

Librarian's Report – August/September 2014

Wendy Wright, Library Director

Families have been visiting their public library in droves this September, borrowing stacks of materials to support their children's learning and enjoying a free, comfortable outing in their community. Public Internet access usage has soared during the teacher strike, and patrons often must reserve computer time. Staff note seeing many new faces in the library -- welcome!

Adult Programs and Events:

- In Our Backyard – Wellness Options resumes on September 15 with monthly talks and demonstrations by Bulkley Valley alternative health practitioners.
- Knitting Circle: Knitters and crocheters are invited to bring their work to the library on Thursdays between 6 and 8 pm to meet others with similar interests and exchange tips and ideas. Begins September 18.
- Preserve & Recipe Swap: Bring two jars of homemade preserves and two copies of the recipe to the library on September 27, from 10:30-12. Share one jar, and swap the other. A fun way to share ideas, information, and good food with our neighbours.

After Hours Use:

- Smithers Tabletop Gaming group (Attendance: 18)
- Book Club (Attendance: 9)

Summer Reading Club (SRC):

- Unable to promote the SRC through the schools in June as usual, we instead spread the word through outreach this summer. Ultimately, exactly the same number of children participated in the 2014 Summer Reading Club as last year (167), with fewer in the 3-6 age group and twice as many 'tweens. Next year we will reach out to preschools and daycares to connect with younger children.
- 28 'tweens enjoyed a fabulous Murder Mystery evening program, complete with role-playing and costumes. Thanks to Summer Student Skeena Lawson for a job well done!
- 23 people attended two pop-up Storytimes with Skeena in Smithers playgrounds. Our goal was to provide free, literacy-based entertainment to as much of the community as possible, and to reach people who may not already be using the library by offering services in non-traditional locations. We will continue Stories in the Park next summer.

Teen Summer Challenge:

- Approximately 20 teens participated in our inaugural online program. Youth were encouraged to complete challenges that included not only reading but athletic feats, artistic creations, and social interactions, then post photos of their accomplishments on our Summer Challenge website. Thanks to Skeena for setting up this reusable site.

Children's Programming:

- The Mother Goose on the Loose (MGOL) early literacy program and Family Storytime run weekly beginning September 24. Both drop-in programs are now for children accompanied by a caregiver. The library cannot accept responsibility for unattended small children as we are not trained or licensed to provide childcare, and unattended children occasionally disrupt the program. Caregivers will benefit from attending the program as they learn new techniques for engaging their child with language and learning.
- Get creative with LEGO! Kids and caregivers are invited to build and create with LEGO purchased by The Friends of Smithers Library, Thursdays from 3-4:30. This program began earlier than its advertised start date to accommodate demand during the teacher strike.

Teen & Youth Programming:

- Attendance at Teen programs was down during the gloriously hot, sunny evenings this summer, despite an innovative and varied roster of programs and strong promotion. Wanda will try a different time slot next summer. This fall the United Way of Northern BC funds our youth programming every Friday night beginning September 19. Programs include art, music, technology, crafts, and Dungeons & Dragons.

Community Involvement:

- Bulkley Valley Exhibition – Over 20 people tried their hand at a horse-themed quiz created by the Friends of Smithers Public Library, available in print and online. Books about agriculture, food preservation, and handicrafts were available for checkout, and Wendy provided reference service for curious fairgoers.

Community Partnerships and Needs Assessments:

- Wendy will meet with Michele Cook of Northwest Community College Library in September to discuss our database collections. The goal is to ensure community access to these expensive information resources without unnecessary duplication, particularly if they are infrequently used.
- Smithers Clubs Day – The library's programs for ages 0-6 and for teens were the only free activities on offer at this registration day for children and youth. The cost of most other clubs and lessons would be prohibitive for many families. Participation in this event highlighted both the need for free after-school programs for 6-12-year-olds, and this gap in the library's offerings due to not having a separate programming room. Noise considerations currently prohibit children's programs during open hours, such as after school. It is imperative that Smithers acquire a larger public library facility with separate areas for programming and quiet study in order to meet the full range of this community's needs.

Technology:

- Telus has determined that either our router or switch is interfering with high-speed Internet service. The library's technician will find a solution.
- Our IP address has been abused only once since taking preventative measures in June, down from three incidents per week. Although the majority of patrons can still access our WiFi connection, unfortunately a few have been unable to connect. We apologize for the inconvenience and suggest these patrons use either our Public Access Computers or Northwest Community College's free WiFi.
- The CAP YI (Student Computer Tutor) government-funded program has been delayed this year. Approval to begin the hiring process was granted in mid-September and will commence immediately.

Staff:

- Thanks to generous funding from MOST for Children, we have rehired Jill McDonald as an Assistant Facilitator for our upcoming Mother Goose on the Loose early literacy program. Jill brings extensive Early Childhood Education training and experience to the program.
- The provincial Community Library Training Program (CLTP) for library staff and volunteers has been discontinued. Other online library schooling options remain, albeit more costly, and will be budgeted for as we plan further staff professional development.
- Individual staff training continues with an OverDrive eBook webinar, basic computer skills course, and a group computer troubleshooting session. The director participated in webinars on statistics reporting, eProduct innovations, and website development in addition to completing a course on Aboriginal Reference Resources.

Friends of Smithers Public Library:

- FOL Darlene and Gary Weippert donated beautiful prizes to the lucky winners of the Fall Fair quiz created by Lorraine Doiron.
- The Digitization Committee has received widespread support for their project of digitizing 100 years of the Smithers Interior News and making it available via a link on the library's website. The project now requires funds to realize its goal. The Committee seeks financial support within the community, and will apply for a grant to assist with the cost of digitizing the first 6 reels of microfilm (1910-1942) this fall.