

BCLA Community-Led Interest Group Meeting

September 23, 2021, 10am-12pm

Virtual meeting via Zoom

In attendance: Tara Thompson (ORL); Peter Critchley (ORL); Steph Pettigrew (VIRL); Emily Guerrero (BPL); Hana Kim (BPL); Emily Gow (BIPL); Gordana Rauski (CPL); Ann Johannes (CPL); Gordon Yusko (Write to Read BC); Ravi Basi (SL); Adair Harper (RPL); Millicent Mabi (RPL); Leila Meshgini; Jessica Stol; Kelty Roberts (VPL); McKelle Hansen (UBC iSchool student); Janeen Parent (FVRL); Chris Koth (NWPL); Shideh Taleban (NVCL); Nick Ubels (UBC Learning Exchange).

This was our sixth virtual CLIG meeting after the pandemic.

1. Land Acknowledgment & Introductions

2. May 28, 2021 meeting minutes approved

3. CLIG Community Development Days Conference

Tentative dates are December 2nd and 3rd, with two sessions per day from 10am-12pm and 1pm-3pm.

Topics will be: What is community-led librarianship (led by Jorge and Ann); EDI issues in libraries (led by Leila and Emily Guerrero); How to work with communities (led by Ravi and unconfirmed speaker); and How to work with library management (led by Beth and Ariel).

The event will be free, virtual, and open to any library workers and students. It will be BC focused, but the event will be open to attendees from outside of the province. If you have any questions or comments, reach out to Shideh.

4. Call out for new Secretary

Leila is taking a break from libraries, and so is stepping down as CLIG Secretary. If anyone is interested in taking on the role, please reach out to Shideh.

The new co-secretaries for CLIG are:

- Emily Gow (emilygow@yahoo.com)
- Jessica Stol (jbwstol@gmail.com)

Also, if anyone knows any potential guest speakers for future sessions, let Shideh know. Previous guest speakers have included people from food banks, the Centre for Diversity and Innovation, Lookout Society, and more.

5. Roundtable discussion of what is currently going at the various library systems

Vancouver Public Library (VPL)

Kelty – Acting as an Assistant Manager for Special Collections, so less community work right now. But in general, there has been a lot of system-wide work for Orange Shirt Day. VPL will be closed on September 30. Basically back to normal hours and operations, except for mask mandate. Free printing and laminating at Central and some branches for vaccine passports.

Gordon (W2R) – There was [an interview](#) with West Vancouver Memorial Library (WVML) about being open for September 30. Interviewed Tara Matsuzaki from WVML for CBC Afternoon show.

Richmond Public Library (RPL)

Adair – Has been going to the library a lot more since having a baby. New parents are hurting for in-person programming!

Millicent – RPL has been doing a movie series leading up to September 30. They've been showing Indigenous films each week. RPL will partially close on September 30 (open 10am-2pm); will host an Indigenous film and Indigenous story time. Also celebrating Jewish holidays with movies every Tuesday night. RPL returning to pre-pandemic hours, but they have changed their hours slightly (closing at 9pm not 9:30).

Update on the project providing technology in shelters: The project is moving forward. Decided to go for laptops instead of Chromebooks. They have 8 laptops with charging cases on wheels to transport to the shelter. They are consulting with shelters to see what kind of programming/training would be of interest. RPL will continue with non-technology based social connection programs (e.g., games night, themed conversations, employment support programs), and will continue to learn from them as they go. The project led by Alex Friesan, who couldn't make it today.

In June, RPL had their first online job fair and it was very successful (over 500 registered, over 350 attendees). They are planning another online hiring conference in the fall (preference is for in-person, but it may have to be online). Have joined other libraries by getting bird watching kits, and they're also working on fishing kits and a ukulele collection. [BIPOC Tok: Podcasting Made Easy](#) program: Funded by BC Multicultural Branch, in partnership with Connection Services. Working on first display for rotating community art wall, in partnership with Richmond Public Art and Multicultural Services Society, featuring artwork from Arabic and Farsi speaking people. RPL had community tables at every branch

where community organizations could reserve 2-hour slots to talk about their offerings. They have discussed offering it to the RCMP, which they were excited about. Decided not to do “Coffee with Cops” because people in the community might decide to avoid the library. Instead, they might have the RCMP host webinars (e.g., avoiding web scams); people who are comfortable can sign up. Possibility of an RCMP storytime.

