



INTRODUCTION

Mackenzie Public Library is located in the heart of Mackenzie, in the Allan Sheppard Recreation Complex, the social centre of Mackenzie. The Centre houses the library, arena, curling rink, pool, gym, lunch stop, recreation programs and meeting rooms all under one roof. The library is a cornerstone of this establishment as it provides a safe and engaging space for children to read and attend programs, parents to use the internet, read and socialize while waiting for their children in recreation programs, and the community to gather, learn, collaborate and have fun.

Mackenzie is a planned community, built to support the forestry industry in 1966. This narrow economic focus was detrimental during the 2008 recession as the mills closed and families were forced to move away to find work. As the economy has since recovered and Mackenzie has regained some, though not all, of its previous population, the District is now seeking to diversify and become a more resilient community. The housing is inexpensive and employment in forestry is easy to find for those qualified, attracting many young families and young single men early in their careers to the area. Mackenzie also sees a small population boom in the summer as seasonal workers pass through. The library is an important asset for transient populations.

2015 was the second year of our three year Strategic Plan. As of the end of the year, we have already completed 11/16 of our objectives and made progress towards the rest. This year, we completed the following objectives:

- a) We investigated new grant sources and held a Touch a Truck fundraiser to raise money to refurbish the children's area. In 2015, we raised \$13,114 towards facility improvements and programs combined.
- b) We participated in the local Leisure Fair, Chamber of Commerce Spring Business Expo, and Northern Health Children's Fair to advertise our programs and services and increase community engagement with the library.
- c) We funded training opportunities for every staff and board member who wished to improve their skills and their public service abilities. Many of these opportunities were provided through our Federation.
- d) We continued to invite local businesses to participate in our programming.
- e) We built the library's brand and recognizability by developing a new vision, mission, tagline, and logo.
- f) We expanded our programming by adding three new regular programs, a Seed Library, and a summer StoryWalk. We also offered three contests, three craft days, six special workshops, school visits, a perennial swap, a language exchange, Hallowe'en movies, an open house, a teddy bear picnic, and a performance by an aboriginal hoop dancer at the elementary school.
- g) We joined the Interlibrary Connect network to offer increased access to interlibrary loans through our ILS.
- h) We procured an online streaming video service, IndieFlix, through the BC Libraries Cooperative to offer a wider variety of media options to our patrons.



After the rapid changes in 2014 to our facility, programs, and online presence, 2015 was a year for settling into the changes we had made, as well as looking forward and setting the groundwork for some of the big projects to take place in the final year of this Strategic Plan. The staff has been focused on building up and building on our strengths to continue to improve our service to the community. We're looking forward to wrapping up these goals in 2016 and getting back into community assessment mode for our next plan.

PRIORITY 1: A FOCUS ON EQUITABLE ACCESS TO LIBRARY SERVICES FOR ALL BRITISH COLUMBIANS, INCLUDING EFFORTS TO EXTEND LIBRARY SERVICE, BOTH PHYSICAL AND DIGITAL, TO UNDER-REPRESENTED POPULATIONS (EX. ABORIGINAL, PRINT DISABLED, AND IMMIGRANTS).

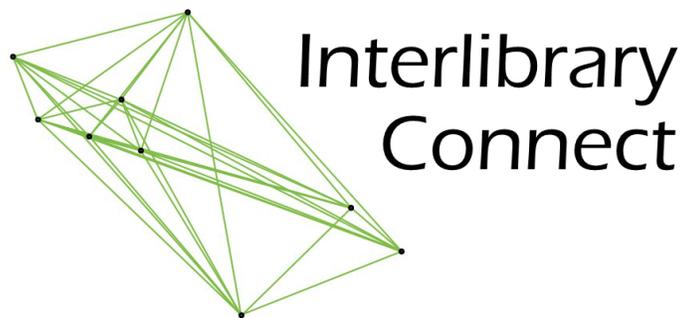
Library Goal that supports the priority:

From our Strategic Plan: “Make the library collection accessible to more people.”

