

Provincial Library Grants Report 2013

Introduction:

The Chetwynd Public Library is the Hub of the District of Chetwynd and surrounding area, which consists of a population base of over 5,000, situated in the Peace River Regional District in the north eastern section of B.C. and is a member of the North East Library Federation. By highway, Chetwynd is 180km east of Mackenzie and 102km west of Dawson Creek. Chetwynd and area is made up of a wide demographic population being over 45% of Aboriginal descent down to a smaller portion of new immigrants and landed immigrants, which has been on the rise in the last few years. Our area also includes Moberly Lake containing two Aboriginal Reserves making up the bulk of the population. Our Senior population, with longer life-span, is also a rapidly increasing group that look to the library as a source of activity.

Industries:

Chetwynd was founded on the agriculture and forestry industries, both of which have remained a driving force in the economy of our community. In later years oil and gas exploration and mining have become very prominent in our area and seem to be increasing each year. Tourism is fast becoming a viable industry in our area due to our annual world class “**Chain Saw Sculpture event**” coupled with the vast amount of hunting, fishing, and camping that takes place in our land of lakes and rivers.

Challenges we face: As a library our biggest challenge is **communicating** our resources and services to non-library users. It is a constant struggle to find new and innovative ways to reach and engage all of our population. Second challenge both as a Library and a community, would be “**isolation**” from the main-stream ultimately making the cost of everything so much higher. Tradesmen and IT Professionals are at an extreme minority in our area. For example, our IT Professionals are located in Fort St. John, almost a 2 hour drive each way, which highly escalates our technical costs.

Strategic Plan/P.A.T.H.

Our Strategic Plan will be re-vamped in 2014, but to date some of the key goals that we have achieved in 2013 have been:

Chetwynd Bistro financially profitable – In 2008 we opened a Library-owned and operated Bistro and after struggling for 4 years we decided to lease the space to a private owner-operator. 2013 proved to be a fabulous year for both the Bistro and the Library by reaching our goal of paying back the full amount of initial start-up funds. We were without our Bistro for a few months in 2012 and Library visits dropped by one-third. The Library has a very close working relationship with the Bistro and one without the other is not even an option any more. For example: “A lady from Tumbler Ridge stopped in today and pleaded with Peggy (Bistro Owner) to open something similar in their town as she just loves it.”

First Aid for All Staff: Because of the many programs we offer and the diversity of people in our library we felt it necessary to have our entire staff trained in basic first aid, which we accomplished in 2013.

New technologies/keeping Current: In 2013 we initiated and completed a \$44,000.00 Public Access computer upgrade along with new file server and other items necessary to facilitate the upgrade. This was necessary as it was time to upgrade or replace all of our Public Access stations, so we took this opportunity to replace them all with 6 tablets, all working from Wifi, relocate them from the Bistro area into the main library. This has definitely been a learning curve both for the IT Techs and ourselves. The general public are gradually conforming to this new technology and we have yet to determine the full impact it will have on the Library.

Building on the “Library as a Community Hub”: Our **Chetwynd Family Resource Corner** in 2013, has had a full year now to successfully fulfill our vision of “a resource and referral station, or as I like to call it, **“one-stop-shopping”**, open to citizens of Chetwynd and area, which is dedicated to the support of the quality of life for all families and/or individuals within the community.” The Resource Corner is dedicated to providing information on local programs, events and resources as well as fostering volunteer & networking opportunities for the residents of Chetwynd. We are also dedicated to helping promote the local service providers and community organizations, programs, services and events. This is all being done through a variety of delivery mediums.

1. Government Priority #2: Supports for education transformation, particularly in the area of reading for early learners (individualized/personalized learning in formal and informal environments);

Library Goal supporting priority: “Improve usage of services available” and building partnerships/networks/capacity

1. Programs and Services:

Goals Accomplishments : Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library:

Give a child a book when we should be lending them? Yes, yes, yes! An idea sparked by the library staff has snowballed into a huge program that staff, board and community all enthusiastically support. Imagine a program that has pregnant moms waiting anxiously for the birth of their child to sign up for. A program in which a child receives one book per month, carefully selected to create their very own book collection at home. Not only are we helping to create a love of reading at a very young age, we are working to strengthen parent/child at home reading connections and cultivate the next generation of library users. This is one program that we can’t simply define with stats and measurements. We do currently have over 234 children who participate in this monthly program until age 5, with 115 graduates of the **Imagination Library**. We joined this program in March of 2011 and since that time 86.25% of Chetwynd’s kindergarten students are graduates of Imagination Library. In a couple of years we hope to be able to document the effect that this program is having on early learning in our community.