Write to Read BC (W2R)

Gordon – Broad scope of community work. W2R is working to support a number of Indigenous communities that have been affected by wildfires. Large warehouse out in Surrey where book donations come in, are processed by a group called the Library Response Team, and the books are sorted and shipped from there; really impressed with them. Agreed to be part of conference presentation for Nova Scotia Library and Archives, and is organizing a pre-recorded session. Working closely with correctional centres with large Indigenous populations, with W2R supplying shelving and furniture. Provided a lawnmower for Gitsegukla First Nation library. Connector between philanthropists and companies and Indigenous community librarians and centres who ultimately decide what materials they get.

- Link to map showing where Indigenous communities located:
<https://www.writetoreadbc.com/map-bc-write-read/>
- Article on Write to Read for BCAL:
<https://bclaconnect.ca/perspectives/2020/11/30/write-to-read-project/>

Burnaby Public Library (BPL)

Emily Guerrero – BPL will be closed September 30. They have an internal Indigenous initiative staff group that will be crafting an email to go out to all-staff with reflections, resources to engage, and places to consider making donations from paid time off money. BPL reopened hours, but new operating hours will be more limited than pre-pandemic. Now the library will be 10am-8pm most days instead of 9am-9pm. Will have an extra hour without the public at the beginning and end of each day so that staff to catch up on their work load.

Hana – BPL has been regularly visiting the food bank over the summer. Just started bringing printers and laminators to the food bank this week for vaccine passports (have done 5 so far). Busy over summer supporting people and doing outreach at outdoor community events. As usual, reaching out to immigrant groups and community members to update them on library services. No in-person programs currently.

UBC iSchool

McKelle – Collected resources for community-led work over the summer. The resources can be found [here](#). Gathered about 65 resources. Is trying to put it on one site, but can send as email for anyone interested. Learning Exchange has restarted computer classes, and it’s going really well. Offering scaffolded basic and advanced classes.

Coquitlam Public Library (CPL)

Ann – CPL’s hours have been back to normal for a year. Biggest news is a new outreach vehicle called Pop (named after pop-up library). Use it for outreach and also home delivery. For Orange Shirt Day, there is a committed web page all about truth and reconciliation and storytime with an Indigenous focus; Ann coordinates “What to Read Wednesdays,” and next week is an Orange Shirt Day themed focus, with all of the books about Residential Schools and trauma. On September 30, CPL will be open and the mobile bus will be out. The library will also be coordinating a speaker series. The first speaker will be from local First Nations, then will move to immigrants who build BC, and then the Office of Human Rights Commission will speak on what’s happening with systemic racism and rights under the Human Rights Code. CPL will bring in a facilitator in January for Community Conversation about what to do to advance human rights. Very excited, spending a lot of time and energy on this. Last summer CPL ran in-person storytimes in the park, story walks in the winter, and starting in April this year, they did story walks in the park. Starting in-person storytimes on October 12, five days a week. As Adair said, kids and parents are desperate for it so their kids can be exposed to other kids and parents can talk to other parents.

Chat question: Who does the RCMP storytime target?

Millicent (RPL) – RPL hasn’t done one yet, they are just thinking about it. But from other systems that have done, it’s meant to be interactive for children but also an opportunity for parents, especially immigrant parents, to connect. Haven’t done all the necessary research yet.

Leila – Will there be consultations with local First Nations?

Millicent (RPL) – Yes, RPL will definitely do such consultation, which is why the launch has been delayed. Will be a partnership program with the RCMP.

Gordon (W2R) – In a previous meeting, Jorge and Gordon had respectful disagreement on the RCMP. Jorge is very firm on having nothing to do with police, but from Gordon’s experience on W2R, they have a community safety committee that includes the RCMP and other law enforcement. It has been through some of those communities that W2R has been able to build trust with local First Nations who have those relationships. Should be on a case-by-case basis.

