



2021–2022

**ANNUAL REPORT**

# *Our Mission*

To strengthen and inspire our community by providing quality collections, cultural resources, programs, and services in a welcoming environment where all can enjoy reading and learning.

## **LIBRARY BOARD (2021–2022)**

Appointments to the Library Board are made by Cape Breton Regional Municipality, Victoria County and the Province of Nova Scotia.

### **Province of Nova Scotia**

- Michelle Smith (from May 2021)
- Murdoch Moore, Treasurer (from August 2020)

### **Cape Breton Regional Municipality**

- Kathy MacIntyre (from January 2022)
- Councillor Darren O'Quinn (from December 2020)
- Councillor Glenn Paruch (from December 2020)
- Douglas MacLennan, Vice Chair (from February 2021)
- Councillor Eldon MacDonald, Chair (from December 2020)

### **Victoria County**

- Terry Murray (from March 2020)
- Councillor Barbara Longva (from December 2020)

## **LIBRARY BRANCHES**

- |            |                 |                   |
|------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| • Sydney   | • Glace Bay     | • Reserve Mines   |
| • Ingonish | • Louisbourg    | • Sydney Mines    |
| • Baddeck  | • Main-a-Dieu   | • CBRL Bookmobile |
| • Dominion | • North Sydney  |                   |
| • Florence | • New Waterford |                   |

# Welcome Message

## FROM OUR REGIONAL LIBRARIAN AND BOARD CHAIR



Libraries are extraordinary, transformational places. Never more so than during this past year. We found ourselves pivoting and reinventing our services as year 2 of the pandemic played out. In May and June, another wave of Covid-19 necessitated the public closure of our physical spaces. Continuing to provide service in this new environment proved seamless as we moved to curbside delivery. Throughout 2021, whether handing out test kits, helping people print their vaccination records, or booking vaccination appointments, our dedicated employees stepped up at every turn to maintain our core services. We found

ways to connect with our community safely and when required from a distance too!

This report is a glimpse at some of our successes over the past year, showcasing the dedication and overt passion of our employees, inspiring and strengthening our community. It is a privilege to work alongside them. Thank you to all those who have supported the Library over the past year—individuals, organizations, and businesses. To the staff at Provincial Library, the Cape Breton Regional Library Board, and our two municipal units, Cape Breton Regional Municipality and Victoria County, thank you for your assistance, work and support.

**Lisa Mulak**

Regional Librarian,  
Cape Breton Regional Library

**Councillor Eldon MacDonald**

Chair, Cape Breton Regional Library Board



# Enhancing Community

## ENCOURAGING, EXPLORING, CREATING AND COLLABORATING

From our curated collections to events and activities thoughtfully planned by our dedicated employees, CBRL achieves its mission to inform and inspire. This year we encountered a few pandemic speed bumps along the way but they didn't stop us from providing our community with opportunities for awareness, acknowledgment, and growth.

Libraries are trusted spaces centrally located within our communities. CBRL collaborates with many partner organizations facilitating collective impact to enhance community well-being. This year our most significant partnership was with local health authorities and their efforts at pandemic recovery. In December, CBRL distributed the first of many allotments of rapid test kits- 10,000 in a few short days. Throughout the winter as Covid became more prevalent we looked for innovative ways to safely distribute test kits. As a result, staff worked extended hours giving out test kits in outdoor pop-up sites in Sydney, Albert Bridge, Glace Bay and New Waterford.



Baddeck Library Community Garden

Pop-up Test Kit Distribution



## LEARNING BY DOING

This year, CBRL distributed seed packets to 1500 households in CBRM and Victoria County. In addition to library members receiving seed packets, the Good Food Bus included them in their food baskets. Firsthand learning opportunities about plants, nature and growing food were further realized by maintaining community gardens at both Sydney and Baddeck libraries.



### Libraries inspire and educate.

CBRL launched another series of Kids in the Kitchen, a food literacy program with the goal of inspiring families to learn new recipes while spending quality time together. Thank you to our dedicated employees in our Glace Bay and New Waterford branches who made valuable connections with the families that participated in this impactful program.

