



Cape Breton Regional Library

Highlights

June 29, 2020

Regional Librarians Report

Regional circulation for the year 2019/2020 is 347,277. Circulation of materials is down from last year by 12,000. This can be attributed to the closure of Glace Bay Library from May-September and the closure of all libraries in March due to COVID-19.

Pandemic Recovery Plan: an update

Staff returned to work on Monday, June 8th. While the buildings have remained closed to the public we are now offering curbside service at all locations. The CBRL Bookmobile resumed service using a curbside service model. At this time patrons are not entering the bus to retrieve items. Staff have reported that patrons are happy to now be able to borrow materials.

The libraries are still continuing with virtual programs and have launched summer reading programs for all ages.

Programs

The pandemic has impacted the whole planet and how we work as a public library has been no exception.

We closed our Library branches during March Break, a time when we are typically very busy offering programs for the school aged crowd. Not having our branches open to the public meant like everywhere else we had to shift efforts to on-line. A few staff were very quick to engage in on-line activities in March and April: daily Wee-ones Story Times were offered in the mornings on the Library's Facebook page (Baddeck) and afternoons were read aloud chapters of classics (Charlie and the Chocolate Factory; Charlotte's Web; & The Hobbit); (Sydney) shared puppet shows on our Facebook page, many with Public Health reminders and/ or sharing what Library services are still available to the community; Lindsay (Sydney) also shared story times.

A program staff connected with a few of the Sydney Book Clubs to see if they were interested in trying a Zoom Book Club meeting. One of the Clubs took her up on that offer. Our Library helped to promote the Read Atlantic initiative that offered unlimited downloads to a selection of books by Atlantic Canadian writers. This initiative also had a few author readings on-line. (Sydney) hosted a Zoom Book Club discussion on *The Blue Castle*, by L.M. Montgomery.

We were also able to post a few previously recorded Storytelling evenings with our Storyteller-in-Residence and guests.

A few staff made efforts to engage with the community by organizing contests and creative community sharing on-line: poetry and short story contests; a teen contest and a community 'zine' project where anyone could share photographs, writing, etc. to be gathered in a 'magazine' like format and shared to the public on-line.

Finally, a very popular offering this spring was the Seed Library. Seeds were purchased in January from the last of a provincial grant. The initial plan for this project was to have patrons who were interested in starting a garden; or adding variety to their existing gardens visit the Library and check-out seeds, and accompanying the offer of seeds would be some gardening programs with farmer Michelle Smith, i.e. 'gardening tips', 'seed saving', 'growing vegetables', etc. Of course, like everything else program-related our plans had to be adjusted and the Seed Library was advertised on-line in May; orders were made on-line and seeds were packaged and delivered locally by staff, or mailed out. We were fortunate to have another provincial grant at our disposal to pay for the mail-out option this spring. There was a huge interest in this program and in many ways the 'plan B' to mail-out meant that more community members were able to participate; seeds were sent as far as Dingwall, Port Morien, Christmas Island, & Ingonish.