL just expanded levels 8 and 9 of the Central Library and introduced limited seating yesterday. In addition to regular reference services, has resumed work with the [Connection to Kith and Kin](#) program, which transitioned to Zoom in January. The Globe and Mail recently published an [article](#) about the program and one of its regular participants.

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

*Shideh* – As of Jan 16<sup>th</sup>, CNVL has extended their service hours and are now open 7 days a week, with 3 evenings until 8 pm. Started a new themed programming initiative with the launch of their *Year of Science: Introduction to Citizen Science*. You can learn more about this programming initiative by watching this [YouTube video](#) recorded by one of our librarians.

**6. Next Meeting – Date? Guest speakers?**

Next meeting will be in May, after the BC Libraries Conference.