

2020

LETHBRIDGE PUBLIC LIBRARY REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY





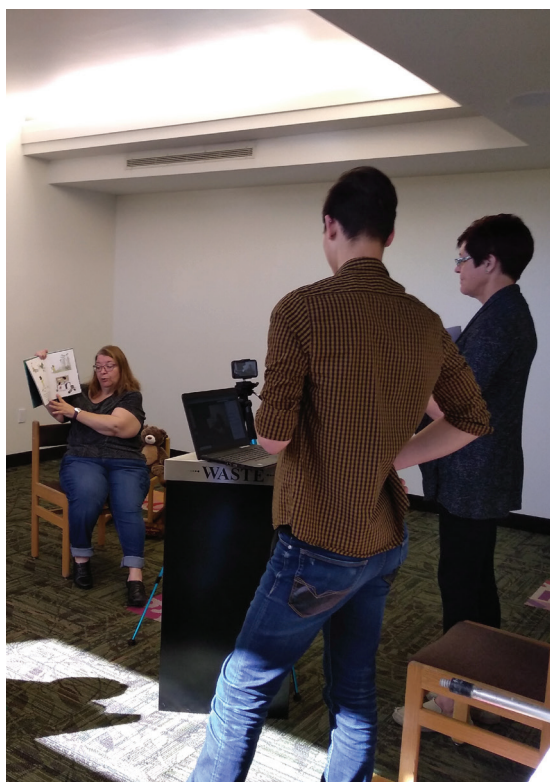
Our Vision

Lethbridge Public Library is the community's choice for the pursuit of literacy, leisure, learning and innovation.

Our Mission

Lethbridge Public Library is a welcoming, inclusive space that connects and strengthens community through equitable access to learning and leisure.

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2020 City of Lethbridge Library Board



Top Row (L–R): Terra Plato (CEO), Allan Quinton (Chair), James Chymboryk, Craig Brown, Heather Woodruff, Jennifer Gullage-Payne

Bottom Row (L–R): Linda Erickson, Mark Campbell, Mike Maguire, Sean Hubbell, Wendy Kalkan

LOOKING BACK AT 2020

Allan Quinton Board Chair | Terra Plato Library CEO

The year 2020 was a year that will live in infamy for our Library, our community, our nation, and our world. 2020 saw the temporary closure of many businesses and services, and the

reinvention of those same services as all struggled to survive during a pandemic. The Library was not immune to this and we were forced to close our doors to the public for an extended period,

not once, but twice – an unprecedented action in the history of the Library. The Library had spent many years developing a robust online platform and collection for our customers that became a blessing at

this time. Many customers were still able to make use of Library resources through downloadable eBooks and audiobooks, streaming services, access to digital magazines and newspapers, online databases and learning tools, and an online holds system that allowed us to implement curbside pick up once it was determined safe to do so. Within days of our unexpected initial closure in March, staff had started streaming interactive storytimes for children; those confined to their homes were able to see familiar faces and children could still hear their names being spoken by a trusted Library staff member, ensuring that vital community connections were not lost. Library staff became innovative in how we would provide services while we could not open our doors, including hosting online book clubs, book tournaments and summer reading clubs, providing on-demand programming through social media and YouTube, coordinating a virtual edition of the 10th annual The Word on the Street festival, providing take-home craft kits for child and adult programs, creating Surprise Me grab bags for library materials, and supporting our community and partners wherever possible.

2020 was a year of extreme challenges for our community and the

Library. It taught us many things about our Library and the services we provide, including:

1. The Library's physical spaces are important to our community as a place to connect with ideas and each other. The Library is a safe space for many in our community, is key to civic pride, and fosters a sense of community and discovery.
2. The Library's online collections and resources are important and growing in popularity, but they do not replace physical collections. They are another way for us to provide access to knowledge and ideas, but do not meet the needs of those without access to reliable Internet service or devices.
3. The Library must continue to examine and adjust our policies and services to remove barriers and to ensure equitable access to resources and information that must be available to all in order to uphold the principles of civil society, social justice, and the democratic values of equality and inclusion.

