

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

June 3, 2022, 10am-12pm

Virtual meeting via Zoom

### In attendance:

Shideh Taleban (NVCL), Caitlin MacRae (NWPL), Victoria Gomez (NVDPL), Kelty Roberts (VPL), Eleonore Shaffer (VPL), Elizabeth Fernandes (UCW), Tara Thompson (ORL), Chris Koth (NWPL), Saara Itkonen (CVPL), Anita Fata (Out on the Shelves), Kara Desimone (ORL), Rebekah Adams-Brush (NVDL), Allison Kvern (VPL), Nicole Sousa (BPL), Noreen Ma (BPL), Ana Johannes (CPL), Emily Guerrero (BPL), Deanna Walker (RPL), Jill Klaponski (ORL), Janeen Parent (FVRL), Isabel Dos Santos (NWPL), Liz Hunter (NWPL)

### **1. Land Acknowledgment & Introductions**

### **2. March 30, 2022 meeting minutes approved**

### **3. Learning about NVDPL's [Caring Community Kits](#) – Rebekah Adams-Brush**

After the tragic stabbing outside of the Lynn Valley branch of the NVDL in 2021, the community came together to support the library and the surrounding community. After raising funds for the purpose of supporting the community, a church group approached the library with the idea of creating community kits that aimed to promote community building, strengthen resilience and increase common understanding. Under these broad parameters the library created the Caring Community Kits.

The kits are being piloted at the main branch with the hopes of eventually expanding across the system. There are currently 23 kits (4 Adult, 4 Multigenerational, 15 Children's) with similar topics used across each category. The kits are currently displayed in the adult and children's area of the library. Kits can be checked out for 3 weeks and holds can be placed through bibliocommons. Each kit has an itemized label of key materials and the kits are checked when they are returned. A binder with refills of paper materials is also housed behind the circulation desk. The approximate replacement cost for each bag is \$150. The children's kits have been the most popular.

Each Caring Community Kit is housed in a [clear backpack](#) and consist of books, resource lists (both library materials and resources in the community) and extension activities.

Example Bags:

Children's Indigenous Languages Themed Kit

- Books
- Paper resource list (including a list of indigenous authors)
- A puzzle
- A puppet

Adult Conversation Starters Themed Kit

- Books
- Paper resource list
- Table topics game

Shideh told the group about [On the Table](#), an innovative conversation series where hosts from across the province will invite friends, family, co-workers, and strangers to gather, share food, and talk to help combat social isolation and help people “get beyond small talk.”

#### **4. How do we capture or evaluate community-led work in our library systems?**

The group discussed how to capture the impact of community work beyond basic statistics. How do you capture the value of conversations? Especially when these conversations are a part of a long-term process? Many libraries share stories as a way of demonstrating that value, but everyone agreed that they are beginning to question the ethics behind sharing people’s stories without their consent. Currently all libraries ensure that identifying information, like pronouns and names, are not included in their reports.

Burnaby has consulted with Hasfa from the Downtown Eastside Women’s Centre on how they share stories and demonstrate the impact of their work. They are looking into sharing key words or patterns rather than one story that exemplifies a need or impact.

Questions to consider:

- Do you need to share stories? For libraries with more established community-led practices, stories might not be needed to secure funding or board support. Pattern mapping might be enough.
- Is this a reciprocal relationship? Does the individual benefit from their story being told?
- What are you trying to accomplish when sharing a story? Is the information for coordinating work? Securing funding?
- Is there another way to share the information presented in the story?

A tension between our capitalist structures and the foundational goals of community-led work was identified. The community’s needs and desires are the foundation of community-led work, so respecting their wishes (aka securing consent) when reporting on community-led activities is in direct alignment with the work. A need to shift away from colonial structures when reporting and delivering services was also identified.

Many expressed gratitude that the ethics of sharing stories and ways of reporting is being discussed. Many also noted a gap in the literature when it comes to the ethics of sharing stories and reporting qualitative information.

Sources shared during the discussion:

- Tara shared that she attended an informative talk by [Audrey Barbakoff](#)
- [Red Woman Rising](#) – an example sharing stories with consent
- Maree Brown’s books [Emergent Strategies](#) and [Pleasure Activism](#)

If you are interested in collaborating on a BCLA presentation or paper on capturing and evaluating community-led work, please contact Chris Koth at [ckoth@nwpl.ca](mailto:ckoth@nwpl.ca).

#### **5. Guest speaker: Margaret Fletcher from [Write to Read](#)**

Margaret Fletcher is a volunteer with Write to Read (WTR) and the head of the Library Response Team. Write to Read is an Indigenous literacy project that helps build libraries in remote and under-served Indigenous communities throughout BC. Write to Read was founded in 1996 by then Lieutenant Governor Steven Point and his Aid-de-Camp Bob Blacker, after Point noticed a lack of

access to books during visits to remote Indigenous communities. To date WTR has helped build 23 libraries.

The non-profit organization is run by a team of volunteers ranging from librarians to web designers, architects, and trades people. The organization depends on donations and grants, and receives significant financial support from local rotary clubs.

In order for a project to be initiated, WTR must be invited into a community. The team then meets with the elected council and elders to learn their specific vision for the library. They collect information on the library's audience, age range, community interests, reading level and more. The WTR architect also consults on building a library or modifying an existing building.

