

BCLA Community-Led Interest Group Meeting Minutes
November 15, 2019, 2-4 pm
Burnaby Public Library – Bob Prittie Metrotown branch, 3rd floor, board room

In attendance in person: Kelty Roberts (VPL), Shideh Taleban (NVCL), Nicole Sousa (BPL), Andrea Lukic (BPL), Andrea Lam (BPL), Mariah Gastaldo (BPL), Emily Sobool (VPL), Diana Walker (RPL), David Kerr (SL), Ilona Stachura (SL), Adair Harper (RPL), Jorge Cardenas (BPL), Allison Kvern (BPL/WVML), Nicola Henderson (Greater Vancouver Food Bank)

Kelty welcomed everyone and we all introduced ourselves. She invited Nicola Henderson from the Greater Vancouver Food Bank to join us as a guest speaker later this afternoon.

1. September 20th, 2019 meeting minutes approved

2. Working with undocumented and non-status immigrants/BPL

Jorge mentioned that few weeks ago BPL re-established a relationship that he had formed while at VPL with [Watari Counseling & Support Services Society](#). This is an organization that works with a lot of undocumented and non-status immigrants. Although Watari is in Vancouver, right next to the náč̓mat ct Strathcona branch, most of the people who come here do not live in Vancouver, but in surrounding areas like Burnaby, New Westminster, Surrey, Richmond, etc. He and Nicole recently visited and registered around 30 people for BPL cards. He is interested in having staff from other library systems visit as well to give library cards to residents from other municipalities. SL and NVCL mentioned that they are interested connecting with them.

He brought up two major difficulties. 1) They don't know that they can come to the library or get cards access free services. 2) They are afraid and don't trust libraries to not to report them to Canadian Border Services. Kelty asked if other systems have any policy statements similar to VPL's [Access Without Fear](#) – none have that specifically, but all obviously have strong privacy statements that apply to all patrons.

There are two groups in that centre: a family group which meet on Fridays, and an adult group that meets twice a month on Mondays. Most of them are Spanish speaking people. They don't trust libraries that much but they are also interested in having their meetings in the libraries. Jorge is trying to find out when they are going to meet next time and mentioned that usually it's a last minute thing.

Kelty asked about how different systems handle "access-type" cards that have no, or limited ID requirements.

- BPL: *Access Card* with 2 item limit; no ID required; no fines; no access to databases.
- RPL: *No Fixed Address Card* with 3 item limit, no ID required, regular fines (and loss of borrowing & internet privileges at \$5), no access to databases.
- SL: *Access Card* with 5 item limit, no ID required, no fines, no access to databases.

- NVCL: no card of this type as yet; working on developing a no-ID, no fines, 2 item card within the next year (currently have a waitlist of people interested in receiving one once established).
- VPL: *Access Card* with 2 item limit, no ID required*, no fines, no access to databases without proof of address (there is a separate borrower type for patrons with a verified Vancouver address, and they can access databases from home).

* Although ID is not a requirement, having something with the patron's name on it (e.g., community membership card, pill bottle, photocopy of ID, etc.) is strongly encouraged.

	BPL	RPL	SL	NVCL	VPL
Name:	Access	No Fixed Address	Access	[currently in development]	Access
CKO Limit:	2	3	5	[2]	2
ID Required?	no	no	no	[no]	no
Fines?	no	yes	no	[no]	no
Databases?	no	no	no	[?]	possible

3. Guest Speaker – Nicola Henderson from the Greater Vancouver Food Bank

The [Greater Vancouver Food Bank](#) (GVFB) serves Burnaby, Vancouver, New Westminster, and the North Shore. They are now headquartered in Burnaby, where clients can pick up their weekly food stuffs at their convenience M-F (daytime only). There are also 13 community food hubs (each being open 1 day per week during specified hours). They have a low-barrier model for card registration (options, including referrals, exist for people with no fixed address) that allow clients to visit one site three times per month (i.e., once per week, with the exception of cheque week).

