

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

September 26, 2023, from 2-4pm

Virtual meeting via Zoom

In attendance: Shideh Taleban (NVCL); CJ Pentland (NVCL); Claire Badali (Surrey Libraries); Katie Fry (ORL); Ann Johannes (CPL); Emily Guerrero (BPL); Alison Campbell (NVDPL); Noreen Ma (BPL); Saara Itkonen (Creston Valley Public Library); Tara Thompson (ORL).

### **1. Land Acknowledgements & Introductions**

If CLIG participants are interested in offering the land acknowledgement at the next CLIG meeting, please let Shideh know. The next meeting will be taking place at the end of November or early December.

### **2. Approval of July 27, 2023 meeting minutes**

### **3. Community Development Days 2023**

The 2023 Community Development Days will be on November 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>, between 10am-12pm and 1pm-3pm each day. The event will be free, hosted over Zoom in a webinar format, and open to everyone working in libraries as well as students.

There will be a total of four sessions:

- *Introduction to Community Work: Learning and Advocating* – led by Nicole Sousa and Jorge Cárdenas
- *Accessibility and Community Work* – led by Tara Thompson and Noreen Ma
- *Community Work and Academic Libraries* – led by Jorge Cárdenas, Donna Langille, Carolyn Caseñas, Melissa Smith, and David Gill
- *Building Relationships in Community Work* – led by Saara Itkonen and Claire Badali

Session themes were curated based on topics discussed at previous CLIG meetings and were chosen by the CDD planning committee (Shideh Taleban, Jessica Stol, Andrea Galbraith, Jorge Cárdenas, Saara Itkonen, Tara Thompson, Noreen Ma). The details of each session will be determined by the speakers.

Save the date and tell colleagues about the event.

Tara and Noreen asked for feedback about what folks may be particularly interested in learning for community-led work and accessibility. They are planning to give an overview of the provincial legislation and share their experiences of accessibility and

community-led work in public libraries. Additional suggestions from CLIG participants included:

- What does “nothing about us without us” mean?
- Community-led work in the virtual environment
- What accessibility has meant in relationship building, how it is an ongoing practice
- How people with lived experience have so much knowledge and how disabled community often has to be an advocate for themselves
- Sign language interpreters at events and programs

Please reach out to Shideh or Jessica by October 17<sup>th</sup> to share any further suggestions with Tara and Noreen.

#### **4. Round Table**

##### ***Okanagan Regional Library***

Tara shared the Visual Tech Library of Things kits that ORL will soon be releasing. These kits allow people who are losing their eyesight to try out different technologies, as well as teach people what the world is like for an individual with blindness. The kit includes a stuffed guide dog to teach about proper behaviour around a guide dog, magnifiers, colourblind lenses, tactile dice and a large print deck of cards, paper glasses that show what it's like to have different eye diseases, C-Pen reader, as well as books and activity guides. There will be four kits in total and lendable for everyone. Also, Ivan Coyote will be visiting the Kelowna and Vernon libraries, and ASL interpretation will be available at both events. ORL is doing a library card drive for the month of October, and the system has officially gone fine free.

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

NVDPL will be offering a passive program on the days leading up to the National Day for Truth & Reconciliation, where patrons can make a bracelet to commit to reconciliation actions. The bracelet uses orange embroidery and patrons can add beads made out of wrapped paper, which are written with different truth and reconciliation actions. NVDPL is also offering a Pins & Needles program for people who like to do stitching, and they are also working with district partners to do programming related to climate action week. NVDPL will continue to work on their community asset mapping project this fall.

##### ***Surrey Libraries***

SL reassessed programs during COVID and have been working on their new strategic plan. They have hired an Indigenous Services Coordinator who is leading programs, and they are hoping to soft launch their new bookmobile this winter.