Once the information is collected and a library layout is finalized the Library Response Team (LRT), begins to assemble a collection. All WTR books are donated and they only accept "gently used" materials. [Good Minds](#) also donates new books to each library and allows each community to select their own materials. The (LRT) consists of 6 volunteers with varied backgrounds from Lib Techs to Teachers, all with a library background. The team meets every Monday at the WTK storage facility to sort books and prep the new collection. The facility can hold roughly 50,000 books.

The LRT sets up a mock library in one of the storage units and assembles the collection based on the community's specifications and space. The books are then catalogued as simply as possible using the DDC. Each library receives between 3000 and 4000 books. Once the collection is assembled, they are packed according to where they are shelved to make assembling the library as easy as possible.

All of the shelving for the WTR libraries are made in a correctional facility in Nanaimo. WTR supplies the wood and the incarcerated men learn to build the shelves. They produce shelves, children's tables and conference tables with the WTR logo. All shelves are moveable to ensure that the library space can change with the community.

Once the collection and space are ready, the LRT travels to the community to assemble the collection, set up computers, signage, teleconferencing and catalogue any additional materials that the community has gathered. This can take up to a week. A minimum of 3 community members are also trained on how to run the library. The community members are provided with contact information for the LRT so they can receive ongoing support after the library is set up.

WTR does not currently have a formal system for refreshing collections. They are looking into creating a system which will address weeding and sending books between libraries. The largest hurdle is shipping.

WTR does not have an existing relationship with public libraries in BC, but they are open to a partnership. They are always looking for Children's materials, in particular board books, picture books and easy readers. They do not need adult materials or non-fiction. You can contact Margaret at [Fletchm@shaw.ca](mailto:Fletchm@shaw.ca), if you have any questions or would like to discuss a library partnership.

At a local level Eleonore has talked to the WTR library in the Aboriginal Mother Centre about a partnership with the nearby VPL branch to help increase access to specific materials

You can find the CBC's 2014 documentary on Write to Read [here](#).

## **6. Round Table**

### **Okanogan Regional Library**

ORL has been doing in-person programming since October. Most of their children programming is in-person and has been extremely popular (almost back to pre-pandemic numbers). They are using a hybrid model for adult programs. Many participants in programs like book clubs and pyjama

storytime have asked for the programs to remain online. They are returning to in-person outreach and community events this summer.

#### **New Westminster Public Library**

NWPL is at the early stages of their community work. Their board recognizes that this is a long process and they are learning from others who have already done the work. They are currently assets mapping, and beginning to see where they should concentrate their efforts. Children's programs have returned to in-person. They have cancelled most adult programming and are being strategic about what they offer. The main focus is on supporting the local urban Indigenous community through supporting existing initiatives. More programs, including tech programs, will return in the fall.

#### **Burnaby Public Library**

Burnaby is being conservative in their return to in-person programming. Adult programs are online, but children's programs are going to shift to in-person outdoor programs this summer. They are still doing in-person community visits and the adult services team is looking to incorporate community work into their adult programming.

#### **North Vancouver District Public Library**

NVDPL is running in-person children's programs and most adult programs are running online or as a hybrid. They had an outreach visit with a high school club that was set up by the student representatives, and not the teachers. This is a first, and they are now considering new ways to directly reach and work with the students. The new Lion's Gate satellite branch has just opened. The small location has been slow as the surrounding housing is not completed yet.

#### **Vancouver Public Library**

VPL is offering a mixture of in-person and online programs for adults and children. In-person adult programs have had a very low attendance rate. Most children's programs are in-person, including storytimes and SRC. The community librarian team is in flux so they have a lower capacity for community visits right now. Community partners are eager for in-person visits again. They have also launched the bibilobike and are excited to bring it to visits.

#### **Coquitlam Public Library**

CPL is running in-person and online programs for children and families. The in-person family programs are well attended. Family storytime will take place both indoors and outside this summer. Adult programs have remained online. They are continuing with in-person care home visits and are launching a new tech program for seniors where volunteers visit people at home.

#### **Greater Victoria Public Library**

GVPL has been conservative with their return to programming. They have been running outdoor storytime and are starting in-door programs as well. There has been a huge turnout for babytime programs. They are focusing on existing partnerships before reaching out to new people.

#### **Fraser Valley Regional Public Library**

FVRL has started in-person children's and adults programming, but are keeping online options. SRC registration will be online again, with the option to sign up in-person. In-person outreach has started again, including visits to correctional facilities. They have received lots of invitations to community events on top of regular visits. They are focusing on building relationships with local Indigenous communities.

### **Richmond Public Library**

RPL has returned to in-person programming, but are continuing with a few online programs. For instance, the teens asked to keep their programs online. The library is prepping for Doors Open, a community event where organizations invite the public into their spaces. They will be highlighting the library's kits and programs. A permanent storywalk has been put up in Hamilton Park. The library has purchased a Criterion license so they can show films in the library. More organizations have been reaching out for community visits.

### **Creston Valley Public Library**

CVPL is still recovering from the pandemic and are mindful of staff capacity. They are doing in-person SRC with a focus on programs and storytimes.

### **Out on the Shelves**

This is the first year since 2015 that the library has been open 5 days a week. They hope to do more outreach and programming with funding from grants.

### **North Vancouver City Library**

NVCL has a new website. They are offering both in-person and virtual programming, although adult programming is predominantly online. English Conversation Circles will stay online based on community feedback. They have been doing in-person community visits since April and have just hired a new book bike ambassador for the summer. ELL class visits are currently virtual.

### **7. Next Meeting?**

The last two CLIG meetings for 2022 will be in late September and early December. Keep an eye out for a doodle poll after Labour Day.