



CAPE BRETON REGIONAL LIBRARY
Highlights – June 14, 2021

Regional Librarian's Report:

Our fiscal year closed on March 31 with a total circulation of 240,148. Comparatively, year-end circulation in 2020 was 347,157. (Overall difference of -36%)

As of March 31, membership was at 22,373 active library cardholders, increasing 1378 members from the previous year.

Due to the third wave of the pandemic, CBRL branches once again closed to the public. Unlike the closure of March 2020, public libraries could offer contactless delivery of library materials to patrons. Just as the lockdown began, CBRL launched the Seed Library for the second year in a row. Library staff processed 1500+ seed orders and approximately 400 new library card registrations in the first two weeks of the shutdown.

Public libraries are expected to open in Phase 2, commencing June 16, of Nova Scotia's multi-phased approach to reopening. Libraries' operational capacity will be capped at 25%.

During the closure, library staff have been working on several projects, including but not limited to:

- annual inventory of collections;
- filling Seed Library orders;
- retrieving requested materials to be delivered via Library Take-Out (contactless service);
- preparing Crafts-to-go kits;
- professional development courses through LinkedIn Learning and Ryan Dowd's Homelessness webinars

Programs:

CBRL Seed Library

The Seed Library was launched in mid-May 2020 and we were overwhelmed by the response. In fact, we needed to take down the order info after 2 days last year because of the high demand; in the end, we filled 540 orders.

We are happy to say that we were more prepared for the 2021 CBRL Seed Library! We ordered a lot more seeds this year consisting of 25 vegetable seed varieties and a few companion flower seeds too. This larger order meant that staff and volunteers helped to package over 18,000 seed packets in March and April. We were also able to launch 2 weeks earlier this year (on Wed April

28th) to give people more time to start growing tomatoes indoors.

By mid-May, 2021, over 1500 complete orders were filled for Cape Breton and Victoria County households, and we expect to receive orders daily until early June.

Kids in the Kitchen – Glace Bay

In early April we registered 10 families (10+ adults and 28 kids) into a Kids in the Kitchen series at the Glace Bay Library. Participating families would either come into the library to pick up their groceries or staff would organize a delivery to be made to their home through Marg's taxi service. This program provided a great way for the families to spend time together and prepare simple (and healthy) meal recipes.

Continuing Programs through Lockdown

When the lock-down started at the end of April, and we moved to curbside pick-up at our branches. A few Book Clubs and Fibre/Craft Clubs that were previously meeting in-person had to stop, or move to Zoom. Participants in the North Sydney Library's Fibre Lunch group have met 7 times since the beginning of March and reported to staff that they very much look forward to meeting each week.

Video and social media content on our library platforms have also been a bonus for our followers and library community over the last year. Projects, such as the Jon & Leon videos, are very popular with Facebook viewers; the last video posted reached the 1K viewer mark. Other video projects included a gentle exercise series that was posted in March; promotional videos for the ESL conversation group; a Lone Poet video, and monthly language videos.

One last online program to mention is the New Moon Storytelling Series hosted by our Storyteller-in-Residence, Bill Conall. From September to May, Bill offered this monthly Zoom session and over that time he rallied some great storytellers, as well as a dedicated audience.

In many ways we have been more prepared for this most recent lockdown in how we offer programs and services. For example, much like the Seed Library, many of the grab and go, crafts to go, and science kits that we've been sharing with patrons over the last year, are still available as a curbside offering.