

BCLA Community-Led Interest Group Meeting

March 30, 2022, 2pm-4pm

Virtual meeting via Zoom

In attendance: Shideh Taleban (NVCL); Kelty Roberts (VPL); Eleonore Shaffer (VPL); Emily Gow (VPL); Chris Koth (NWPL); Liz Hunter (NWPL); Ann Johannes (CPL); Rebekah Adams-Brush (NVDPL); Tara Thompson (ORL); Caitlin Ottenbreit (GVPL); Jessica Stol (LPL); Vicki Lee (WVML); Kate Quinn-Feehan (WVML); Kelly Thoreson (RPL); Deanna Walker (RPL); Anita Fata (Out on the Shelves Library); Mariah Gastaldo (BPL); David Kerr (SL); Ravi Basi (SL)

1. Land Acknowledgement & Introductions

2. December 15, 2021 meeting minutes approved

3. Community Development Days Report and Debrief

Shideh shared the report that was submitted to BCLA. The report has also been uploaded on the [CLIG resources webpage](#). The Community Development Days (CDD) event was hosted on February 24th and 25th, and included 4 sessions that were free for all library workers and students in BC, as well as other provinces and territories. BCLA membership was not required to attend.

The sessions were not recorded due to the sensitive nature of the topics and to facilitate open conversations. We chose a webinar format based on the registration numbers and speakers' preferences. The registration numbers by session:

Session 1 = 139 registered, 95 attended

Session 2 = 147 registered, 97 attended

Session 3 = 130 registered, 70 attended

Session 4 = 129 registered, 78 attended.

There was an incident during the second session with a chat comment about the Freedom Convoy. The presenters, Leila Meshgini and Emily Guerrero, addressed the comment and refocused the discussion to the topic and presentation. We received positive feedback from attendees who appreciated how the incident was handled and who shared that it was a learning opportunity for how to address difficult conversations. We have gathered resources for how to handle hard conversations and these will be posted on the CLIG resources webpage soon.

This was the first conference about this topic in our profession. We will explore a variety of options for how a future CDD event could be hosted. The online event had lower costs, allowed the event to be free for attendees, and made it more accessible for rural libraries who may not always be included in these types of events because of their location.

We did not send out surveys for feedback. Hoped to gather more feedback during this CLIG meeting from people who attended the sessions.

Rebekah (NVDPL) – Loved the event and conversational format, as well as how the two days were structured. At NVDPL, the librarians that were able to attend were then asked to present to the rest of their colleagues, so the event's reach is probably even greater than the attendance numbers suggest. Everyone who attended from her library had positive feedback.

Caitlin (GVPL) – Was affected by the BCLA communication listservs not working and she didn't know that the event had happened. There may be even greater attendance next time now that the communication listservs have been fixed.

Shideh – Also experienced problems with the BCLA listservs after the migration. It seems the listserv problems have largely been resolved, but if not, emails may be appearing in spam folders. Adding BCLA listserv emails as a trusted domain should resolve this. Very sorry that Caitlin and GVPL staff weren't able to attend.

Ravi (SL) – Shideh did a great summary. Glad that we will be posting resources on how to handle disruptions. Really liked the webinar format since seeing all those faces can be distracting for a speaker.

Ann (CPL) – Liked the webinar format because it felt like she and Jorge were just having a casual conversation, rather than seeing a hundred small faces on the screen. Kudos to Shideh who did so much work for this event.

Shideh (NVCL) – Asked the CLIG group about their preferences for having a future CDD event online or in-person.

Liz – Online. Really liked having the breadth of participants from afar.

Anita – Online made it much more accessible to her in Prince George.

Tara – Virtual is better. She can attend more easily.

Shideh – It was also much easier to organize.

Shideh shared her screen and showed how to find the CLIG website, as well as how to subscribe to BCLA listservs. To find the CLIG webpage: Go to the BCLA website, click on the [Divisions](#) tab along the top header, then scroll down to click on the [Community-Led Interest Group](#) link. To subscribe to different listservs: Go to BCLA website, click on [Professional Development](#) along the top header, and click on [BCLA Listservs](#) link along the left panel.