In addition to providing food, they partner with other community service providers such as public libraries, SUCCESS, ISS of BC, Quest, etc. Sometimes they are able to bring in live music, dietitians, nurses, and dentists as well. They are currently doing a peer resource sharing exercise where clients can write down service providers that they use on a white board.

Someone asked about what challenges they face. Nicole said that their biggest constraints are time and space. She mentioned that their community hubs are often too small and that having a lot of people in such a confined space can be quite chaotic. Additionally, the food bank is largely run by volunteers so high turnover can be problematic. Fortunately, the coordination piece is no longer handled exclusively by volunteers; now that there are more paid positions, consistency in terms of staff has gone way up.

How do libraries contribute? BPL, VPL, and NVCL mainly register people for library cards, waive fines, give out donations (bike and transit maps also popular), promote library programs, make referrals to other organizations, and occasionally participate in GVFB programming (e.g.,

cooking classes). Since SL and RPL have separate food bank organizations, Kelty inquired about their partnerships.

- SL offer similar services to the other libraries, but also sometimes bring an Arabic speaking settlement worker from DIVERSEcity to help out with translation. Unfortunately, librarians at SL aren't allowed to sign people up for cards, so this can only be done when circulation staff are present.
- RPL do card registrations, but don't bring donations. They bring games to use as ice breakers/conversation starters as well as items from the collection that can be checked out.

Nicola was asked about the possibility of expanding services. She said that they could potentially expand on their hours of operation, however adding locations would be more difficult to do. They are conversing with Vancouver Coastal Health about the possibility of collaborating to build a permanent (warehouse model) hub near the Main St./Terminal area.

Jorge asked if food bank staff are aware of what the library is there for/are they expecting them? Nicola indicated that she believes that they are, but will maybe bring this up at a staff meeting to clarify. They do have an internal calendar to keep track of which partners will be onsite when, but do not have public/online advertisements to this effect. Kelty asked if SL or RPL advertise when they'll be visiting. SL sometimes puts up a poster a few weeks in advance to let people know when they'll be onsite; RPL does not.

Kelty asked about the impact that the recent closure of the Downtown Hub had on visits (i.e., what happened to the people who used to go downtown)? Nicola said that they actually keep stats on where clients go to pick up their food and that she will share this data; basically most either started going to the Burnaby warehouse or switched to a nearby hub like Gordon House. Nicola added that they've experience a 20% increase in client visits between 2018 and 2019. She also said the move towards hosting food hubs in community centres or neighbourhood houses (as opposed to places of worship) has been intentional as they tend to offer more opportunities and services for their clients to connect with.

4. BCLA 2020 Conference – CLIG proposal ideas? Interested panelists?

The 2020 conference theme is [Libraries, Democracy, and Action](#); deadline for submitting proposals is December 2nd.

Kelty read out her current draft for the proposal (document attached in email), which focusses on newcomers' experiences in public libraries, and asked for feedback. Tentative list of panelists for this proposal topic: NVCL (Shideh), FVRL (Janeen or possibly a colleague), & VPL (Mark MacKichan, Coordinator of the [Skilled Immigrant Info Centre](#) and former community librarian). Looking into possible guest speakers.

Jorge mentioned there are two ways of approaching this topic, either focusing on what libraries currently do to make newcomers feel welcome or focusing on the ways in which the library isn't a welcoming space for newcomers (i.e., where are we failing and how can we improve). He

added that he doesn't like the [Library Champions](#) program because libraries aren't hiring them when they apply for jobs later on. Shideh provided a differing opinion, saying that she was a library champion and had a very good experience.