In 2020, the Library Board made a number of important decisions that will positively impact the ability of our community

to access library services. These included approving no fee memberships for the third year in a row, moving to a materials recovery model that prioritizes recovering library materials over charging late fees, and adopting the Canadian Urban Libraries Council Statement on Race and Social Equity. In addition, a number of service changes were implemented, many of which will be continued long term to improve equitable access to library resources, including: implementing curbside pick up, hosting online/on demand programming, establishing an international collection, and acquiring the funding to pilot a hotspot lending/mobile device program.

As we look forward to 2021 and helping our community recover, the Board and staff will be developing a new strategic plan for 2022–2026, that will build on the learnings of the past year, and will be based on a foundation of community needs, and looking towards the future of public library services. We are excited for the future of library services in Lethbridge, and to continue to explore how your Lethbridge Public Library can fulfill our mission to be an inclusive, welcoming space that connects and strengthens community through equitable access to learning and leisure.

Significant Projects & Key Highlights

2020 was a challenging year; however, Library staff rose to the challenge, and found new and innovative ways to offer Library services to our community throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, reaffirming the Library's commitment to being a welcoming, inclusive space that connects and strengthens community through equitable access to learning and leisure.



HIGHLIGHTS OF 2020 INCLUDED:

No Fee Memberships

Fees provide a significant barrier to many, and eliminating fees ensures that all residents are able to access the Library's physical and virtual services equally, which is why no fee memberships continued through 2020 and now also into 2021. Now, more than ever, and in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, our community needs access to the Library as we are a lifeline for so many.

Crossings Branch Toy Library

Thanks to generous donations from Friends of the Lethbridge Public Library and FortisAlberta, the Crossings Branch became home to a new toy library in February. The Friends inspired the project with an initial donation, and further grant funds from FortisAlberta made it possible for Library staff to purchase toys made by companies that have

committed themselves to considering best environmental practices in the manufacturing of their products.

Commitment to Race & Social Equity

The City of Lethbridge Library Board approved an endorsement of the Canadian Urban Libraries Council's Statement on Race & Social Equity. The statement outlines the important role that public



libraries have to play in advancing racial and social equity. The motion also required that Lethbridge Public Library incorporate these principles into its planning and approach to service development, and sign on to the original statement created by the Urban Libraries Council.

COVID-19 Response

Lethbridge Public Library's response to the COVID-19 pandemic was a commitment to ensuring a continuity of Library services and resources, keeping the health and safety of staff, customers, and community a priority. This included:

- Shifting programming to the Library's online spaces: website (lethlib.ca), YouTube channel (youtube.com/lethlib), Kids Facebook page (facebook.com/LethlibKids), and Instagram (@lethlib), as well as onto Shaw TV.
- Offering Curbside Pick Up and Grab & Go services.

- Increasing investment in e-resources such as OverDrive/Libby and Creativebug.
- Hosting a number of events with special guests throughout the year including: Dr. Jen Gunter, Linda Rakos, Terry Vulcano, Tanya Boteju, Eva Holland, Jesse Thistle, Jeff Rubin, Desmond Cole, Shari Lapena, Richard Van Camp, and Janie Chang.

Awards & Recognition

In keeping with its commitment for excellence in needs-based community programming, Lethbridge Public Library was recognized with the following awards in 2020:

- Minister's Award for Excellence in Library Service – 2019 Big Truck Petting Zoo (Government of Alberta, Municipal Affairs)
- Special Service Award – CEO, Terra Plato (Canadian Mental Health Association, Alberta Division)



The Word On The Street

While the event looked much different in 2020, The Word On The Street was robust and well received. The core of the festival was moved online with a reduced virtual programming track, and was extended to include a week of pre-event programming and a fall reading series that ran October–December.

This year's event featured:

- 24 authors of poetry, fiction, non-fiction, and children's books
- two comics pre-events
- 3 days of children's, teen, and adult programming
- a book-themed at-home scavenger hunt for families
- an Indigenous cultural programming track highlighting local Blackfoot voices and culminated in a writing workshop with Indigenous author Richard Van Camp





We Provide Value to the Community

Lethbridge Public Library understands what it means to meet the changing needs of our community and customers, and sees results through growing services and expanded reach in our community.