We are still in the process of meeting this goal. From 2014-2015, we have:

- 1) Completed a rearrangement of the non-fiction collection to allow easier browsing and access for our in-house patrons.
- 2) Joined Interlibrary Connect (ILC) through Sitka Evergreen, as detailed below in Priority 4.
- 3) Joined the National Network for Equitable Library Service (NNELS) to provide more options for our print-impaired patrons. One significant outcome of this service is detailed below.

Our final actionable step to meet our Strategic Plan goal is to improve the signage and wayfinding within the library, which we expect to complete in 2016. Future considerations include further outreach to our local Aboriginal populations.



Programs and/or Services that aligns with the priority:

Mackenzie Public Library joined the NNELS community in 2014, but we didn't take the time to advertise the service and train staff until early 2015, when we officially launched the service locally. NNELS offers conversion of print materials into a variety of accessible formats. With the implementation of NNELS, the Library is able to open up our services to a population that we haven't connected with well in the past: the print-impaired. Research shows that this demographic, despite being up to 10% of the Canadian population, is often overlooked and underserved in the library community. Offering materials through NNELS fits well with our commitment to equal, barrier-free service.

Partnerships that support the priority:

Our NNELS service was launched with the help of The British Columbia Libraries Cooperative, who manages the collection, support, and technical aspects of the service.

We have also worked with the Prince George Immigrant and Multicultural Services Society to provide service referrals to new Canadians.



Outcomes that were identified:

The outcomes we have seen from implementing NNELS are best told with a single story.

One of our patrons to register for the NNELS service in 2015 was an elderly gentleman who had been a voracious reader throughout his life but had recently lost his sight. He couldn't come into the library himself, so our staff taught his wife how to use NNELS and fix him up with the service at home. With little else to do, he "read" several books a week through the NNELS service as well as our traditional CD audiobook collection. His wife told us that this service significantly improved his quality of life and thanked us for the materials that kept him content and busy throughout the day.

In recent years, books such as *Being Mortal* by Atul Gawande have pointed North American society towards improving the quality of life for our elderly, as opposed to privileging the extension of life. NNELS allows us to make an active, positive contribution to this trend. Sadly, our patron recently passed away, but we are grateful that the Library was able to play a role in ensuring his final months were as comfortable as possible and we are proud to be able to offer a better quality of life for all our print-impaired patrons.

PRIORITY 2: INCREASED SUPPORTS FOR EDUCATION TRANSFORMATION. LIBRARIES, AS KEY PARTNERS IN PROVIDING SUPPORTS TO STUDENTS AND PARENTS OUTSIDE OF THE CLASSROOM, SHOULD CONTINUE ORGANIZING AND COLLABORATING ON COMMUNITY-BASED, PERSONALIZE LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL LEARNERS WHICH ALLOWS THEM TO REALIZE THEIR FULL POTENTIAL IN REACHING PERSONAL GOALS.

Library Goal that supports the priority:

From our Strategic Plan: “Provide a high level of service to the public through a well-trained staff and library board.” This goal encompasses not only staff and board training, but also increased services in the form of deeper partnerships and more programs offered to our community to expand personalized learning opportunities for students of all ages.

We are still in the process of meeting this goal. In regards to supporting education transformation, from 2014-2015, we have:

- 1) Developed regular programming for teens and pre-teens.
- 2) Continued to offer excellent programs for pre-school and young school-age children.
- 3) Investigated areas outside the Library to host library programs and developed program partnerships.

As of December 2015, we support learning opportunities outside the classroom by offering 13 regular programs for all ages, from 0 – adult, with the help of several community partners and funders. We also offered several one-time educational events and programs this year, as listed in the introduction. All for free and all in the interests of lifelong, personalized learning and community development.