4. BCLA Conference – Who is attending? What sessions are you interested in? How do you feel about the “Collective Restoration” theme?

Shideh (NVCL) – Is attending, and also ready to do desk coverage for other colleagues. NVCL is having a [Pride Storytime presentation](#).

Chris (NWPL) – Not attending this year, but people from his library are attending.

Deanna (RPL) – She is attending, as well as presenting at BCLA on a multiculturalism grant project for a podcasting program. Deanna's session is called [“Giving Voices to the Unheard: Connecting with BIPOC youth through podcasting.”](#)

Kate (WVML) – Will be attending and is particularly excited for the Monique Gray Smith talk.

Rebekah (NVDPL) – Not attending this year, but will be doing desk coverage for colleagues.

Mariah (BPL) – Will be attending for two of the days. She is especially looking forward to the keynote from Monique Gray Smith. Her approach to online conferences is to go to sessions even if she doesn't seem super interested in them because she finds that the sessions often change her perspective. She is hoping many of the sessions will be recorded so that she can go to them later. Excited to learn more about what "Collective Restoration" means.

Liz (NWPL) – Won't be attending BCLA. Will be attending the [Decoda Literacy Conference](#) since they have some sessions with a focus on digital literacy and she is in a new digital literacy position. Liz is also attending ALA's [Digital Experience](#) conference, which is a subset of ALA's main conference.

Ann (CPL) – Is not attending BCLA this year. She used to go to the Decoda Conference too, and agrees that the conference will probably have some good resources for Liz in her new role.

Eleonore (VPL) – Won't be attending BCLA. She's still working through the recordings of the OLA conference. She would love to hear if anyone has any OLA session recommendations,

Tara – Recommends "Think Like a Coach" and "Academic Libraries Spotlight: Daniel Dale."

Caitlin (GVPL) – Still working through OLA sessions and won't be attending BCLA this year.

Tara (ORL) – She will be applying to attend BCLA and hopes to be there. There are a lot of accessibility sessions on the BCLA schedule, which is an area of focus and interest for her.

David (SL) – Will be attending BCLA. There are a good number of accessibility sessions, which will be a learning opportunity since accessibility services is a new role for him. The [Social Services Sandbox session](#) is also interesting since Surrey Libraries is exploring this idea, too.

Ravi (SL) – Will be attending a few sessions. Tania Thomas for Surrey Libraries will be presenting on [Library Services for Migrant, Undocumented, and Temporary Foreign Workers](#).

Kelty (VPL) – Is attending as an exhibitor for the Skilled Immigrant Info Centre, so she will also have access to the full conference. Will try to attend the session on outreach to migrant, undocumented, and temporary foreign workers.

Anita (Out on the Shelves) – She'll be volunteering and tweeting for BCLA. Interested in the idea of collective restoration, what the panelists will talk about in relation to this, and what collective restoration will look like in the COVID world.

Vicki (WVML) – She is also new in a role as the acting Digital Experience Coordinator. Instead of BCLA, she will be going to the Decoda Conference, for the same reasons that Liz mentioned.

Kelly (RPL) – Not attending BCLA this year either. Really appreciated the CLIG Community Development Days because they were focused on areas very specific to her job.

Shideh (NVCL) – Was subscribed to the Decoda emails a few years ago and found their email newsletters were very informative. Shideh also attended the virtual PLA conference in March. The PLA 2022 theme focused on accessibility and EDI.

5. Roundtable discussion of community-led work happening at the various library systems

North Vancouver City Library (NVCL)

Shideh – The library is offering a free tax clinic with CRA’s community volunteer income tax program. Last year, NVCL only offered the tax clinic virtually, but this year it’s in-person. If this is something other libraries would like to pursue in the future, connect with the CRA volunteer program and Shideh can also share information about the steps that NVCL needed to take. Their [Library Small Grants](#) application is up and running again this year.