Ann (CPL) – In previous role, storytimes were organized with the RCMP and local fire station, which was really popular.

Shideh (NVCL) – NVCL offered a scam and privacy program in multiple languages with the RCMP. It was very popular and got positive feedback. Agree that it depends on the situation.

Leila – In the last few years conversations have deepened around libraries as institutions and our relationships with other institutions, like policing, especially in the context of racism, reconciliation, and decolonizing. While we want to build stronger connections in the community to benefit some people, that can come at the cost of a sense of safety for others in the community. Might have positives but not be net positive. Need to look at building community relationships more equitably, with consultations, and be really critical of those relationships and keep having these consultations since everyone doesn't have the same relationship with law enforcement.

From chat: Emily Guerrero (BPL) – There's a group of parents who organized to end the school liaison program here in Vancouver. Bet they would have a lot of perspective on the question of city organizations running programs with police and the RCMP. [Here](#) is their Facebook page.

Group agrees to put this topic on the agenda for the next meeting and try to find a speaker on the topic. Based on a suggestion from Millicent, will try to touch on this topic at CLIG conference. If not possible, will keep in mind for future sessions.

New Westminster Public Library (NWPL)

Chris – Shout out to McKelle. Was really pleased with all the work assembled around community development. It's such a contribution for everyone! A big initiative at NWPL is a new strategic plan, which will allow NWPL to pivot its focus to really strong community-led librarianship as a cornerstone, as well as EDI and climate action, which really aligns with the City of New Westminster. Will be getting a book bike to start expanding outreach to the community. All staff are working through the University of Alberta's [Indigenous Canada](#) MOOC Series. NWPL wants all staff, no matter their position, to start from learning and unlearning with regard to Indigenous perspectives and reconciliation. Represents one of many efforts to recalibrate and build capacity of staff for a new phase of librarianship in their community.

Also pioneered drag queen storytime in their community, which was a huge success; will be inviting the Queens back. NWPL has decided to relaunch in-person programming, in particular for kids, but also with virtual options. Core adult programs will remain virtual, except for a new ESL book club. New partnership with Douglas College where NWPL will start a conversation with newcomers; time limited and focused exclusively on affordable housing to make sure their voices are heard on this issue. For September 30 this year, NWPL is only closing their facilities. They have all staff highlighting things they're reading in order to honour reconciliation; these highlights will be featured on social media. Will also launch a Truth & Reconciliation page to start to document their journey (inspired by VPL and Halifax Public Library pages). Excited for the arrival of a new Chief Librarian in October! This individual will help pivot NWPL into more of a strategic effort in community development.

Bowen Island Public Library (BIPL)

Emily Gow – BIPL has a lot going on at the library, including a new interim Director who started in August. Back to full-time hours and exclusively in-person programming starting on October 1. Scrapped virtual programs since no one was coming. Set a limit for in-person with first come first serve, but no vaccine passports are needed. Only requiring registration for storytime, otherwise anyone can join programs (registration was a barrier). BIPL is preparing for a new Strategic Plan and just distributed a survey. Bowen is predominately a seniors' community, so younger age groups are often overlooked. Hope to track them down with this survey. Have also started BYOBook club for 18-35 demographic (a hugely overlooked demographic) and BIPL is starting to see new community members they've never seen before. They are also starting their first Teen Advisory Group. Since there's no high school on Bowen, teens are more involved in WVML. Excited to get feedback from them and bring teens back home into Bowen Library.

Millicent (RPL) – Interesting to see that on Bowen seniors want to come back in-person. RPL is doing hybrid programs, both in-person and virtual. Spoke to the Seniors Centre in Richmond and heard that seniors are unwilling to come back to in-person programming; they wanted to stay online and stay safe. However, some didn't have enough digital technology skills to participate, so RPL is working with community partners to improve tech literacy so they can get on Zoom.

From chat: Chris (NWPL) – The two seniors' book clubs, historical society, and writers' groups have all asked to return to in-person.