Programs and/or Services that aligns with the priority:

One extremely popular program launched this September is “Minecraft: Creative Crew.” With the help of the United Way of Northern British Columbia, we purchased 10 laptops and 11 Minecraft licenses. Minecraft is an open-ended, creative game where players roam a landscape made of different kinds of blocks that can be used to build just about anything. Studies have shown that this sort of video game has a positive correlation with creativity, problem solving, and increased academic performance among youth. Minecraft, in particular, has been shown to increase spatial intelligence, an important skill to have for future success in STEM fields. Once a week, our youth volunteer runs an online server and children from ages 9 – 13 are invited to play Minecraft together in the Library. This has proven to be an extremely popular program, with an average of 12 kids participating every week and a consistent demand for more playing time. More outcomes of this program are detailed below.



Partnerships that support the priority:

The following partners were crucial in our delivery of educational programs and services this year:

- North Central Library Federation for organizing and sponsoring Lego Robotics, Teddy Anderson – hoop dancing performance, Shane Peacock – teen creative writing workshop
- Mackenzie Secondary School for helping organize and advertise Homework Club for teens
- Success by 6 for sponsoring pre-school storytime
- Mackenzie Bear Committee for partnering to organize the Teddy Bear Picnic
- Mackenzie Gets Healthy Committee for sponsoring StoryWalk and the Seed Library
- CHMM Radio and Mackenzie Leisure Services for free advertising
- Numerous volunteers and businesses for participating in our first annual Touch a Truck fundraiser (detailed on our website: mackenzie.bc.libraries.coop/2015-sponsors)

We also developed a special partnership with Morfee Elementary School through the provision of institutional cards. These cards will be used to access downloadable audiobooks for special needs students who are primarily auditory learners to ensure they will be able to engage with assigned readings on the same level as their peers.

Outcomes that were identified:

Our Minecraft program has been successful in attracting a difficult-to-reach demographic (tween boys, who are often reluctant readers) to the Library. The kids who participate in the program have been excited to come play Minecraft and are often seen hanging out at the library on other days as well (whereas they did not before this program.) Several of the boys have taken out books on Minecraft, as well as other topics, showing that the program has encouraged further library engagement.

Many of these kids have little regular interaction with standard computers and their typing skills are quite poor. By learning to log in with the keyboard and using the in-game chat, these kids are practicing their typing skills in a fun environment – a valuable asset for modern schoolwork and in the workplace

The greatest and most noticeable achievement of the Minecraft program so far has been the huge improvement in social skills of the youth involved. At first, several kids were reluctant to get off the computers and let others have a turn when their allotted time was up. After four months, these same kids happily share their computers. Moreover, instead of leaving until their next turn on the computer, these kids will stay and help the ones playing the game.

One girl, upon starting to come to Minecraft was so shy that she would cross the room to whisper in her brother's ear when she wanted to ask something of our teen volunteer (whom she was seated beside.) Now, she has gained the confidence to be in the fray, talking to all the other participants, even those who are older than her, and helping them out when she can. This girl is a success story whose newfound social skills will transfer well to many other applications outside of the library program and will help her find success in her future education and eventual career.



PRIORITY 3: SUPPORT FOR THE BC JOBS PLAN BY IMPROVING OUTCOMES FOR JOB SEEKERS IN BC. SPECIFICALLY, LIBRARIES SHOULD FOCUS ON TOOLS, PROGRAMS AND ESSENTIAL LITERACY SUPPORTS THAT HELP YOUR COMMUNITY EXPLORE NEW SKILLS AND EMPLOYMENT OPTIONS, LEADING THEM TO BE SUCCESSFULLY “FIRST IN LINE” FOR JOB OPPORTUNITIES FOR TODAY AND TOMORROW.

Library Goal that supports the priority:

From our Strategic Plan: “Provide a high level of service to the public through a well-trained staff and Library Board.”