Rebekah – She promotes the tax clinic to NVDPL’s patrons all the time.

New Westminster Public Library (NWPL)

Chris – [With their new strategic plan](#), the library board is asking them to focus on being embedded in the community, and staff are starting the process of community entry. This work has also included asset mapping. There are staff who aren’t librarians but who are energized and interested in doing this work, so they are trying to find ways to include them since many also have lived experience. NWPL is starting to bring back in-person programs; they’re looking forward to doing outside programming in the summer.

Shideh – What is the limit for in-person programs? Are they full capacity?

Chris – Yes. NWPL has slowed down the adult programming. Currently they are only doing core programming, which is literacy programs for children and youth.

Shideh – NVCL has slowed down its programming, too. They only have computer classes, story times, and senior gatherings happening in-person, and the rest is virtual.

Surrey Libraries (SL)

Ravi – SL is also focusing on being out in the community. They’re using a mapping tool that the City of Surrey helped them design. The tool identifies places that the library has not accessed within a certain radius, with a focus on marginalized communities.

David – The City of Surrey put together a map using a tool where the library can look at organizations or opportunities for connection within the areas around the library branches. The library is asking each of the ten branches to create a Branch Action Plan that identifies at least five new locations to connect with in their community. As far as outreach, SL is slowly getting back to in-person outreach – such as visits to the Surrey Food Bank – and programming is slowly starting to happen.

Burnaby Public Library (BPL)

Mariah – The community librarian team is still going once or twice a week to do food bank visits at different locations, and doing other virtual visits. The team is looking at how they evaluate their work. A lot of evaluation has been done through storytelling, which is very meaningful

since the work is more qualitative than quantitative. But with the Indigenous initiatives working group at BPL and having other discussions with community, it is starting to feel weird to share stories without asking for explicit permission. The team is thinking about the process of decolonizing their work and trying to see what evaluation can look like going forward, since the Board needs something to evaluate. Mariah would be interested in discussing this more and seeing how other libraries evaluate community-led work. BPL is also having lots of anti-racism conversations at the library after the anti-racism climate audit that was done.

Shideh – This is a great suggestion for an agenda item for one of our next meetings: *how do we capture or evaluate community-led work in our systems?*

Liz – Is the community librarian team made up of librarians who are specifically hired to do the community-led work? Are there other librarians who aren't involved in doing the work at that same level?

Mariah – BPL has an actual team of community librarians, which is part of a community development department that Jorge started. Their whole job is to be out in the community and inform the services at the library. BPL has done a public services staffing model shift and are in the process of seeing what other Public Service Adult Librarian portfolios look like. But there is a component of community development in every librarian's role. BPL is still figuring this out.

Eleonore – Would love to discuss evaluation at a future CLIG meeting! It is something that they've talked about a lot on the community librarian team at VPL.

Vicki – It's difficult because we are often quite removed from the outcomes and impacts of our actions. Collecting interaction stats is such an inadequate measure.

Okanagan Regional Library (ORL)

Tara – Just finished their Library Champions Project. Their programs have been in-person for several months and they're expanding. They've also learned that some programs work better online. For example, their pajama story time works better online because kids can tune in right before bedtime.

Shideh – NVCL's pajama story time is also popular online. Their English corner is also wanting to continue online because they have participants who are tuning in from outside Canada, including from Mexico, the U.S., and Chile.

North Vancouver District Public Library (NVDPL)

Rebekah – NVDPL is moving to a model that's more embedded in the community. It's exciting but she is also figuring out what it means for her role as a branch head, where a lot of administrative duties are inside the branch. As a teen librarian, she was constantly out in the community and would like to get back to that, but is figuring out how the community engagement piece can work logistically. The first main initiative they are undertaking is deepening and developing meaningful relationships with the Indigenous nations that are closest to them.

West Vancouver Memorial Library (WVML)

Vicki – Looking forward to programming coming back inside the branch and evaluating what will still be offered virtually; not all patrons want to come back and the library is reaching new people virtually. They are doing outreach at the West Vancouver seniors centre and connecting with the volunteer advisory board of the seniors' centre; they have had many ideas of how to

take the library outside, including painting the yellow brick road from the seniors centre to the library.

