



Cape Breton Regional Library

Highlights – March 8, 2021

Snowshoe Loan Program

CBRL has been offering the snowshoe loan program for many years. This year library staff have made improvements to the loan procedures for this item. The new procedures take into consideration that snowshoes are weather dependent and in high demand. Snowshoes are now borrowed on a first come first served basis. These changes are proving to be beneficial for all.

McConnell New Hours

The new schedule for operating hours at the Sydney branch went into effect on Monday, February 1st. Prior to this the branch was open Tuesday-Saturday. We are now open on Mondays. The open hours are as follows:

Monday	10-5
Tuesday	10-8
Wednesday	10-8
Thursday	10-8
Friday	10-6
Saturday	10-5

The move to now being open on Mondays has been widely received by the public.

Program update for Board Meeting (March 2021):

Library programs and spaces

A few library branches with separate program spaces have been able to safely host Fibre lunch groups, Book Clubs and Drama Queens (Baddeck Library) – these groups were established pre COVID-19 and we allowed them to meet in our libraries this fall following all the public health

guidelines for 'social bubbles'. In the case of Louisbourg Library, staff organized their book club in the Seniors Centre which accommodated 10 people with social distancing. We have had requests for our spaces to host meetings, programs, etc. since we opened after NS COVID-19 shut down and for the most part we've not been able to accommodate these requests. There have been a few exceptions – i.e. Wilfred Oram Library has allowed one-on-one tutoring in their program space. Conversations on hosting programs have been on staff meeting agendas over the fall and winter but space and accommodating the public safely is always a challenge.

Another Library service that's needed to be re-worked are book deliveries to senior's apartments and Guest homes. Since COVID-19 Baddeck staff aren't able to have contact with the residents at Alderwood (long-term care home), but they are able to visit every 2 weeks to re-stock a library book cart; staff also visit MacLeod House (seniors' apartments) bi-weekly to re-stock a library book cart and in this case they are able to chat with Seniors following the necessary health protocols. Prior to COVID-19 staff from the McConnell Library made bi-weekly visits to Parkland, Harbourstone, MacGillivray and the Cove to deliver tailor-made book selections for residents. For the time being this service has stopped also but in some cases staff have been able to continue to offer books to senior residents, if a family member of the senior can pick-up the books at the Library and deliver.

'Crafts to Go' kits remain popular in a number of CBRL branches. A few staff members have reported that these kits have been mailed to grandkids who live away – it's a touching thought. In January our libraries have traditionally recognized the nation-wide Family Literacy Day with programs and displays - to coincide with FLD 2021 staff organized 'crafts to go' kits with an 'armchair' travel theme and also Family Fort Night kits with fun fort/ reading ideas for families to do at home; we also gave away free books during the week of Jan. 27 (we used the books we have stored for summer reading prizes and contests).

Close to 1000 'Snacks to Go' bags have been handed-out since December in CBRL branches. 'Snacks to Go' are provided through funding from the Province of NS.

We've also continued to offer 'Kids in the Kitchen' series, currently happening out of the Wilfred Oram Centennial Library. Constable Paul Ratchford has been very supportive of the program and he's even picked-up the grocery bags to deliver.

New Moon Stories with Storyteller-in-Residence Bill Conall continues to be a monthly offering on Zoom with growing audience numbers. A recent addition to on-line programs is a Health Canada webinar series on 'healthier homes'. This series will continue bi-weekly into April.

The Library calendar year celebrates and recognizes events and initiatives all-year long, both local and larger in scope too (i.e. Family Literacy Day, African Heritage Month, National Poetry Month, etc.). These activities often make for great program opportunities – but they are also great events to springboard into book displays, promote on fb, etc. and staff have been very creative in engaging 'on the edges'.

Contests & Challenges

Baddeck and Ingonish offered an activity challenge in partnership with Victoria County Recreation this February. The "Family Winter Bingo" and "Winter Nature Treasure Hunt" were created to challenge families and individuals to get active outside - and each completed challenge card became a ballot in a draw for a Victoria County ski package (paid for by Recreation and sourced from the recipient's choice of Victoria County Ski/Snowshoe facility operators).

Winter Reading Challenge @ CBRL is an on-line reading challenge for all ages taking place in our Libraries Jan. 27- Mar. 31. Prizes for this challenge are a Nintendo Switch (donated by Nintendo of Canada); 2021 Family Museum passes (donated by Provincial Library); and Indigo gift cards.

Seed Library

A small committee of staff from McConnell and HQ have met along with gardening expert/farmer Michelle Smith to start planning for CBRL's Seed Library 2021 program. We have all the supplies and some of the seeds needed for this year's roll-out. The Seed Library was extremely popular last year so we've doubled the seed orders for 2021. Our plan is to have packets ready for in-person pick-up at the McConnell Library and mail-out orders for other communities in our Library region by mid-to late April. It will still be a first-come-first-served model. On-line and outdoor programs will hopefully be part of the mix this year!

TechConnect

Baddeck Library has partnered with Victoria County Home Support Services and Victoria County Seniors Safety Office to put 20 Ipads into the hands of seniors who have not used this technology. VCHSS obtained a grant through New Horizons to purchase Ipads, 6 months' worth of data and Victoria County Transit passes for participants, who come from all over Victoria County. Baddeck Library's role is to give each participant an orientation session that covers basic use, CBRL resources, and terms/conditions. Nicky Duenkel, our Outreach Assistant, has been doing an excellent job of introducing participants to the technology and is also fielding follow-up questions and providing tech support. She is seeing participants in both the Baddeck and Ingonish branches. The Ipads will eventually become part of CBRL's collection. VC Seniors' Safety Office has also obtained a New Horizons grant to continue this work past the pilot (Baddeck Library role undetermined at this point).

Community Cupboard

As a result of a Community Health Board grant, Baddeck Library now has a Community Cupboard. It operates on a "Take what you need, give what you can" principle, and staff have been encouraging people to take anything that makes life a bit easier (i.e. you don't have to be destitute to take things from the cupboard - it's for everyone). We've had GREAT community uptake so far in terms of donations! People have brought in small Christmas gifts, smoke detectors, canned food, personal hygiene products, knitted goods, reading glasses, yarn, school

supplies, and more. The grant allowed us to stock the cupboard with a first round of food, and we purchased Co-op gift cards that can be used to re-stock in the future (although at the rate people are donating things, we have had to do very little purchasing so far). Folks are also beginning to take items, and we're getting a better sense of the kinds of things people need.