As mentioned in Section 2, this goal also encompasses the objectives of better service through increased programming. We have achieved this goal by developing a range of new and improved programming for all ages. Some new programs, such as Teen Homework Club, help kids and adults improve their knowledge and skills for today’s job market. Others, such as our Library Month Open House, provide opportunities for Mackenzie residents to connect and network, a crucial part of job searching in a small town where many positions are found by word of mouth.

A second goal from our Strategic Plan is to “increase community engagement.” Part of this initiative has been to recruit volunteers into the library. More details on this objective are outlined below.

Programs and/or Services that aligns with the priority:

Career Day

This year, our Library Director – Anna Babluck – participated in a Career Day at the local high school organized by the United Way of Northern British Columbia. Groups of grade 10s and 11s went from person to person to hear lightning talks about different professions and ask questions. A few of the students participating were already interested in library and archival studies and enjoyed the opportunity to explore this opportunity one-on-one with a librarian.

Teen Volunteers

For the first time since library employees joined CUPE in 2008, the Library negotiated the ability to offer positions for student volunteers. We now have volunteers who are gaining valuable employment skills and additions to their resumes by running a Teen Book Club, tutoring, running our Minecraft server, writing articles for us for the local newspaper, advising the librarian on programs and services for teens, and much more.

Partnerships that support the priority:

The Career Day was organized by the United Way of Northern British Columbia and Mackenzie Secondary School. We also worked with Mackenzie Secondary School to identify students with the most to gain from a volunteer placement at the Library.

We have approached the Mackenzie campus of the College of New Caledonia and WorkBC to identify job skills needs in our community and opportunities for the Library to offer new programs and services. We expect to further this partnership in 2016 with more cross-promotion of services and the potential implementation of new joint-programs.



Outcomes that were identified:

Due to our new teen volunteers, we are able to offer more programs and better promote our services, especially at Mackenzie Secondary School. Because of their dedication, we have been able to offer three new weekly programs directed at teens and tweens, a previously underserved population.

The volunteer program is not only valuable to the library, it is valuable to the students who need work or volunteer hours to complete their Graduate Transition Work Experience requirement. One of our grade 12 volunteers has no work experience, but she now has a position and a reference to put on her resume, increasing her chances of being accepted into a post-secondary program of her choice.

Though the volunteer program is too new to evaluate long-term outcomes yet, we can say for certain that it has increased and improved our connections with Mackenzie Secondary School, which is likely to lead to further service partnership opportunities in the future.

PRIORITY 4: A FOCUS ON COLLABORATION BETWEEN LIBRARIES AND OTHER PARTNERS. FOR EXAMPLE, THE DEVELOPMENT OF SHARED SERVICE MODELS AND RESOURCES WHICH EXTEND OR IMPROVE SEAMLESS ACCESS.

Library Goal that supports the priority:

From our Strategic Plan: “Raise the library's profile in the community through increased community engagement.”

Though work on this goal will always be an ongoing process, we have made significant strides in the past year and met all of our objectives. Many of these objectives were met through increased local collaboration, including:

- 1) Participating in community events such as the Spring Business Expo, the Northern Health Children’s Fair, and Ignite the North Youth Engagement sessions.
- 2) Regularly informing the public and other stakeholders of services we offer through partnership with local media.
- 3) Maximizing our reach by inviting local businesses and organizations to participate in library programming.

Through partnering with local media for publicity, and businesses and other organizations to provide new programs and services, we have been able to reach more people (and more diverse demographics) in our community than in previous years.

Programs and/or Services that aligns with the priority:

Teddy Bear Picnic

In 2015, after an increase in bear activity and encounters in the area, Mackenzie formed a Bear Awareness Committee. The committee approached us to do an educational and fun joint-program for children, which resulted in our first Teddy Bear Picnic. Pre-school and young school-age children were invited, along with their families, to join us for games, songs, crafts, and snacks put on by the Library. An essential component of the program was a series of short talks interspersed among the other fun activities about bear awareness and safety from local experts, including our Conservation Officer and representatives from Wildlife Infometrics. The Library concurrently put out a book display on the same topic.