From chat: Nick (UBCLE) – Seniors who participated in the English Conversation program aren't ready to return to in-person, so it will continue online for the time being while many other programs are returning to in-person.

Surrey Libraries (SL)

Ravi – Surrey created new positions, one for an Indigenous Coordinator, and another for a Manager of Community Connections (filled internally by David Kerr). Some branches are offering outdoor storytimes; the pilot is going really well but will have to stop as weather turns bad. Staff are continuing to do a lot of virtual outreach in multiple languages. Most staff and Branch Managers are busy adapting to the new one-desk service model. It is a big change and a lot of stress around that, so SL is just sticking to core programs. Any new programs around reigniting the economy (employment, job search, resumes, careers etc.). One program they managed to squeeze in is a presentation on October 14 by two artists – one South Asian, one Indigenous – who have collaborated on the Punjabi Market Revival Project and will talk about their art and what their project means for reconciliation. SL will be closed on September 30. They plan to continue doing BIPOC/Indigenous related programs throughout the year instead of just at specific times.

Okanagan Regional Library (ORL)

Tara – Back to normal hours, doing both in-person and virtual programming. Like other libraries, they are focusing on core programming for in-person (storytimes, book clubs, maker spaces). Started virtual read-books storytime series, and they are paying for Beanstack to run “Read Woke” which focuses on diverse voices. Also hosting “tough topics” storytimes at Vernon branch (connecting with community organizations to do that). ORL is starting up their library of things with snap circuits, birding backpacks, spheros, and microscopes. They opened up access cards for fire evacuees so that they can access services while displaced, without having to prove residence.

Peter – Hybrid of virtual and in-person. Looking at mid-October to start programming. Planning “Save a Life” program on overdose training and prevention; nurse will show people how to administer Naloxone and get a free kit to address the opioid crisis. ORL partnered with local health authority to support health in the community, especially for seniors, including on topics like aging well, “Joint Tuneup” with a focus on knee and hip osteoarthritis, and the “walk and talk for life” support program for seniors where they would have some discussions on making choices and then just go walking together. One positive coming out of Covid, is that it developed a lot of virtual programming, including [a podcast on books and libraries](#).

Jessica Stol – Not working in a library but in London, Ontario. Really enjoyed hearing more about the services that we’re doing in BC.

UBC Learning Exchange (UBCLE)

Nick – Coming up, UBCLE will be hosting a two-part Wikipedia editing series called “[Info Activism](#),” with a kick-off speaker, then a workshop, and an edit-athon. It will be the first series of events that are fully hybrid (10-20 people in-person, then however many can join virtually). If anyone else has experimented with this format, would appreciate advice!

From chat: There is a discussion on hybrid programming on [this Facebook post](#) in the Programming Librarian Interest Group (Facebook group).

Leila Meshgini – With Ravi and a few others, Leila has started a BIPOC in Libraries Support Group that will offer monthly peer-led discussions for BIPOC folk to talk about experiences and share support around racism in libraries. First session will be on October 21, from 7pm-8:30pm. Check out the invitation [here](#).

North Vancouver City Library (NVCL)

Shideh – NVCL is back to being open 9am-9pm, but now only open 9am-5pm on Fridays (was 9am-9pm before). The library will be open September 30 from 9am-5pm; North Shore libraries decided to stay open to the public to support the community’s learning. NVCL is testing out some in-person programs with very limited capacity, and offered first in-person storytime this Monday. Opened collaborator space with lots of technology and computer programs; people can book a tour to learn about resources before checking them out. Will use

this collaborator space for partnership programs going forward, including resume writing and tax clinics. Did a tax clinic this year that was very successful and Shideh is happy to share learnings for anyone else hosting a tax clinic. Launching first staff EDI Book Club to read books from many cultures; the first book will be *Yellow Bird* by Sierra Crane Murdoch. Had offered storytimes with the mayor and drag queens, possibly also the RCMP. Recently learned about Next Chapter Book Club, a program for people with intellectual disabilities, and is excited to pursue this in our libraries.

6. Next Meeting?

The next meeting will be in the third week of December. A Doodle poll will be sent out.