No-fee cards:

- for the second year in a row, Lethbridge Public Library was able to offer library memberships for no fee
- eliminates a barrier to Library access
- ensures all residents are able to access the Library's physical and virtual spaces equally
- designed a Writing Basics Review class to assist adults in improving the skills needed for college admission. This class also led to the creation of Essay Writing Basics, which builds on skills learned in Writing Basics Review
- the Building Communication skills class was developed in response to requests from English language learners who wanted to learn acceptable ways of communicating in workplaces and social situations

Read On Adult Literacy & Learning:

- 31 organizations in our community referred adults to Read On in 2020, including employers seeking learning assistance for employees and community organizations seeking information for clients

Highlight Stories

Parent-Child Mother Goose is an early literacy program for babies, that offers a bonding opportunity for parents and their children as well acts as a support group for new caregivers. With the COVID-19 restrictions we revised the program and offered it on the Zoom platform, so that we could keep that connection with and between participants.

From the time H. settled in our community, he knew how important Read On Adult Literacy & Learning would be in helping him learn English. Four short years later, he was recognized in the province, and chosen as one of two adult learners by Community Adult Learning Programs (CALP) to speak at the annual Literacy & Learning Symposium.

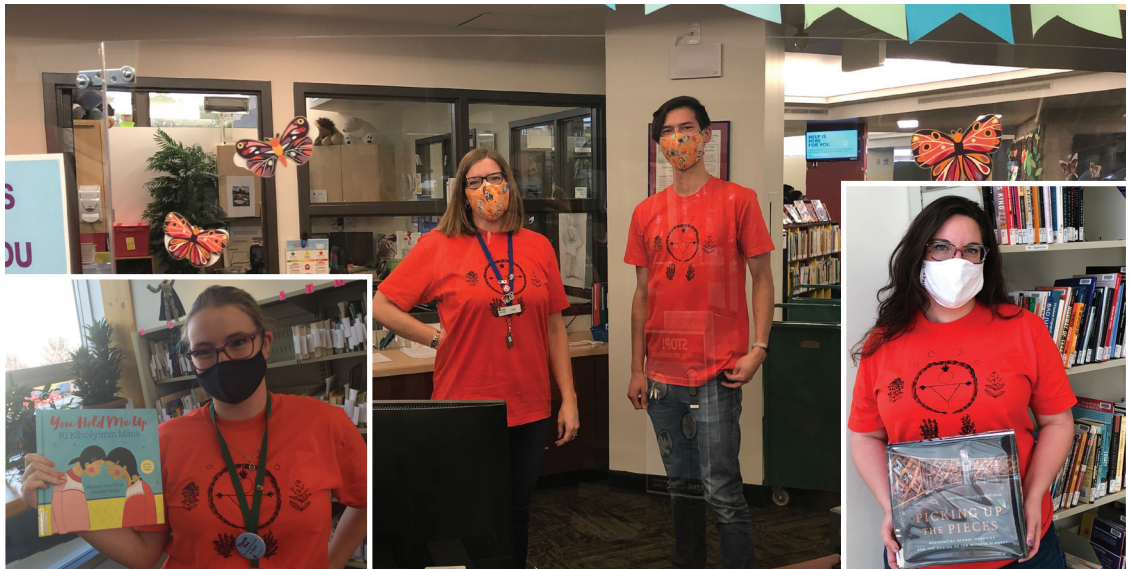


“I think [Parent-Child Mother Goose] was well done on the Library’s end. I was impressed with how you were able to adapt the program to Zoom and have it still be fun and engaging.”
~Library Customer

Connecting with community:

- expanded programming to online platforms Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube, which also increased our social media presence
- partnership with Shaw TV saw the creation of The Library Show, which aired Mondays, Wednesdays – Sundays at 3 p.m.





We Cultivate and Model Community Leadership

Lethbridge Public Library has a long history of collaboration with community partners and strives to strengthen intersections with diverse populations that are representative of our community, as well as working to develop leaders in the community.

