



BC Library Association Announces 2020 Awards For Immediate Release

VANCOUVER BC: Each year the British Columbia Library Association (BCLA) invites the library community, partners, and stakeholders to nominate individuals and organizations for awards recognizing outstanding work in libraries throughout the province. BCLA is privileged to present three overarching awards for outstanding work in libraries and four awards with a specific topic focus. The awards were announced at the BCLA Annual General Meeting, June 24th, 2020.

The BCLA Eureka Award Winner: The Community Scholars Program

The BCLA Eureka Award recognizes individuals or organizations that have created an innovative approach to address a barrier, solve a problem, provide a powerful new insight, or introduce an original idea in the library world.

Simon Fraser University Library has run the Community Scholars Program since its pilot phase in 2016. The expanded program is now delivered in partnership with Vancouver Island University Library, University of North British Columbia Library, and Thompson Rivers University Library. The Community Scholars Program gives 500 BC non-profit leaders free access to thousands of articles and e-books, through an enhanced search interface designed for the program. Community Scholars are also supported and mentored by dedicated Community Scholars Program librarians through one-on-one consultations, tailored workshops, Community Scholars journal clubs, and other events.

The BCLA Building Better Communities Award Winner: Paul Taylor and the North Vancouver District Public Library

The BCLA Building Better Communities Award recognizes an individual or organization responsible for increasing the relevancy and impact of library service through partnership, collaboration, and building trust where little has previously existed.

The program curation and community librarianship taking place at North Vancouver District Public Library is novel and inspirational. Using an innovative approach to reduce barriers and combat isolation, Parkgate Library librarian Paul Taylor creates a welcoming environment for the community to learn new things, share ideas, discuss difficult or contentious topics, and ultimately, feel more connected to one another. During a time when many social issues and crises are gaining significance and, at times, becoming divisive, it is more important than ever that libraries create spaces for communities to engage with and exchange ideas in a respectful way and in welcoming spaces.

Paul Taylor and North Vancouver District Public Library have created a culture of community collaboration where none previously existed by using a unique approach to build community, conversation by conversation.

The BCLA Champion of Intellectual Freedom Award Winner: Ashley Machum and Christopher Stephenson, Okanagan Regional Library



This award is given to an individual or organization that demonstrates significant advancement of intellectual freedom in the public realm for the benefit of British Columbians, or that champions intellectual freedom issues in their library, community, province, or country.

Ashley Machum and Christopher Stephenson mounted the first Drag Queen Story Time at the downtown Kelowna branch of the Okanagan Regional Library on September 14th, 2019. The program was well attended, and well-received, but mounting the program was not without its challenges.

Whether or not to hold a Drag Queen Story Time raised several intellectual freedom discussions. Ashley Machum (Kelowna's Youth Services Librarian), and Christopher Stephenson (Kelowna's Branch Head Librarian), argued for the importance of listening to their community and standing by library values. They convinced skeptics that the tenets of Intellectual Freedom meant that a Drag Queen story time should be a welcome part of library programming, especially when such an event had the support of the local community.

Their hard work won the applause of their Library Board, the local media, and all the community members who attended the event. The effect of Ashley and Christopher's work reverberates in the community and in the library.

The BC Summer Reading Club Community Story Award: Kate Inman, Squamish Public Library

BCLA introduced the Summer Reading Club Community Story Award at the 2013 BC Library Conference. Each year, the BC Summer Reading Club presents this award to an individual who recounts an experience, event, or observation that best demonstrates the impact of the Summer Reading Club within their community.

This year's winning story is by Kate Inman of the Squamish Public Library. Kate's story, called "Another Young Reader Emerges" tells us about the power of the Summer Reading Club to transform a child's relationship with reading. Our judges chose Kate's story because they were touched by Sammi's (a child and patron of the Squamish public library) progression from being uncomfortable with the library to fully participating in library programs.

We hear lots of great stories about the effects of the Summer Reading Club on children across the province, but Kate's story was exceptional!

The Young Adult and Children's Services Award (YAACS Award) Winner: West Vancouver Memorial Library Youth Department

The YAACS Award recognizes exceptional service by librarians, library technicians, teacher-librarians, and others who have, as individuals or teams, demonstrated exceptional dedication in children's and youth library services

The West Vancouver Memorial Library (WVML) Youth Department is a small but mighty team of four staff - Shannon Ozirny, Youth Department Head; Roseanne Hinmueller, Youth Librarian; Lise Nielsen,



Youth Librarian; Patricia Lesku, Digital Access Librarian. Together they are a highly innovative and collaborative team making a significant difference in the community.

The WVML Youth Department established a unique partnership with West Vancouver Schools to create a seamless learning environment where students can move from school to library and back again with support for their learning in either environment. The WVML Youth Department collaborates across departments to create innovative tech-related projects. Staff go beyond basic skill building programs and work to integrate philosophical considerations about why something is important in a participant's life, and what value it really brings.

Just one great program among several is "Tell Your Story," an ebook publishing program for students in Grades 5 – 8 to create, edit, design and publish their original work as circulating ebooks.

The BC Academic Libraries Outstanding Contribution Award Winner: Nicole White, SFU Library Research Commons

The BC Academic Libraries Section (BCALS) Outstanding Contribution Award is presented to an individual who works in an academic library (or team of academic library personnel) whose professional achievements have made a difference to students, faculty, or colleagues in British Columbia.

The 2020 winner is Nicole White, Head of the SFU Library Research Commons. The nomination for Nicole spoke to the significant positive impact she has on students, colleagues, and the library. Nicole is described as a wonderful supervisor and mentor and an incredible leader for the Research Commons.

Nicole champions graduate writing services and provides mentorship, support, and training to graduate writing facilitators. Nicole has led cross-campus initiatives in digital humanities, big data, knowledge mobilization, and research data management, demonstrating her commitment to library service innovation. Her contributions beyond SFU include her participation in national level committees guiding the development of research data management policy and co-authoring a chapter in a forthcoming book on academic support for graduate students.

J. McRee Elrod Leadership Award Winner: Rachel Rodger, Greater Victoria Public Library

The BC Cataloguing and Technical Services J. McRee Elrod Leadership Award recognizes an individual or team currently working in the area of Technical Services in British Columbia that demonstrates excellence and/or had a positive impact on users and colleagues in the province, and who best represents the principles of patron-centered values, social justice, and intellectual freedom that Mac Elrod upheld throughout his life and career.

Rachel Rodgers from the Greater Victoria Public Library is the recipient of this year's award. Rachel is the first winner to come from a public library since the award's inception in 2014.



Rachel's work at GVPL focuses on decolonizing the subject headings used for Canadian Indigenous peoples and has galvanized the rest of the BC library community. Rachel forged ahead to tackle all the subject headings related to Indigenous peoples creating a list of more appropriate terms for use with materials about Canadian indigenous peoples and topics.

Rachel works to support libraries across the Province as they too decolonize subject headings in library catalogues.

Congratulations to all award winners, and to the many excellent nominees whose collective contributions demonstrate the relevant, important, and outstanding work libraries do in their communities.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christine Middlemass". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Christine Middlemass
President
BC Library Association

For further information please contact:

Annette DeFaveri
Executive Director
BC Library Association
604-683-5354
execdir@bcla.bc.ca