

## **BCLA Community-Led Interest Group Meeting**

September 23, 2022, 1-3pm

Virtual meeting via Zoom

### In attendance:

Shideh Taleban (NVCL), CJ Pentland (NVCL), Noreen Ma (BPL), Victoria Gomez (BPL), Rebekah Adams-Brush (NWPL), Liz Hunter (NWPL), Chris Koth (NWPL), Caitlin MacRae (NWPL), Tammie Mercado (NWPL), Isabel Dos Santos (NWPL), David Kerr (SL), Ann Johannes (Coquitlam Public Library), Andrea Galbraith (VPL), Emily Gow (VPL), Nick Ubels (UBC Library and Learning Exchange), Janeen Parent (FVRL), Tara Thompson (ORL), Deanna Walker (RPL)

### **1. Land acknowledgement & Introductions**

### **2. June 3, 2022 meeting minutes approved**

### **3. What are the methods or tools of discovery of community, beyond the community-led toolkit?**

The methods of evaluation and reporting for community-led work is a topic that has come up at previous meetings. Previous discussion has centered on the ethics of sharing and reporting the community's stories with Library Boards.

Some questions for discussion:

- How do we report currently? Do we share stories in our reporting?
- Is it our place to share these stories?
- If these stories are significant, how do we share them? Under what conditions or circumstances do we share them?

The group had a round-table discussion of how different library systems report community-led work. Some libraries focus on quantitative measurements, report on general trends that are being observed in the community, or share impact stories from a staff member's perspective.

Many libraries share customer stories as part of their reporting, but they rely on these stories to different extents. Names, pronouns, and identifying information are removed. At RPL, stories are often shared when they are related to big events and new programs, including grant-funded programs. CPL and FVRL share stories that are usually collected through customer feedback forms, which involves more permission and notes that the information can be used in reporting.

Some libraries are in the midst of changing how they report community-led work. NWPL is currently collecting and sharing stories internally as they undertake asset mapping and begin building connections in the community; they don't have a formal process for how this information will be presented, yet. Surrey Libraries is changing how they report statistics and they are hoping to find a way to collect stories through new SharePoint lists.

BPL has recently decided to move away from sharing stories, but they are still deciding how to report going forward. Their current monthly report highlights one area of focus (e.g. food insecurity) and one partnership. It is an informational report for the organization and shares who BPL interacted with that month.

It was suggested that story-sharing may not be unethical, but perhaps ethics should be actively considered. Some questions for consideration:

- What are the reasons for including these stories? Can it be achieved another way?
- Do we have explicit permission from someone to share that specific story? Have we been clear about what this story/information might be used for? Do we have informed consent?
- When someone share's their story, what can the library offer them in return? Can this be reciprocal? By sharing this story and impact, can we then remove a barrier or provide a new service?
- Can public libraries draw on the knowledge of academic research and how they interact with research-participants regarding consent?

During this round table discussion, we noticed three keywords: report, story, impact. We all agreed that we share stories to highlight the impact of our work (this can be for Library Boards or for staff).

CLIG can revisit this discussion in 2023 to get an update on how libraries are measuring and reporting on community-led work.

#### **4. BCLA Conference and/or CDD 2023**

The 2023 BCLA Conference will be hybrid this year, and the theme will be *Windows, Mirrors, and Sliding Glass Doors*. The group discussed whether there was any interest for CLIG to draft a proposal.

Following last CLIG meeting, Chris Koth, Tara Thompson, and Donna Langille (from [ICER](#)) met to talk about submitting a proposal to BCLA about approaches to evaluation of community-led work from a variety of perspectives. They are hoping for more perspectives to be included. If anyone would like to join them, please reach out to them.

CLIG is available to offer support facilitating meetings as this group works on their proposal.

The CLIG group also had an initial discussion to see if we wanted to offer another Community Development Day in 2023. We had 6-7 people on the design team last year. If anyone is interested in joining this year's design team and starting the discussion, please reach out to Shideh, Emily, or Jessica.

## **5. Guest speaker: Rebecca Knight – Community Access Worker at North Vancouver City Library**

Rebecca Knight is a Community Access Worker at NVCL and is currently running the [Open Door Community Hub Program](#). The program is funded by the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) through the Strengthening Communities' Services Grant.

This is a drop-in program for folks experiencing homelessness, who are marginally housed, vulnerably housed, or low income. The program runs twice a week, on a weekday and a weekend to accommodate different people's schedules. They have 225-250 attendees each month, with approximately 50% of individuals defined as absolute homeless (those who are not accessing any shelter spaces).

The program's space is separated with a partition in order to accommodate different needs, with one space designated as a quiet area and the other for socializing and activities. The space includes comfortable seating, games, and a TV.

The purpose of the program is to provide a space of joy, rest, socializing and community, and access to basic provisions (snacks, refreshments, care packages, etc.). They have seen friendships form between attendees and it has been an opportunity for the housed and unhoused community to interact.