Kate – It is in the early stages, but WVML is creating new community portfolios for each of the librarians so that they have a goal of which community organizations the librarians will connect with. They also have a [Climate Writer in Residence](#) who is having interesting conversations about not only the climate, but also an Indigenous perspective on the climate; there will be an Indigenous climate panel coming up soon. More in-person programs are happening, but they are seeing how this looks and which programs work best. WVML has such a large area and people north of the highway don't have access to as many services, so virtual programs have been helpful to connect with those areas.

Rebekah – One of her first librarian gigs was delivering an after-school book club for WVM at an elementary school way up the mountain. The kids would never have been able to make it physically down to the library.

Shideh – This might be a topic for future CLIG meetings: *when are we considering hybrid programming in our systems and when are we not?*

Coquitlam Public Library (CPL)

Ann – Have been running story times in person since October. They have capacity limits on them and checking COVID passports, but the attendance numbers have been slowly increasing. Day care providers have also been reaching out again for monthly story times. CPL will be getting a new library bus. Ann recently went to a seniors' home and it was the first time they were allowed to go inside; the seniors were so excited for them to visit. There is a huge senior population in Coquitlam so it's a target population for them to focus on.

Vancouver Public Library (VPL)

Eleonore – VPL is also doing some hybrid programs. The [Indigenous Storyteller in Residence](#) is a hybrid program and is not something she would necessarily be able to attend, so it's been nice to have the recording available to watch afterwards. VPL will also have a book bike launching in May, so they are looking at staff training and scheduling. If other libraries have book bikes and have tips for VPL, she would love to hear them.

Shideh – Visited the Calgary Public Library before the pandemic and was fascinated by their Artist in Residence and Indigenous Storyteller in Residence.

Rebekah – NVDPL had Kung Jaadee speak at their annual all-staff workshop, who was a previous VPL Indigenous Storyteller in Residence. She was phenomenal!

Eleonore – The Indigenous Storyteller program has been running at VPL since 2008!

Kelty (VPL) – Has been meeting with community partners and service providers. They are moving towards a hybrid model of programming, with some in-person programs in April. But they like having some programs online since some people haven't arrived in Canada yet and can prepare through these online programs. There a program in April with MOSAIC to prepare for job fairs, and another one in May with Back in Motion for mock interviews. They also have a series called [Uplift Asian](#) at VPL to combat anti-Asian racism and to celebrate Asian cultures.

Rebekah – Heard about the Uplift Asian series on CBC.

Greater Victoria Public Library (GVPL)

Caitlin – Community-led work was stripped back during the pandemic, but it's starting up again. GVPL has a two-year strategic bridging plan, and one of the four pillars is community relationship building. They used to do a tax clinic in the library as a partnership with an organization in town and they're hoping to do that again. They will also be opening their new branch soon and will be doing outdoor literacy programming all summer – story times and baby times in local parks, as well as some in-branch story times.

Richmond Public Library (RPL)

Kelly – Librarians are focusing on rebuilding relationships with the senior community, and other staff are continuing their work with shelters and unhoused populations. For anyone interested in more information about tax clinics, RPL staff have been leading the library's tax clinic. RPL is also doing food bank visits once or twice a month. Kelly worked on Black History Month with a local Black woman who is a passionate volunteer; this volunteer has been Kelly's primary gatekeeper during Black History Month activities. They want to continue this throughout the year and connect with more community members, so they developed a book club where they read Black Canadian authors. RPL is also working on Ramadan with a local grassroots group of Muslim moms who run a children's program with the library for Eid every year. One of RPL's community partner agencies wrote a report about racism and found that anti-Asian racism is the top issue in Richmond, but the other prevalent issue is Islamophobia. Kelly is also wanting to connect with LGBTQ2S+ adults in Richmond, but has been really struggling to find organizations that serve this population within Richmond (there are organizations that serve surrounding communities). She is thinking of developing a program and hoping to bring folks in, but is wondering if anyone else has had a similar experience where the library hasn't found an "in" with a community group yet. If anyone has any advice, Kelly would love to hear from people.