The proof of success is in the excitement of the children who we see come into our library to use our books and participate in our programs. It is not an inexpensive program by any means, but it is one that staff and board members *volunteer* their spare time to support by being deeply involved in the two major annual fund raisers held each year to raise the \$10,000 needed to keep the program alive. **Imagination Library** – give a book, create a life-long library user. One of our best stories comes from a young father who stated **“that until he signed his little girl up with Imagination Library he had never, even as a child had any desire to read. When his**

daughter's books started coming in the mail he realized he had to start reading to her and this opened up a whole new part of his brain that he hadn't realized existed."

Partnerships that support the priority:

Dolly Parton Foundation Canada
CCLD Contracting Ltd./ Don & Connie Twin – major funders
Spectra Energy
Talisman Energy
Northern Health
Success by 6 / Children First
Lake View Credit Union
School District 59 – local elementary schools
Mason's

2. Programs & Services:

Goals and Accomplishments:

Chetwynd Family Resource Corner:

The Chetwynd Family Resource Corner is dedicated to providing information on local programs, events and resources as well as fostering volunteer & networking opportunities for the residents of Chetwynd. We are also dedicated to helping promote the local service providers and community organizations, programs, services and events. The library has successfully created a resource and referral desk in the library that addresses the transient nature of our community. We have been able to create an answer desk that can help seek out information for community members while strengthening partnership opportunities and solutions for community gaps and needs. We have a Chetwynd Community Calendar that has been created for 24/7 access to community event information to anyone outside of the library walls. This calendar is one of the varied collaborative outreach methods used by not only service groups to promote their activities, but also by community members from all backgrounds to seek out timely event information. The installation of a digital media sign in the resource corner along with more streamlined pamphlet display, has worked together to create a welcoming area for residents to seek out community information on a wide range of topics. Social media plays a large part in this program to reach community members who do not seek out the physical and conventional library space on a repetitive basis.

Partnerships that support the priority:

District of Chetwynd Healthy Communities:
Chetwynd Service Providers Network
School District #59
Peace FM / Chet TV
Welcoming Communities
ESLSAP – English as a Second Language Assistance Program
Chetwynd Social Planning Society

2. Government Priority #3: Library collaboration and cooperation, including working together in the development of collaborative services and shared resources among libraries and through library federations and other partner organizations (eg. Schools, arts, culture, literacy, heritage and community groups:

Library Goal Supporting this priority: Engage community for volunteers and programming interests; strengthen partnerships; interest in adult programs;

1. Programs and/or Services:
Goals Accomplishments

Young at Heart 55+ is a library program geared towards our seniors. Until 2013 it was always held within the Library walls. At one of our community meetings it was asked if we could somehow incorporate outreach to give seniors who are not able to drive to the library the ability to attend. The staff ran with this idea and called a meeting of six groups/organizations who provide services to seniors, together to brainstorm options. Out of this came the idea to have our staff deliver the Young at Heart 55+ program at various locations – highlighting the best of what each place has to offer. Key successes have included the participation of community members who would not be able to physically attend the traditional library program as well as the collaboration and support from those service providers who would not necessarily have partnered with the Library.

The **biggest accomplishment** in this program change was to see so many more seniors being actively involved and interacting with people they may never see on a daily basis as well as being able to meet and interact with other seniors. The Aboriginal Culture was integrated into the mainstream senior group, which was a huge breakthrough. Each service provider: Tansi Friendship Centre; Chetwynd Recreation Centre, Pine Valley Seniors, Royal Canadian Legion, Surerus Place, Little Prairie Haven, as well as the Library each take a turn at hosting the monthly Senior program, with the Library being the main program coordinator. We have a following of between 25 and 45 seniors each month attending.