Some of the outcomes from this program include: community integration and reducing stigma; trust and relationship building with those who use the space; community partnerships; and referrals to services, such as resource guides, meal programs, housing options, keeping safe cards, extreme weather events, etc.

The program has allowed for community partnerships with [Lookout](#), CMHA's new mental health outreach team, and Vancouver Coastal Health. The Hub has acted as a neutral space to have these interactions and for attendees to gradually build trusting relationships with outreach workers. Programming is also offered at the Hub, including ID clinics, footcare clinics, art therapy sessions, and a bike repair clinic (in partnership with the [PEDAL Society](#)).

Rebecca writes Empathy Corner content with tips about how to interact with folks with as much understanding as possible, as well as program reports that track trends and events in the Hub.

Some observations from the Hub:

- There is an extreme need for community space. The program has been a great way to build relationships with community and strengthen relationships with folks who regularly come to the library.
- Diverse and accessible programming is needed. Currently most attendees are middle-age, white, and male. They are exploring ways to reach more demographics.
- Consistency and routine are key. Changes should be slow and should be an inclusive process with attendees.

Going into this project, staff at NVCL already had high capacity and relationship building skills that were developed over the last 3 years through weekly HUB (intranet) posts called “Empathy Corner” initially with content from Ryan Dowd’s trainings. NVCL is a smaller library and staff already had familiarity with many of the individuals who attend the Hub, but staff have been able to positively develop these relationships further through the Hub.

People are welcome to contact Rebecca at [rknights@cnv.org](mailto:rknights@cnv.org).

## **6. Round Table Discussion**

### **New Westminster Public Library**

NWPL has been mainly focused on asset mapping for the last few months. They have been identifying and cataloguing all of the available community supports (housing, mental health supports, etc.). This process has been helping them to better understand what is happening in the community. The children’s department is still in the process of asset mapping, while the adult department is now in the beginning stages of embedding themselves in the community. Programming is mostly in-person.

### **Vancouver Public Library**

VPL has had more in-person adult programming, but they are still offering some virtual programs since people have found those convenient. They have been focusing on food insecurity and newcomer services, such as partnering with the Immigrant Services Society of BC (ISS), CityReach Food Bank, and the Vietnamese Family Support Group. Children’s programming has returned to in-person, with a handful of online programs for tweens and teens. A project is being developed with South Vancouver resources and the Vancouver School Board to create a pilot program to help children with school readiness. This program is in response to a significant gap between children with different abilities and supports for when they start kindergarten.

### **Burnaby Public Library**

BPL is doing most of their adult programming online. They are in the process of helping Adult Public Service Librarians shift towards a community-need approach to program creation, where staff look at community needs and then work with the community to produce a program or service. The Community Team has been in transition and they are looking to shift their work to more in-person programs rather than online, while still taking into consideration community feedback. English conversation circles are happening virtually and in-person. BPL will also be hosting an upcoming ID clinic.

### **North Vancouver City Library**

The majority of programs at NVCL are in-person, with several virtual and hybrid programs. Their book bike ambassador was busy attending many community events throughout the summer. As Rebecca Knight shared, the Open Door Community Hub is continuing to take place at NVCL, and the library will also be hosting an ID clinic.

### **Coquitlam Public Library**

CPL is no longer offering hybrid programming, and their programs are either in-person or online. Storytimes have moved back to being in-person and have been well attended. They are

continuing to do outreach to seniors through visits to care homes, including offering a popular Armchair Travel program.

### **Surrey Libraries**

Surrey Libraries is mostly back to in-person programming, but many career programs are still online. English Conversation Circles are both in-person and online. SL has experienced staffing challenges over the last few months, with a lack of casual staff to fill-in for regular staff as needed. They are continuing to engage with the community connections they already have, but they have put a hiatus on new outreach initiatives. SL hosts two teams of community service workers from the Street SMART program for three hours every day, and staff are finding this partnership to be very helpful; these community service workers can make or replace IDs, as well as help individuals locate shelters and treatment services.

### **Okanogan Regional Library**

ORL is offering both in-person and virtual programming. Virtual programs allow branches with more staff to offer programs to branches with fewer staff. The Kelowna branch has put a call out for Community Readers – members of the community who are interested in hosting a storytime and who will work with the children's librarian to plan a storytime in order to offer diverse perspectives. ORL also has Peer Navigators, their version of social workers within the library. For more information, contact Tara at [tthompson@orl.bc.ca](mailto:tthompson@orl.bc.ca).

### **Richmond Public Library**

RPL's programs are mostly in-person now. Richmond recently opened [Aster Place, a temporary modular housing unit](#). Library staff are working on a ceremonial workshop program to celebrate art the community has created in recognition of Homeless Action Week. This is part of RPL's art wall project, where community members can create art and have it displayed in the library space.

## **7. Next meeting?**

The next CLIG meeting will be at the end of November. If anyone has suggestions for guest speakers or additional discussion topics, please let us know.

If anyone has the contact information for Carla Foxe, please share it with Shideh, as we would be interested in having Carla as a future guest speaker.