

BCLA Multicultural Services Interest Group Meeting Minutes

Date: Tuesday May 14, 2024 from 9:30-10:45 AM

Location: Zoom

Present: Emily (Burnaby Public Library), Victoria (Burnaby Public Library) Ann (Coquitlam Public Library), Laura (Surrey Libraries), and Andrea (West Van Library).

Agenda:

1. Emily & Andrea to introduce new logo package prepared by Studio Nuvo students
2. BCLA Conference 2024 Roundtable - Highlights
3. Roundtable
4. Next meeting & action items over the summer hiatus
5. Other

MEETING

1. Emily & Andrea introduced new logo package prepared by Studio Nuvo students

Emily shared that we really enjoyed working with the Studio Nuvo students from Vancouver Community College. Cynthia and Rina from BCLA were on hand to help guide us through the process because they had previously worked with Studio Nuvo students (Thanks Cynthia and Rina!)

Andrea shared the new logo and brand guidelines with meeting attendees on Zoom. The new logo was well received.

2. BCLA Conference 2024 Roundtable - Highlights

We had a special roundtable to discuss takeaways from sessions at the 2024 BCLA Conference.

Several people attended and really enjoyed the Drag Story Time: A case study in library crisis management session. There was consensus that the Communication Plan that Okanagan Regional Library (ORL) created to support staff was great because it included tools that empowered front line staff to disengage from patron encounters if they became abusive.

Ann attended the Communities in Crisis: the ORL's Approach to Vulnerable Populations session. What stood out? ORL has shifted its focus: they've moved away from putting all of their effort into figuring out how to keep the library open to how they can support staff. What does this

look like in practice? Library management shut down the library after an incident to give staff time to debrief.

Ann applauded Burnaby Public library staff for being so candid during the session entitled “Awkward, Messy, Vital: One Library’s experience with EDI commitments and operationalizing antiracism.”

Andrea was impressed by the session entitled “Reciprocity, “Reconciliation”, Truth-telling, and Indigenous Voices”. Rick Ouellet, Vancouver Public Library’s Indigenous Planner, shared some of the systemic barriers that are impeding library sector efforts to recruit more Indigenous staff. One notable barrier is the precarious nature of library positions namely, that many library workers work on a casual basis and people can’t afford to live on casual, intermittent and small salaries.

There was discussion about the session entitled “Library Leadership: A candid discussion.” One of the suggestions the library leaders had for advancing your career in libraries was to move far away to smaller, more remote communities where you might have a better opportunity to get involved in library management. However, the panelists didn’t seem to consider the reality that moving away to small remote communities is not safe for many people including but not limited to 2SLGBTQIA+ library workers.

3. Roundtable

The Roundtable is when we share information about multicultural programming, services and collections that we are offering or would like to offer at our library systems.

Ann shared that Coquitlam Public Library is offering a two-part speaker series featuring people from diverse backgrounds sharing their stories. The series will feature an Interfaith Exchange in the hopes that it fosters a better understanding of, and appreciation for, the different cultures, faith and individuals that make up the Canadian Mosaic.

Coquitlam Public Library will also be hosting a Writers Festival in June that features a diverse group of authors including 2 Indigenous authors and 1 2SLGBTQIA+ author.

Coquitlam Public Library has been hosting a monthly Korean seniors program that is very popular.

Emily and Victoria shared that Burnaby Public Library is partnering with Burnaby Neighbourhood House to highlight poetry told in mother tongues. They will be making poetry available in both the mother tongue of the poet and in English translations. One of the goals of

this project is to help parents raise multilingual children and help multilingual children connect with their cultures.

Burnaby Public Library has also given S.U.C.C.E.E.S staff tours of the library. S.U.C.C.E.E.S staff were impressed that prospective library patrons do not need any official immigration papers or a specific immigration status to get a library card and access library resources. The motto at Burnaby Public Library when it comes to prospective patrons is “No ID, no Problem.” For the last 5 years, Burnaby hasn’t had different library cards (e.g. internet access only card): everyone with a Burnaby library card can access all library resources including databases.

Emily shared that she is working with a colleague to develop a training document that would support staff after a racist incident. The goal is to create one document that maps both internal and external supports that are available to staff.

Laura shared that Surrey Libraries is still offering Storytimes in Spanish at the Guildford Branch.

Surrey Libraries’ Street SMART program continues to be very successful. The program, which has been operating since September 2022, involves Community Outreach Workers and Surrey Bylaw Enforcement Officers working together in the City Centre Branch to support community members experiencing homelessness and other complex challenges. One of the reasons it has been so effective is that Street SMART workers can give cash to people who are in crisis right away - up to \$150. Surrey Libraries is hoping to secure the funding they need to continue offering this program.

Surrey Libraries has also hosted the soft launch of its new mobile library. The mobile library will go to shelters and jobfairs.

Andrea shared that West Van Library is hosting Farsi Poetry Nights that are being presented in Farsi by the Third Bridge Foundation.

West Van Library has also created a new resource page to help patrons cope with disturbing ongoing world events. Andrea shared the weblink with attendees via Zoom.

4. Next meeting and action items

Our Interest Group takes a break over the summer. Our next meeting will be in September 2024 (date to be determined).

Action items over the summer:

Andrea will upload the new brand guidelines to our Interest Group's online forum. Emily will reach out to Cynthia to ask her update our logo on the BCLA website.

Andrea will create a Google Forms poll to determine the dates & times of the Interest Group's four planned meetings for 2024-2025. Andrea will upload the poll to the BCLA website and encourage Interest Group members to share it with colleagues at their respective library systems.

The Google Forms poll will close on July 31st. We will select the dates that receive the most votes. Andrea will post information about the 2024-2025 meeting dates and times on the BCLA website in August 2024.

Over the summer, Emily and Natalie will discuss the possibility of hosting a continuing education session about working with precarious and/or undocumented library patrons.

5. Other

No other items were raised.

Meeting adjourned at 10:45am.