

Central Library Re-Opening Day
May 8, 2019

STRATHCONA
COUNTY LIBRARY

2019 Annual Report



MESSAGE FROM BOARD CHAIR & CEO

Our library was deeply affected by the explosion in the Strathcona Community Centre Parkade on November 6, 2018. Fortunately, our Bookmobile was out on its regular run and was able to keep serving County residents over the next six months. Without our main facility at the beginning of 2019, we found ourselves offering community services from all kinds of creative places and spaces. No matter where the library popped up, residents found us and let us know how much they needed and appreciated continued access to library materials, programs and support. We were focused on returning to our home in the Community Centre, and it was with a mixture of trepidation and joy that we reopened the doors to the Central Library on May 8. Our worries were about whether or not our visitors would feel comfortable coming back, and about how well our staff would be able to adjust to being back in the building given all they had been through the year before.

Our time away taught us a lot about what it means to work differently, and to respond quickly to emerging community needs. For several glorious months, the library got back to business almost as usual between June and December 2019. While everyone in the Community Centre looked to finalize its restoration, library staff worked steadily to increase digital training opportunities in the Central Library and via the Bookmobile. Throughout the fall, Board and staff members were asked to share Strathcona County Library's experiences with colleagues to help them with emergency planning and build resiliency in their own organizations.

Little did we know how soon all of us would need to draw on these newfound strengths. Nor did we know how quickly all of us would need to leap into digital mode to conduct business and connect our social networks. What has remained clear throughout each of our transitions is that our library's services, no matter how they are delivered, remain vital to so many in our community. We are grateful to everyone who reached out to connect with us - online, in person, at the Bookmobile - and thankful to all of the partners we are working with in Strathcona County and in our library community to plan and offer cooperative services during the pandemic. We look forward to seeing you at the library, however you choose to visit.

Thank You,

Doug and Sharon

PLAN OF SERVICE

The community engagement that informed the library's current strategic plan began with Strathcona County's vision. Working from that vision, a dedicated group of community stakeholders identified community needs and pointed the library to the areas where it could best support residents.

In 2019, the library met a few more of its planned objectives, such as diversifying the ways in which it supported residents to build their digital skills, and increasing by 25% the number of training sessions delivered to rural residents in their own communities.

Digital learning took place on the Bookmobile, in rural community halls, and in a variety of other community spaces while the library planned for its transition back to its home in the Strathcona County Community Centre. Despite the many different locations from which the library offered service during the 2018-19 period, residents found their way to us, contributing to a 4% increase in library cardholders overall.

VISIT WITH MINISTER KAYCEE MADU



The former provincial Municipal Affairs Minister, the Honourable Kaycee Madu, chose Strathcona County Library as the location for an announcement that provincial library funding would remain stable in the new government's first budget.

This event took place in the Enchanted Forest on November 8 and young patron Ryan Eller took Minister Madu for a tour of the library immediately following.

FUND DEVELOPMENT



Vinnie the Peregrine Falcon

Thanks to the generous funding provided by the Colchester & District Agricultural Society, the Bookmobile hosted a very successful Winter Wizardry Reading Game in 2019. Over 380 children read for a total of 1113 hours.

The wind-up *Wizards of Winter* event on Family Day was very busy with over 150 people in attendance. Everyone had the opportunity to visit with Vinnie, a peregrine falcon, and Bill, a tiny saw-whet owl.

FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY

As of early September, the library announced that its early literacy outreach service, previously called “Babies Need Books”, had been rebranded as “Welcome Baby” bags and redesigned with new graphics, bags, board book, and a rhyme and song booklet. The bags are a great way to welcome a baby and their family to the library, to share the benefits of early literacy activities in the home, and to let families know what the Library has to offer.

The Friends of the Library are excited to sponsor this important service, and to cover the cost of the bags and board books. The bags are available at the Library by request, and at the Strathcona County Health Centre, where they are provided as part of a baby’s two-month vaccination appointment.



BOOKMOBILE PROGRAMS



Early in the year, *Learn to Make Green Onion Cakes* was sold out at all three locations (South Cooking Lake, Antler Lake and Josephburg) where the Bookmobile offered this popular program.