**147,970**

Wireless Hours

**124,375**

Digital materials  
borrowed

**7,780**

Crafts-to-Go Kits  
Distributed



**“The gardening community is a sharing one, and where better than the Library to get information and support!”**

Chris Thomson, CBRL's Project Lead on the Seed Library



# Engaging Conversations

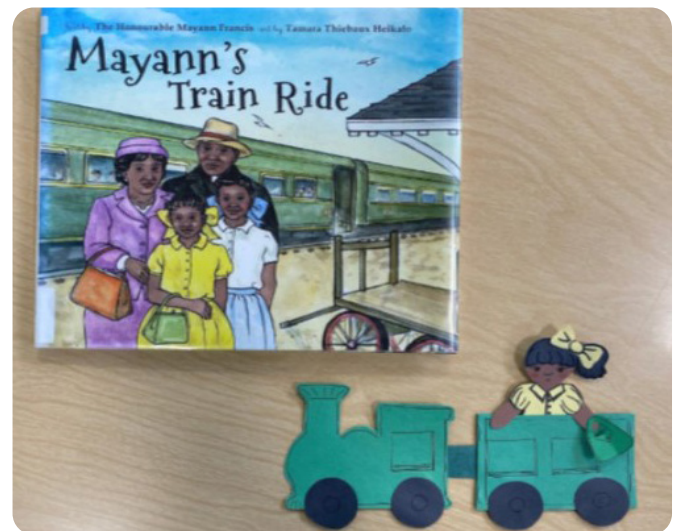
Our Libraries raise awareness and are a natural fit for the promotion of important celebrations which build awareness about Nova Scotia's history.

Despite a tightening of pandemic restrictions, CBRL found thoughtful ways to recognize and celebrate the culture, legacy, achievements, and contributions of people of African descent—past and present. Booklists and displays were prominently featured in our branches and across our social media platforms.

During the month of February, our popular crafts-to-go kit was inspired by the book **Mayann's Train Ride** written by The Honorable Dr. Mayann Francis. Dr. Francis is the first African Nova Scotian to serve as Lieutenant Governor.



New Waterford Library



Glace Bay Library Refuge Canada Exhibit

In February and March, our Sydney and Glace Bay locations hosted the Refuge Canada Exhibit. On loan from the Canadian Museum of Immigration, this interactive exhibit raises awareness of the complex issues surrounding the history of refugees in Canada. Drawing upon oral histories and archival images, this immersive exhibit serves as an introduction to Canada's place in the global refugee crisis and brings to light the challenges faced by refugees.



# New Services Added

- ▲ Expanded Programs: Virtual and In-Person
- ▲ Board Games to borrow
- ▲ Kanopy, a new video streaming service
- ▲ Assistance with booking vaccination appointments
- ▲ Vaccine record printing services
- ▲ Rapid Test Kit distribution
- ▲ Self-check kiosk at the McConnell Library
- ▲ Drop-off locations for Nova Scotia Health Authority's pulse oximeters
- ▲ Niche Academy, step-by-step video tutorials on the use of e-resources
- ▲ TikTok launched
- ▲ LinkedInLearning.com



Board Games to Borrow



**3,188**  
New cards issued

We know that some of our patrons appreciate the option of self-service technology. It's a quick and easy way to borrow materials, renew items, and view account information. It offers a number of accessibility features, and more than 60 language options.



# Going Above and Beyond

This year we took outreach to a whole new level and had so much fun meeting you beyond our four walls! The limitations imposed by Covid could not contain us. The great outdoors and our virtual spaces provided us with new possibilities.

- ▲ Superhero Obstacle Challenge at Open Hearth Park
- ▲ Science Fun at Wentworth Park
- ▲ Teddy Bear Picnic at the Bandshell
- ▲ Virtual contests, such as “Halfway to Halloween”
- ▲ “How do you say?”, a twelve-part online series featuring language tutorials in Mi’kmaq, French, Urdu, Polish, Gaelic, English, Bengali, Mandarin and ASL
- ▲ English Conversation Circles
- ▲ Teen Photo Scavenger Hunt in Downtown Sydney
- ▲ Library Knit-a-thon at Wentworth Park
- ▲ Storybook Walks throughout CBRM and Victoria County
- ▲ Pop-up library visits from the Bookmobile and Victoria County Outreach