2. The Seniors Christmas Dinner is an event that grew from the Young at Heart 55+ program. As the monthly seniors program grew in popularity and participation, the idea to come together to host a Christmas dinner for our seniors was sparked. The initial idea was to be able to give back to our senior population something special at this special time of year. All partners came together with both work and funding to create a memorable community dinner for our seniors. We had over 140 people attend the event with everyone leaving with a smile and appreciation for the work that went into making the event a success. A fabulous meal provided at cost by our Chetwynd Bistro was talked about for weeks after. A reading of the Canadian version of the Night before Christmas story, Aboriginal Dancers for entertainment and a visit from Santa Claus

combined to make a memorable day for participants and volunteers. The power of a simple idea can spark another one and grow into something that brings the community together and the library out of traditional walls, becoming a leader in community capacity building. Out of the box thinking that comes from staff members throwing around ideas, working together and giving creative feedback can often create and adapt programming that better meets the needs of the community.

Partner ships that support the Priority:

Pine Vallley Seniors Society
Surerus Place
Royal Canadian Legion
Tansi Friendship Centre
Kiciawasimsak Centre
Little Prairie Haven
Chet T.V./Peace FM
Chetwynd Echo
Healthy Communities (District of Chetwynd)
Chetwynd Bistro
Simply Perfect Catering

3. Government Priority #5: Community engagement and collaboration (for example, actively supporting community priorities and initiatives, building collaborative community partnerships and modeling decision transparency.

Library Goal that supports this priority: cultivate 6 corporate sponsors & partners with the library;

1. Programs and/or Services:

Goals and Accomplishments:

The **Chetwynd Social Planning Society** created a **community social plan** in 2008 that included gaps and needs in nine defined areas. **A representative from the library** attends many diverse community meetings to work with the many and varied service providers and user groups to offer our diverse services and space to help in the development and implementation of initiatives that will address targeted gaps. We seek collaborative partnerships that help us meet our mission of engaging the community in a spirit of learning and discovery. Working together we find the library is a partner in many community events that not only meets the mission but inspires other groups to come on board making these events well rounded and beneficial to a wide cross section of our diverse community. Asking the question “how we can help” to our staff, board members and patrons can often spark new ideas and out of the box solutions to the challenges of a small northern community.

The **Chetwynd Family Resource Corner** is dedicated to providing information on local programs, events and resources as well as fostering volunteer & networking opportunities for the residents of Chetwynd. We are also dedicated to helping promote the local service providers and community organizations; programs, services and events. The library has successfully created a resource and referral desk in the library that addresses the transient nature of our community.

We have been able to create an answer desk that can help seek out information for community members while strengthening partnership opportunities and solutions for community gaps and needs. We have a **Chetwynd Community Calendar** that has been created for 24/7 access to community event information to anyone outside of the library walls. This calendar is one of the varied **collaborative outreach methods used** by not only service groups to promote their activities, but also by community members from all backgrounds to seek out timely event information. The installation of a **digital media sign** in the resource corner along with more streamlined pamphlet display, has worked together to create a welcoming area for residents to seek out community information on a wide range of topics. **Social media** plays a large part in this program to reach community members who do not seek out the physical and conventional library space on a repetitive basis. Our local **Chet T.V.** approached us to provide a staff person to feature the **Community Calendar** Events on their Canada wide T.V. channel once a week.

Partnerships that Support the Priority:

District of Chetwynd Healthy Communities: Chetwynd Service Providers Network
Northern Health
Chet T.V./Peace FM
Healthy Communities
Chetwynd and District Recreation Centre
Chetwynd Arts Council
Chetwynd Social Planning Society
United Way

2. Programs and/or Services:

Goals and Accomplishments:

“Lake View Learners and Leaders” – Activity based After-School Program:

The Lake View Credit Union (Main Branch) contacted the Chetwynd Public Library in anticipation of partnering with us to implement an **Activity based After-School Program** for 2013. They chose the Library because of our local stability and history of providing and creating quality programs for children, as well as our ability to partner with many groups in the community. We Have had long-term support from our local branch for several years now as well.

Due to a report in 2012 from Active Healthy Kids Canada which found that 73 percent of parents Said their kids watched T.V., read, or played video or computer games after school instead of playing outside or in some type of sport, and the growing concern about the trends of sedentary kids and increasing obesity in children, Lake View Credit Union wanted to make a difference in this area.

The Library created a program that offered children, ages 6 to 15, the opportunity to try new things, test boundaries, learn from their mistakes and, enjoy being active. Our underlying objective was to improve motor function, creativity, decision-making, problem-solving, and social skills. The program was **“free”**, running from 3:00p.m. to 5p.m. three days per week.

