

BCLA Community-Led Interest Group Meeting

December 2, 2022, 10am-12pm

Virtual meeting via Zoom

In attendance: Shideh Taleban (NVCL); Jessica Stol; Fernando Este (VPL), Tara Thompson (ORL); Emily Guerrero (BPL); Noreen Ma (BPL); Deanna Walker (RPL); McKelle Hansen (UBC iSchool); Jarvis Sparks (RPL); Rebekah Adams-Brush (NWPL); Nicole Sousa (BPL)

1. Land Acknowledgement

Shideh shared that she recently connected with local indigenous nations through the canoe sleeping ceremony. The canoes are removed from the water every winter during the canoe sleeping ceremony and are returned to the water in the spring at the awakening ceremony. The library participated as a witness and hosted refreshments afterwards.

2. Approval of September 23, 2022 meeting minutes

3. Community Development Days/ BCLA conference

The 2023 Community Development Days will be after BCLA. The tentative topic is reporting on community work. Jorge, Noreen and Shideh have volunteered to be on the planning committee. If you are interested, please email Shideh. You can find a report on last year's event on the CLIG [resource page](#).

NVCL has submitted a proposal to BCLA about the [open door community hub](#). Tara (ORL), Noreen (BPL), Chris (NWPL), Donna (UBC Okanagan) and Janine (FVRL) have submitted a proposal for a panel on how community work can look in different environments and library systems – academic, urban, rural, regional, etc. Emily Guerrero submitted a proposal for a community conversation on harm reduction and the opioid crisis.

A discussion on harm reduction programs and initiatives in libraries followed: Surrey libraries is working to create a formalized harm reduction strategy for 2023. NVCL offered a naloxone training which was very well attended, especially by staff from community organizations. They are also looking into adding needle receptacles in the plaza outside of the library to make it a more welcoming space for everyone, and will be giving out 12 donated [ZacPac project bags](#), as well as water bottles and other materials at the open door community hub. The City of Richmond has created a training on homelessness for all municipal staff. The library is working to ensure that all staff can attend. The library also has needle receptacles in every bathroom and staff have received training on needle safety. Burnaby will be trialing a harm reduction strategy at the Tommy Douglas branch where they offer snacks and drinks to the public. They are also looking into anti-stigma training on drug use for staff.

If you know of any other harm reduction library programs or initiatives, please reach out to [Emily](#).

4. Round Table

ORL – The system picks “6 notable days” to highlight throughout the year. In 2023 they will be focusing on – Freedom to Read Week, Asian Heritage Month, Indigenous History Month, Pride Month, National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, International Day for Persons with Disabilities. Mainly offering in-person programs, but based on community feedback some programs are still being offered online (author visits and pyjama storytime). Three community storytimes have also been planned - drag storytime, fire department storytime and Spanish storytime. Community librarians and branch heads are also taking online community engagement training. The training ends in a final project so everyone is actively applying their learning throughout the course.

RPL – The library hired 3 new community service librarians in the hopes of rebuilding connections that slowed during covid. They have returned to many of their regular monthly visits, including shelters. The children’s librarians have partnered with [Aspire Richmond](#) to run storytimes that have accessibility and inclusion embedded in the program so all families feel welcome to participate. They are also working with the school district and other community partners on the [SEY2KT](#) project based out of McNeely elementary school. The library also ran very successful accessible technology workshops with the [CNIB](#), and have been running a peer-to-peer tech buddies program for seniors. The library participated in the [Richmond Cares Richmond Gives](#) annual toy drive by acting as a donation location and attending the main donation event.

NVCL – The library ran a lot of programs in 2022. In an attempt to attract individuals aged 30-50 they experimented with different workshops on topics like running a small business and the tenancy act. They also ran a workshop on hate crimes with the [Justice Education Society of BC](#) and partnered with (name?) to run a monthly series that featured documentaries by Iranian woman. The library also piloted a book club for individuals with developmental and intellectual disabilities, inspired by [Next Chapter Book Club](#). Everyone is also very proud of the community that has been built in the [open door community hub](#) and the programs that have been developed based on community feedback. A weekly ID clinic will hopefully run in the New Year. Many seniors expressed that they did not only want to attend programs with other seniors. Based on this feedback the library has also started running intergenerational programming like recipe exchanges and letter writing programs. Each year NVCL bases their programming around a central theme. The theme for 2023 has not been announced yet, but staff will spend the beginning of the New Year reflecting so they can ensure that all new programming is intentional.

Shideh is now permanently working in the role of Library Services Coordinator, Community, Learning and Accessible Services. The library no longer has community

librarians and instead are working to integrate a community-led approach into all aspects of adult services. They are looking to do more training and give more staff the opportunity to work in the community.

BPL – The library is offering both in-person and online programs. The community librarians have been focusing on in-person visits. A new resource centre was built on the Burnaby-Coquitlam boarder. The location is unique because it serves people from across different municipalities. Community Librarians are visiting the location on a monthly basis. They have also been running pop-up library services at BC housing apartment complexes in partnership with other community partners such as Burnaby Association of Community Inclusion and the Burnaby Neighbourhood House.

NWPL – The children’s department has been extremely busy with children’s programs and community visits. They are doing a wide range of visits from schools to postpartum support groups. Board and director are invested in removing barriers to services so directly talking to the community and assessing how the library is serving marginalized communities is the current focus.

VPL – Four of the five community librarians have joined the team in the past year. In 2023 the team will be focusing on training staff on community-led work. Fernando covers the South West area and his current focus is food security and newcomers. He has been working with the South Vancouver Neighbourhood House and various local senior’s organizations. He found that many newcomers from the Hispanic community have concerns over how their information is being used, and if they would be barred from visiting home if they had fines on their library cards. While the library offers many services like ESL conversation circles and career programs, basic education on how the library work is still needed. Fernando also took a City of Vancouver class on consultation vs engagement with indigenous communities which he found very educational.

McKelle has started working at VPL as a Senior Public Library Associate (information staff). She is currently working on building relationships with individuals who come into the branch and is gaining firsthand experience on how building relationships can help reduce the number of incidences in the branch.

Responses: Burnaby does not require ID to register for a library card. This decision was made to help remove barriers for many reasons including those who do not have ID or who may not identify with the gender or name listed on their ID. Richmond, NVCL and VPL have special card types that help individuals with no fixed address access the library. The cards give access to the computers and allow for limited material borrowing.

London Public Library (Ontario) –Librarians noticed that in certain areas of the city children were hanging out at the library from after school until the evening when their parents got off work. In response they started after-school clubs with a dedicated staff member who run activities and provide support to children as a “caring adult”. Each area has been adapting the program based on their community’s needs. Jessica has been running a drop-in children’s newcomer program where kids do activities and

practice their English. The system is looking to adopt a community-led approach in the new year as outreach is currently limited.

Shideh shared the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation's [Calls to Action Booklet](#).

5. In your experience doing both community-led work and outreach in 2022, what challenges have you faced and what are you proud of?

Many people expressed the same challenges and points of pride from the past year.

Challenges: not enough time or staffing, balancing priorities, learning to apply EDI to all aspects of library work, having to say no or not being able to accommodate requests, consistently and humbly evaluating what we are doing, the emotional impact and energy needed during some visits

Proud: rebuilding connections that were lost during the pandemic, that the library is willing to change based on community feedback, not just making the easy connections but taking the time to build other relationships, building new relationships with families who previously did not feel welcome in the library, extending community development beyond the community librarian team

6. Next meeting

The next meeting will be February or March 2023. Please email Shideh, Emily or Jessica if you have any suggestions for guest speakers.