**89,731**  
Visits to our website

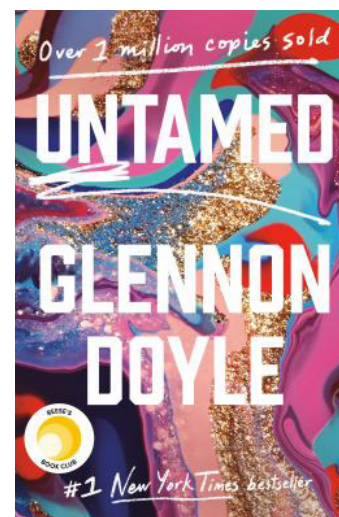
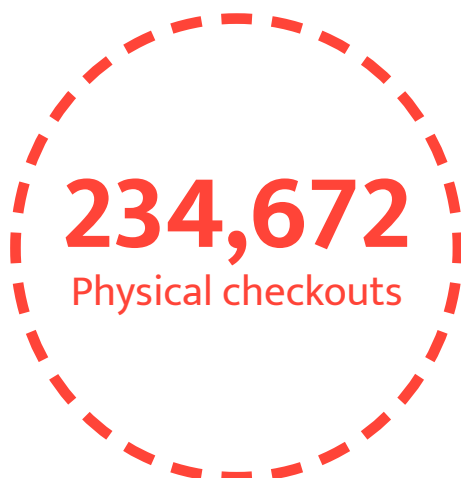
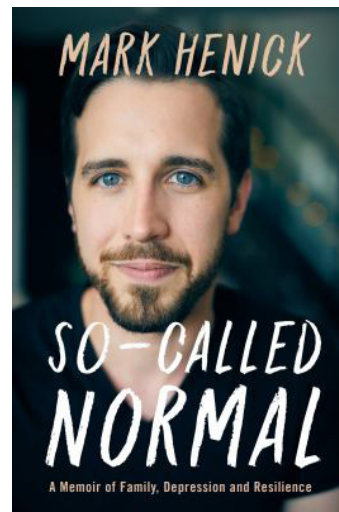
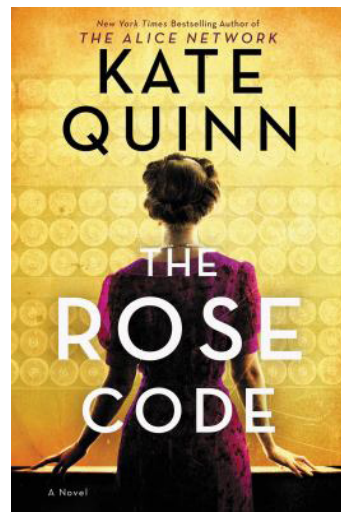
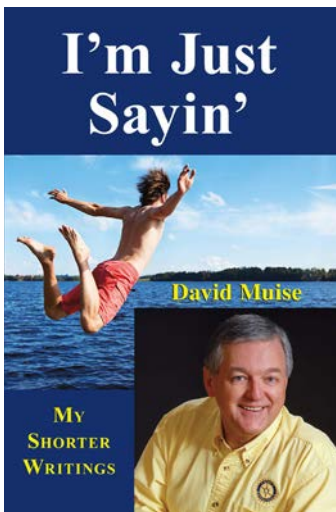
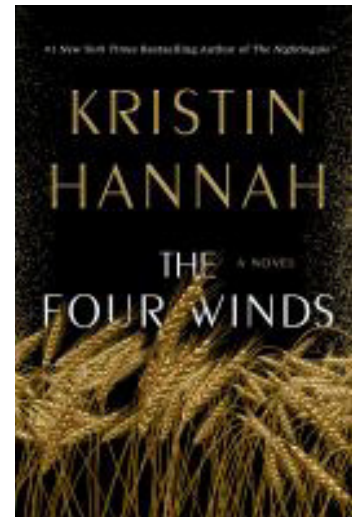
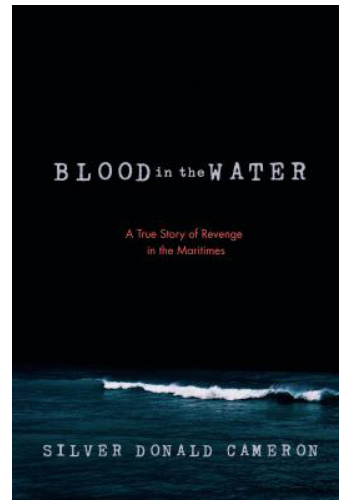
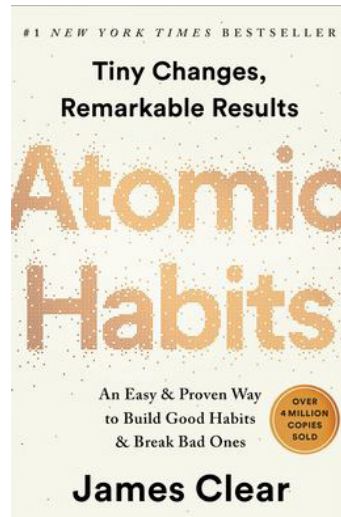
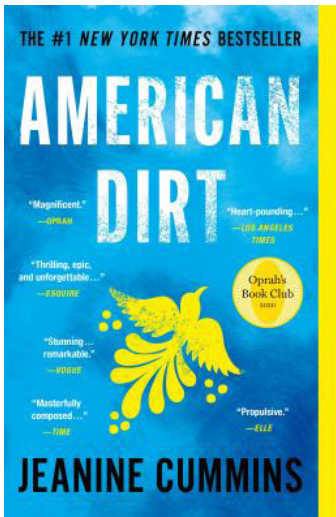
**16,892**  
People participated  
in our programs





