

2019 Report to our Community



The North Vancouver City Library is grateful for the opportunity to learn and grow on the traditional, ancestral and unceded lands of the Coast Salish Peoples including the territories of the Squamish (Skwxwú7mesh) and Tsleil-Waututh (səlílwətaʔ) Nations.



Children’s librarian Karen Coyne reads to Queen Mary Elementary School students during one of their weekly library visits.

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// A NOTE FROM THE CHIEF LIBRARIAN & BOARD CHAIR

For City Library, as for so many others, responding to the COVID-19 pandemic has fully occupied our attention since early March. So we have prepared a shorter-than-usual Community Report to share with you some of the highlights from 2019.

We are so proud of the innovative, transformational work that was accomplished in 2019, the second year of City Library’s 2018–2021 Strategic Plan — a plan that was developed in partnership with our community.

Looking back through the lens of COVID-19, it stands out how many of the highlights of 2019 centred on shared experiences and bringing people together — things that now seem impossibly distant and unreal.

As we strive to restore valued services and implement innovative new ways of serving the community in the face of the pandemic, we continue to be guided by our mission to foster the love of learning and strengthen community connections. We continue to explore new and often digital ways to create a sense of togetherness and community, and at the same time we are working to bridge the digital divide that prevents so many in our community from participating and connecting.

We could not do this work without the ongoing foundational support of the City of North Vancouver and the Province of British Columbia and the many generous gifts from donors that enable us to go above and beyond. We are also grateful for our many community partners, who work with us to strengthen literacy, promote well-being, and strive to ensure that no one gets left behind.



Stephen Smith
BOARD CHAIR



Deb Hutchison Koep
CHIEF LIBRARIAN



Pulling together

City Library was honoured to be invited to join the Semá7maḱa (Snowbird) canoe family this year in the annual Pulling Together Canoe Journey. Pulling Together is a partnership among Indigenous communities, law enforcement and public service organizations with a focus on supporting and building relationships with youth.

Each year, canoe families undertake a summer canoe trip. The journey is one of reconciliation, discovery, contemplation and renewed commitment to uplift and honour Indigenous communities. Paddlers share meals and stories, learn about canoe journeys of the past, and participate in ceremonies and traditions.

Following this year’s journey, the library hosted a public Sleeping Ceremony for Semá7maḱa in October to formally close the canoe season. Members of the community gathered in Civic Plaza for prayers, music and dancing from members of the Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations.

Participating in the journey is part of the reconciliation work City Library is committed to continuing.