They are considering ways to do programming with the bookmobile at various locations throughout the city, such as offering storytimes at ice arenas, toddler dance parties at rec centres, or technology help at food banks. Claire asked for attendees to share any experiences doing programming in challenging or unpredictable environments. Below are some points from the group discussion:

- It can be important to find the right community partner, or at least have two staff attending these types of programs.
- Reach out to organizations to see what programs would fit their needs.
- Perhaps ask the organization “tell me about the work you do” because there may be a way that the library can support them or help to make their job easier.
- Consider the location and bring appropriate supplies, such as a first aid kit, bug spray, sunscreen, dress in layers, etc.
- Consider bringing items that will draw people’s interest, such as free books, stickers, or bubble makers at storytimes.
- Think about how people will move through the space. For example: At a food bank, consider whether to situate yourself at the beginning or end of a line.
- Choose staff who are comfortable with uncertainty, who are flexible and can quickly adapt to other people, who are good at active listening, who can listen and be in spaces where folks are having a hard day, staff who have a lot of public service experience, people are who curious and open to new experiences.
- Have consistent and regular visits. Initial visits may be about building trust. Perhaps visit one location and give it a lot of dedicated attention, such as visiting one food bank every week instead of four different locations once a month.
- Support staff as they fit these visits into their schedules. Some spaces may be more challenging than others. Debrief with staff after visits to see what they learned and what may or may not be working in a location.

### ***Coquitlam Public Library***

CPL is in the middle of their [Indigenous Film Festival](#), which has included short films, feature films, and documentaries. They recently had seven school classes visit their locations to participate in the festival. CPL is also planning its [Conversations on Race in BC speakers series](#) again this year, covering topics such as Indigenous culture, new immigrants, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, and allyship. Ann has been attending the Tri-Cities Homelessness Task Force meetings to represent the library as the task force works on a strategic plan. CPL is also working on keeping their Book Bus running.

### ***North Vancouver City Library***

In collaboration with the North Shore libraries, NVCL will be hosting an author talk with Squamish Elder Sam George for the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. The library will also be working with the North Shore Primary Care network to do some health education programming, where physicians can speak on different topics such as supporting people who use substances. During Transgender Awareness Week in November, the library will be screening the film *Krow’s Transformation* and the director will be speaking afterwards.

Other programming includes writing workshops during climate action week; the [Library Small Grants](#) program; journaling courses for newcomer and immigrant populations to practice their writing skills; a program on [digital skills for entrepreneurship](#) run by Canada Learning Code; Halloween costume creation using the library's new sewing machines; and a variety of computer classes covering topics like intro to online travel planning, AI, and digital health information. The library also has hiking backpacks that can be checked out, as well as memory care kits, and upcoming sensory kits.

NVCL's Open Door Community Hub has hired a new community access worker. They are seeing an increase in folks visiting the space and have expanded the Hub's programming to include a craft table and board games, as well as a community resources board in order to make resources more accessible for folks. Upcoming programs include a tenants' rights workshop, ID clinics, foot care clinics, a media literacy workshop, and spooky jeopardy.

### ***Creston Valley Public Library***

CVPL is looking forward to connecting with a local organization that supports women who are fleeing domestic violence and exploring ways the library can support their work. The library's adult programming has been trying to find different ways to build community, which has included a Skill Share series where participants can do creative mending or learn new creative skills, as well as a book club focusing on different social justice issues since these discussions can be harder to access in a smaller community. The library also offers a monthly board game night, open for all ages to build connections.

The community was impacted and distressed by recent anti-trans protests, and the library has been trying to find small, long-term ways to build community. A local trans group has reached out to the library to have a safe space for meetings.

During the summer, Creston has an influx of migrant workers who do harvesting and fruit picking. The library is considering how to create a Spanish directory of local supports and services so that migrant workers can better orient themselves and learn about practical supports, like transportation.

### ***Burnaby Public Library***

The renovation at the Metrotown branch is mostly completed and the branch had a soft launch of their new digital studio in September. BPL offers an English [Games Night](#) for English language learners, where participants can play conversational games, make connections, and practice their English in a fun environment. The program has had positive feedback and they are hoping to expand it. BPL is also having conversations around room bookings related to community partners and how the library can form

partnerships with groups that offer ongoing programs serving a high-needs library demographic.

### ***Workshop for Immigrants and Refugees***

Shideh shared info about the STAND Festival on November 2-12, which is a Festival to showcase and celebrate works of immigrant and refugee artists in theatre, dance, and music. For one of their workshops, they are inviting immigrants and refugees to participate in their [Intergenerational \(dis\) Connection](#) workshop. This five-day workshop is open to anyone impacted by cultural or language differences to develop small plays and community conversations. Participants will receive a small honorarium for full participation.

### **5. Next meeting**

The next meeting will be at the end of November or early December. Please email Shideh or Jessica if you have any suggestions for guest speakers.