# Most Popular

Of the nearly, 360,000 items you borrowed in 2021, these were some of the most popular. Our local authors feel the love.





# Our People



None of this would be possible without the 60+ employees that are the heart and soul of the Cape Breton Regional Library. This year we came together for the first time in 2 years to connect and engage in important discussions to help serve you better.

Our people are critical to our mission. They know you by your first name, and they, of course, know your favourite author!

They make sure you get a copy of the crossword puzzle. They introduce you to a community of fellow knitters and connect you to new friends who are also learning English. They always ensure your book club has your latest read and sometimes carry those stacks of books to your car.



## 127,305

Physical visits to our  
branches



They chase you down when you forget your keys, and they hang on to those precious keepsakes found in returned books to reunite you with old family photos. Our people travel up and down mountains to bring you a library on wheels. Through storytelling, our people foster a love of reading in your children.



They pour their creative souls into crafts, games, puppet shows, and scavenger hunts. They arrange volunteers to speak with you about important topics like wills and medication or how to make the best cinnamon rolls.

Our people plan programs to stretch your bodies with yoga and to help you stretch your minds through meditation and painting.

Our people plan engaging and entertaining fundraising events that are no small feat, like our Spelling Bee Challenge and Wizard of Oz production. There is no end to what our people do.

# Milestones

In 2021 we held retirement celebrations for three long-time members of our CBRL family.

**Dale Weatherbee** (left) was CBRL's longest-serving employee. Dale drove the Bookmobile for 43 years but it wasn't just about delivering books to people. Dale's kind-hearted and fun-loving nature meant she developed lifelong friendships over the years. She brought a lot of happiness to people on her travels.



**Chris Thomson** (right) was part of our programs team here at CBRL.

She was the driving force behind the Fibre

Arts groups and our annual Knit-a-Thon. She was instrumental in developing book clubs across our library region. Chris gave 110% during her time with CBRL but her greatest accomplishment was the social connections she forged along the way.

**Leona Stockley** worked at CBRL's Ingonish branch for 28 years. Leona was passionate about her work. Her love of the Ingonish Library and the community she served was evident to all. She created a community hub where everyone felt welcome.





*Our new visual identity!*



# Cape Breton Regional Library

Stories are the cornerstone of the human experience. They allow us to share ourselves and our experiences with others. Stories teach us, connect us, and break down barriers.

At Cape Breton Regional Library, stories are our focus and our passion. And we don't just mean the ones in the books on our shelves. Each one of our patrons, staff members, and community partners has a story to tell.

One of the ways in which we share the library's story with our patrons and communities is through our visual identity and logo. Over time, the library has grown, evolved, and changed, and so has our story.

The library's new visual identity reflects who we are today, acknowledges our past, and looks ahead to our future. Designed by Vibe Creative Group, it's a colourful, dynamic symbol that weaves together the branches, bookmobile, and communities that comprise Cape Breton Regional Library. We hope our redesigned logo will spark connections and conversations as we start a new chapter in our story.