There was to be no fixed ceiling of revolving participation, however, we had to put a cap on enrolment at 81 participants due to our child/adult ratio.

The program offered one hour of **homework help** followed by one hour of **physical activity**, such as table tennis, air hockey, foot- ball soccer, lacrosse, skateboarding, roller skating, climbing wall, skipping, hula hoops, tag games, and much more. **Snacks** were provided daily during homework help time. Not all children participated every day which allowed the staff and volunteers to better accommodate the needs of each child.

Along with hired staff, volunteer parents assisted with both the homework help and the activities. Older children were encouraged to play and interact with younger children which we found worked very well. Given the opportunity children will “play” together.

Response from parents and children was positive with such comments as “Homework Help” has made our evenings together much less stressful and more family oriented”. “My child’s social skills have improved due to this program”. “My child is so excited to be doing something fun and active.”

Major challenge with this program was: staying within the realms of not being a “child-care” program. Toward the end Northern Health contacted us indicating they felt we were operating a “child-care” program without a license. *Following much dialogue we were given permission* To complete the program at the end of June 2012. If we were to offer such a program again we would have to comply with their regulations and be licensed. Despite these challenges, the program was a proven success by the amount of participation and positive response from both Parents and children.

Partnerships that Support the Priority:

Lake View Credit Union
Chetwynd and District Recreation Centre
Welcoming Communities
Chetwynd Family Resource Corner

Summary: Outputs vs. Outcomes!

What did we learn throughout the year? As a Board and Staff we learned to “Listen”!

Second major thing we learned is that our Strategic Plan/P.A.T.H. needs to be rebuilt as I found it very difficult to identify a “goal” in our Strategic Plan that would match any of the actual “Goals and Accomplishments that we made for the year. It has become evident that we need some professional assistance in defining future goals and aspirations, which will now be a goal for 2014.

Key Points:

The library is now a place to do more than borrow a book. We are a community space where people come to gather, share, learn and create with each other. Our programming and services are reflective of the changes that libraries are facing. By reaching out to other groups and organizations we found that most are eager to partner and collaborate with us to provide extended services or programs to all citizens of the community. This was proven by the astounding success of our **Young@Heart 55+** program this past year.

We are addressing the technological savvy new generation by keeping up with technology in our public access computers and our digital media services including **Freegal**. We are also bridging a gap that the older generation may face by having computer and technology support and training from our staff in all aspects of basic computing, social media and internet safety **both in-house** and **outreach**. By **“outreach”** we are referring to our **Senior’s Tech Wednesdays** where we send a staff person to facilitate a Tech Training workshop every week for free to the Pine Valley Senior’s Centre. This is a perfect example of our response to a need the Seniors had conveyed to the library.

Because of our extensive work with our **“Imagination Library Program”** since conception in 2011, we were fortunate enough to catch the attention of a local contractor who believes so strongly in this particular program and everything we do at the Library, that he came forward with a **\$5,000.00 cheque** to be put toward the program expense for 2013. This was an opportunity that was totally unexpected and gratefully received. This looks to be a promising partnership for the coming year as well.

One of the **Challenges** we faced in 2013 was the continuing challenge of reaching the people in our community who, either don’t have transportation to visit the library, are incapacitated in some way, or have never visited and don’t realize the free resources that are available to them. Due to weather conditions for half of our year it is often difficult for young parents or those without vehicles to access our facilities. Even though this will always be a challenge, we made huge steps in 2013 to overcome this problem by taking our Young@Heart 55+ program out into the community and provided Senior Tech Services as outreach as well.

Another ongoing **challenge** we face is reaching the young parents with pre-school children, usually those in lower-income families, who do not visit the library. This particular group are the ones who need our services the most and are not receiving the benefits of visiting the library. Partnerships with other pre-school service providers will need to be worked on in 2014 to attempt to reach more of this demographic.

Rather than telling the community what we think they need, we have shifted our mindset to ask the question: **“what do you need and want from us”**. This proactive approach is helping to keep the library in the forefront of the community. Encouraging the staff to think, create and collaborate keeps fresh ideas constantly coming forth sparking new ways to engage and enhance our community.

Fay Asleson,
Library Director