Ann – Could you partner with the school district? They might have some programs?

Kelly – A colleague has connected with LGBTQ2S+ young people through the schools, but Kelly is trying to specifically connect with adults.

Shideh – For the Black authors book club, is it in addition to the adult book club that the library has? Is the format the same?

Kelly – There are a few different adult book clubs that are run. But this one was developed out of Black History Month and from key feedback they received that Black history needs to happen all year, not just during February.

Shideh – Knows of many systems have ESL book clubs or adult book clubs, but was interested to see what other book clubs are offered at RPL.

Kelly – There is a regular adult book club and another one that reads books centered around food, but this one is specifically focused on Black Canadian authors. Anyone is welcome to join but it has the windows and mirrors perspective – for some it's a mirror and for others it's a window into other experiences.

Shideh – What are the logistics for purchasing copies?

Kelly – This is something they are still trying to figure out. This program overlaps with another department's budget, so they are trying to find books that serve multiple purposes. It's also good for their book club collection and trying to be intentional and inclusive with the voices represented in the collection.

Deanna – Working to reach out to Horizons Alternative School. Some students and teachers from Horizons will be visiting the library next week and Deanna will be looking to see what supports both teachers and students need. A colleague is working on an art wall project that has involved reaching out to community groups to make art. A colleague has gotten in touch with the Hamilton community centre and has arranged for some after-school visits, story times, and coding classes. Hamilton is technically part of Richmond but is quite far away, so they are looking to learn more about the community's needs. They are also trying to write a community services strategy plan, which would be an overarching document for RPL and for their team. The nature of their work has changed with the pandemic and this document might be able to provide some guidance.

Out On The Shelves

Anita – Out on the Shelves reopened in March and will be open Monday-Friday during the school year. They would love to have their own space in the future – perhaps an adult queer space that is not alcohol-related, which is something that comes up a lot in discussions. They have a SSHRC partnership grant that they're working on with the iSchool to hopefully improve catalogue descriptions for LGBTQIA+ materials. Volunteers and students are interviewing authors about the way their works are catalogued at Out on the Shelves using Library of Congress subject headings, and hopefully updating their controlled vocabulary to Homosaurus and developing in-house description rules based on author feedback. They are also focusing on filling gaps in the collection based on community feedback, such as books by or for non-binary, intersex, and asexual authors.

Jessica (LPL) – March Break programming was the first time the library had indoor programs and more programming will be starting up again in April, but we're asking the same questions about what will be in-person, online, or hybrid. She's also looking to connect a nearby Child and Parent Resource Institute and their families to see if the centre would be interested in sensory story times.

Ann – CPL runs story walks quarterly with their local organization that works with kids who have extra support needs. Prior to COVID, they would also do a story time once a month at their drop-in.

Liz (NWPL) – Community-led work might be slowed down until other organizations are also in-person and we can better connect with those populations. For example: she can't connect with homeless populations virtually, and she needs to be. She has also noticed that some organizations are funded by health orgs and their guidelines are different about when they can open up.

Chris (NWPL) – At NWPL, staff are wrapping their head around whether they are only focusing on people who are surviving, or also those who are wanting to and interested on thriving? What is the role of the library? What is the role of our support to those who are thriving? It also seems that since librarians are becoming more embedded in the community and applying a lot of social work principles, they are having to discover ways to say no. If anyone has information, Chris is interested in learning more about the methods or tools of discovery of community – beyond the community toolkit.

Shideh – These are good ideas to discuss at future meetings.

5. Next Meeting

We will meet at the beginning of June – stay tuned for the date.

Looked at list of suggested guest speakers, collected during previous CLIG meetings. Plan to reach out to Carla Foxe from Halifax Public Libraries or Margaret Fletcher from Write to Read. If anyone has suggestions for guest speakers or additional discussion topics, please let us know.