Interlibrary Connect

In June, the Mackenzie Public Library began offering Interlibrary Connect (ILC) services through Evergreen. This service allows us to leverage the collections of our partner libraries to offer more materials to more people, seamlessly.

ILC is the first online patron-initiated interlibrary loans service we've offered in Mackenzie. It benefits those who are not able to come in to the library to place their loans, for whatever reason, widening the accessibility of our lending services.

Not only is this expanded service important for our patrons, it is a quicker, more integrated process that frees up staff time for other projects.

Partnerships that support the priority:

The Mackenzie Bear Committee worked with us to plan the Teddy Bear Picnic. Kelly's Bakery donated the snacks (bear paw cookies) and CHMM Radio and various local businesses helped with free advertising.

Our ILC services were launched with the help of two key partners: The British Columbia Libraries Cooperative (who hosts our ILS and manages the technical aspects ILC) and the North Central Library Federation. NCLF worked together to ensure 100% federation participation in ILC, giving more borrowing options for our patrons and ensuring no communities would be left out.

For the first time in a decade of offering the service, we teamed up with the Mackenzie Family Health Clinic to distribute Books for Babies bags to new and expectant mothers and families on home visits. With their help, we were able to reach three times as many families in 2015 as in 2014 by ourselves.

Outcomes that were identified:

22 children and 10 adults attended the Teddy Bear Picnic and the feedback was excellent. Many parents expressed their satisfaction with the program and they felt that they and their children had learned something valuable.

The awareness campaigning by the bear committee, including the Teddy Bear Picnic program, resulted in fewer close encounters with bears throughout the summer and fewer bear sightings within town limits, which in turn resulted in fewer bears destroyed in 2015 than 2014. We hope to continue this productive partnership in 2016.

The partnership also led to greater self-guided education about bear attacks. Two of the books on our bear display – *Bear Attacks* by Stephen Herrero and *Bear Attacks II* by James Gary Shelton – were in our top three circulating adult non-fiction books of 2015.

SUMMARY

This year was all about getting the library facility and collection in order and the procedures and staff up to speed to deliver the best, most efficient library service possible.

Though the work isn't always glamorous, we got a lot done behind the scene that wasn't all directly laid out in our Strategic Plan. We successfully negotiated a new Collective Agreement with CUPE Local 3706-04, finished barcoding the entire library collection - including the implementation of the serials module in Evergreen, completed the first complete collection inventory in five years, completed a branding project along with a new logo, improved our internet services, and completed a huge amount of ongoing training for every member of our team.

On the more publically visible side, we finished the tail end of our refurbishment project, added new programs and services, and pulled off a huge, successful fundraising event.

Although our circulation of digital materials has dropped, circulation of physical materials increased slightly. Our foot traffic, program attendance, wireless internet use, and use of gaming computers increased significantly, showing that the needs of our community are changing and we're adaptable enough to meet the challenges of this new environment.

As with many libraries across the province, our ongoing challenge has been finding enough funding to successfully fulfil our mission, especially with the implementation of a new Collective Agreement with CUPE. To meet the increased demands on our budget from wages, benefits, and negotiation costs, we were required to pull money out of our surplus for the first time in several years. Although the District of Mackenzie granted an increase to cover wages in 2016, the rest of our budget will be very tight. Without an increase or a new funding source next year, we won't be able to sustain the growth in programs and services that we've seen over the past couple of years. It's time to take a hard look at our finances and plan for the future. This is excellent timing as we're coming into the final year of our current Strategic Plan. As of March 2016, we'll be beginning the long process of engaging the community to formulate our next plan.

We are thankful for the generous support we've received from the District of Mackenzie, the province of British Columbia, the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George, local businesses, granting organizations, and, of course, our wonderful library patrons this year. We couldn't do it without you and we're excited to implement our plans for 2016!