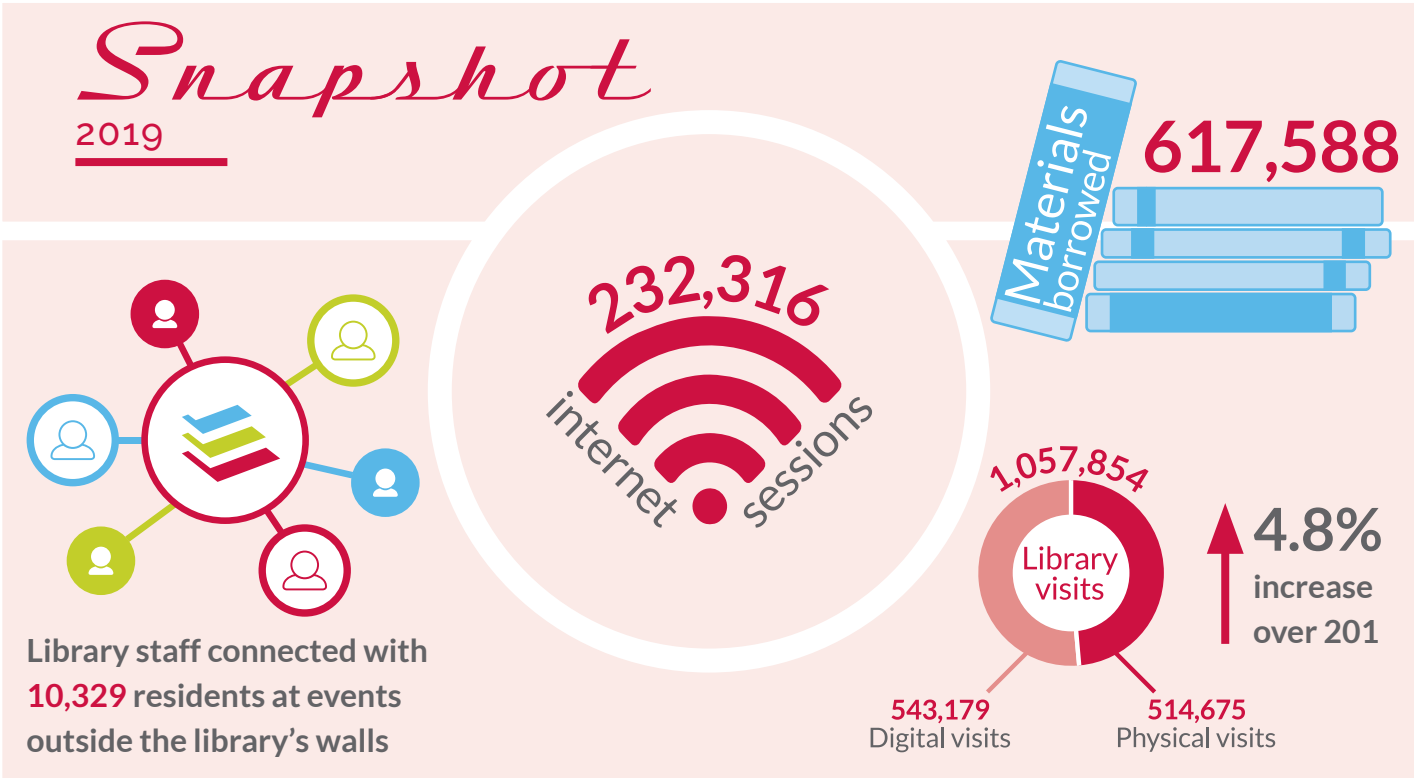
A fine-free library

In response to research showing that overdue fines are a barrier to access and have a disproportionate effect on low-income households, especially those with children, and other vulnerable populations, City Library made a historic decision to eliminate overdue fines in 2019. The decision was reflected in the library’s 2020 budget, with support from City Council.

“Libraries are accessible, welcoming, community hubs where residents of all ages can go to learn, connect and

share experiences,” City of North Vancouver Mayor Linda Buchanan said. “The library’s decision to reduce financial barriers supports Council’s work to make our city a vibrant, inclusive and connected community for everyone.”

With this change, the North Vancouver City Library becomes the first public library in the Lower Mainland to go fine-free, joining a growing international group that includes Chicago and San Francisco Public Libraries as well as dozens of BC libraries.





// CREATE VIBRANT SPACES

Café connection

In September, the community was invited to celebrate the grand opening of the Café Connection. This new “Community Living Room” transformed a previously underutilized, transactional space into a welcoming seating area and created a direct connection between the library and the adjoining Laziza Café.

This new space at the entrance of the library was immediately embraced as a friendly, comfortable place for people of all ages to gather to sip coffee, read a newspaper, catch up with their neighbours and study. It also added more than 30 new seats — a welcome addition for anyone who has looked for an empty seat in the library during peak times.

// INSPIRE LEARNING, DISCOVERY & CREATION

STEAM-powered programming

STEAM stands for science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics. It is a holistic educational approach that stimulates numeracy, design, creativity, problem-solving and critical thinking skills. In 2019, City Library began to integrate STEAM concepts and activities into an increasing number of programs and initiatives.

Responding to our community’s desire for activities that promote and foster computational thinking and creativity — especially for children — City Library partnered with local organizations to enhance and supplement a robust roster of STEAM programs.



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A teen buddy works with a young reader on literacy skills in the Children's Department.