Meanwhile, at Brookville Hall, kids learned the basics of coding with a variety of interactive digital tools.



CHEMISTRY CELEBRATION



Did you know that 2019 was the International Year of the Periodic Table?

In September, the library’s Youth Services staff teamed up with Dr. Lucio Gelmini of MacEwan University for a Saturday afternoon chemistry show in the Agora, to celebrate and develop their STEM skills. Elementary-age students and their families were treated to explosions, fire — and even a batch of ice cream made on the spot with dry ice.



LIBRARY SERVICES IN TRANSITION

Temporary Facility: Baseline Village Dec 2018 - Apr 2019



Come and find us!



Transforming a gym into a library



Opening Day at Baseline Village Library



March at Baseline Village Library

LIBRARY SERVICES IN TRANSITION

Central Library: Reconstruction and Opening Day May 8, 2019



Cleaning and replacing



Transforming a library back into a library



Opening Day at Central Library



Library in the News

CELEBRATING PRIDE WEEK

HUMAN LIBRARY: The Pride Edition

On May 30, a Human Library event ran in partnership with altView Foundation. Extreme smoky conditions that day put a damper on attendance, but those who did participate embraced the opportunity to interact with their choice of unique “living books” and to hear first-hand about their life stories.



Travis Dosser of the Sherwood Park News interviews Adebayo, a “living book” who agreed to tell his story at the 2019 Human Library event.



PRIDE IN THE PARK

Library staff also participated in the “Pride in the Park” event, armed with several hundred of these beautiful temporary tattoos, created by the Library’s in-house graphic designer.

ELDER IN THE MAKING

On Friday, June 14, the library presented a screening of Elder in the Making. In this fascinating documentary, two young men — one Blackfoot and the other Chinese-Canadian — take a road trip across our province to rediscover the heritage they share.

Chris Hsiung, the director of the film, was in attendance, along with Elder Duane Mistaken Chief, who opened the evening with a traditional blessing. Both took part in an audience discussion after the film. Suncor acted as co-sponsor for the event, which was part of their week-long celebration of Canada’s National Indigenous Peoples Day.



FALL FEAST OF WORDS



In October, the library welcomed seven authors and over 400 attendees to its annual celebration of literature, spread out over several weeks to provide lots of opportunity for participants to engage with the works and with each other.

WRITER IN RESIDENCE MARY PINKOSKI

In January, Mary began her four-month term with us.

When she finished in April, she left behind an extraordinary gift: a beautiful poem, titled *Circulation Desk*.

This is an excerpt.

The library, unsurprisingly when you consider what it does with books,
Has always been a space of holding not just of books, but of people.
Perhaps I am playing with metaphor,
but I think the library provides a place where the metaphor becomes reality.

April has me thinking about the stories of the library.
I find myself saying one morning, while poised over the work of a writer seeking consultation, I think that my favourite place in the library is the circulation desk.
It is the “circulation” part of the name, not the actual desk, that draws me in.
This idea of the library as part of some circulatory system, not just of books, but also of community.
There is a beauty to the idea of a place within cities that can pulse with life and sustain and support people.
A place that no matter who you are, your entry is not prohibited, a site of tolerance that welcomes diversity and honours the lived experiences of all who walk through its doors.
A library that not only offers space to community, but also builds and grows that community and supports each person’s place in that.

On one my final days of being the Writer in Residence in Sherwood Park,
I overhear a mother tell her running, excited child: don’t rush, this is a special place.
And, I think, my gosh, isn’t it though?

— excerpted from *Circulation Desk*,
by 2019 Writer in Residence Mary Pinkoski



2020 LIBRARY BOARD



Back Row (left to right): Doug Davey (Chair), Denise Charbonneau, Gene Syvenky, Pam See-Too, Anna Pandos (Vice Chair), Councillor Linton Delainey

Front Row (left to right): Lynn Walker, Meagan Olive, Leah Lewis (Secretary/Treasurer), Susan Miskiman



Strathcona County Library

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