Other thoughts about the proposal:

- Clarification that there will also be discussion about how libraries fail to provide adequate service in this regard. Kelty added that there were additional discussion questions to this effect (gaps in service, failures, etc.) in the longer, background part of the proposal.
- Interest (from the perspective of a conference attendee) in hearing less from libraries about what they are already doing, and more of an outside perspective from settlement services or possibly even from immigrants themselves and their experience with libraries.
- Clarification as to the target demographic. All newcomers vs. just undocumented or temporary foreign workers/students, refugees? Maybe narrow the focus.
- Discussion about which settlement services are available for which groups. Permanent residents get the most services. Very few services available for refugees (e.g., Journey Home) or temporary foreign workers (e.g., MOSAIC). When it comes to some groups, public libraries are among the only institutions that will provide free service.
- How do different library systems work with their partner organizations to provide services to newcomers? Could we get representatives from these organizations to come as guest speakers?
- New Westminster School District is the only one to admit students without documentation – they also have school settlement workers. Would bring a very interesting perspective if anyone has connections in NW.

Kelty asked if anyone present would be interested in participating in the proposal on this topic (either as is or with modified scope), or if there were other topics that they would be interested in working on collaboratively instead. SL interested in participating on the topic as it stands (i.e., existing services for all newcomers), but might not have enough to contribute if the topic was narrowed (e.g., services specifically for undocumented immigrants). Kelty added that CLIG doesn't necessarily need to propose a panel discussion this year if there isn't a strong interest from the group. Several other CLIG members are already working on proposals of their own, including:

- Jorge (BPL) was asked to put together something for BCLA's Multicultural Interest Group, and is thinking about bringing in external settlement organizations to address deficiencies in newcomer services, particularly for undocumented immigrants.
- Adair (RPL) and Heather (SFU) working on an academic/public library community-led discussion.
- VPL is putting together a proposal to look at community work vs. in-library customer service.

Proposal is due in two weeks, so anyone who wants to participate in this proposal topic (services for newcomers) – or wants to suggest an alternate proposal – should do so by the end of next week in order to ensure that there will be enough time for all the panelists to go over everything and finalize the details before submitting on December 2nd. There may be some leeway after the fact in terms of the final list of speakers, but better to prepare as much as possible in advance. If we want to bring in guest speakers from outside organizations, we should also be considering which of our community partners might be willing to join in on the 16th/17th of April.

5. Student Representative – Interested candidates?

We didn't have any students at today's meeting and no one responded to the email callout for a student representative. Allison suggested holding another meeting at SLAIS to get more students involved. Jorge may also be able to refer students from his class.

6. Roundtable (upcoming training, projects, successes/failures, etc.)

David (SL): Held a creative writing workshop at the [Surrey Pretrial Services Centre](#) with their Poet Laureate. He visits the remand centre monthly, but this was a one-off event. They also do monthly writing contests.

Adair (RPL): Asked how others keep track of their visit statistics and otherwise report on their outreach activities:

- VPL community librarians write monthly reports and record visit stats (# cards, # fine waivers, etc.) on a spreadsheet.
- NVCL also do a monthly report and keep statistics on a spreadsheet.
- BPL has 3 different things: spreadsheet of visit stats (how many people, what kind of program, etc.) that goes to the administration, a monthly report that goes to the supervisors (highlights of the month), and a daily log for their own records.

Shideh (NVCL): Warming station is now open. From November to end of March, every Friday from 9 am-12 pm the warming station is open for anyone in a vulnerable situation to come in to have a hot drink and some snacks. This is part of the [North Shore Homelessness Task Force](#), which partners with lots of community organizations to put these on (e.g., Salvation Army for donating coffee and cookies, North Shore Housing Lookout Society for sending outreach workers, CMHA for sending outreach workers and volunteers, North Shore Alliance Church for sending volunteers). Library intends to offer different programs that will be of interest for attendees such as resume writing, job search skills, etc.

Adair (RPL): Asked about how to develop partnerships with caregivers for seniors. Jorge had a few suggestions.

7. Next Meeting – Date? Location? Guest speakers?

Next meeting will be in February, place and date TBD. SL and SLAIS are possible contenders.