Engaging with and learning from Indigenous partners:

- Indigenous Storytime with Indigenous puppets, Sistsi (Small Bird) and Mahpi (short version of small boy), offered children and their parents the opportunity to learn about topics such as sweetgrass and Writing-on-Stone
- Indigenous Conversations feature Knowledge Keepers who share their expertise. These prerecorded interviews/mini documentaries are available on the Library's YouTube channel and feature topics including traditional games and clothing, Blackfoot naming ceremonies, use of medicinal roots/plants, and the Jingle Dress Dance
- The Word On The Street featured Zoom sessions and discussions with

- Indigenous authors and artists including Faye Heavy Shield, Haley Heavy Shield, Amber Weasel Head, Jamie John-Kehewin, Sheena Potts, and Richard Van Camp
- collaboration with University of Lethbridge for a showing of *Gathering* featuring a Zoom Q & A with Alvin First Rider
- completed the translation portion of a Blackfoot Language signage project in consultation with Blackfoot speakers Norma Jean Russell, Lena Russell, and the late Keith (Keon) Weasel Head
- collaborated with the City of Lethbridge on Reconciliation Week; participated in Orange Shirt Day; participation in the Lethbridge Indigenous Sharing Network

Highlight Stories

Read On Adult Literacy & Learning:

- offered a cultural awareness class to City of Lethbridge staff
- presented information about Library services and programs to Alberta Works staff as well as ESL Services at Lethbridge College and both Family Centre locations
- expanded services to the Crossings Branch with staff working one day/week from that branch, and is building a collection of resources to be located there
- fostered ongoing relationships throughout our community with various community organizations and partners
- expanded its collection to include resources specific to the needs of the Low German Mennonite population

“I really miss coming into the library and seeing the staff. They are always so helpful. Looking for books online is just not the same.”

~Library Customer

Battling isolation in our community:

- library staff made customer care calls during our closures in order to connect with customers, help with online membership renewals, and provide information about online resources such as PressReader, Libby, OverDrive, and hoopla
- Connecting over Coffee, a virtual outreach program for seniors, connected seniors living in isolation to each other and the Library through read alouds and conversation
- our Books on the Move program saw Library materials including large print books, DVDs, and CDs delivered to 11 residential facilities throughout Lethbridge

2

020 was the first year we participated in the national First Nation Communities READ program. This annual reading program features the writing, illustrations, and publishing of First Nation, Métis, and Inuit authors and artists. Through the program we seek to promote the sharing and understanding of First Nation, Métis, and Inuit voices and experiences, and encourage family literacy and intergenerational information sharing.

T

he world watched as protests and demonstrations were held internationally in the wake of the death of George Floyd, with the Black Lives Matter movement at the forefront of debate. In the fall, the Lethbridge Public Library partnered with the City of Lethbridge Diversity and Inclusion Working Group to host two sessions of the *How to Be an Antiracist* book club. Participants met weekly for four weeks as they read through Ibram X. Kendi's book, discussed the text, and applied the themes and ideas to Canadian history and current events. The program was part of the Library's efforts to champion the principles of civil society, social justice and the democratic values of equality and inclusion.

STAFF STORY

I

spoke with one of our customers today. She was thrilled to get a call. She had been having a hard time with the COVID shutdown and was feeling particularly lonely. The call cheered her up and made my day too!



Lethbridge Public Library 2020 Report to the Community

22,398

People held a card at our Library,
and had access to more than
800,000 physical items.

696,284

Items were borrowed,
including **137,572** digital items.

11,991

Curbside Pick Up visits,
filled **92,188** holds and
864 Surprise Me grab bags.



244,000

Approximate visits to the Library (Main and Crossings Branches and Bookmobile), as well **512,538** visits to the Library's website.

846

Online programs were hosted, with **8,436** live stream viewers, and **29,826** recorded views.

3,700

Events and activities were hosted, in person and online, that attracted over **45,700** people.

We Are Meeting Community Needs

Libraries inspire learning, drive development, grow social capital, and create opportunities.

Throughout 2020, the staff at Lethbridge Public Library were inspired to rise to the challenges the COVID-19 pandemic presented, and met community needs through responsive library services.



Created and delivered innovative programs and services that enhance traditional library services:

- online program delivery including livestreaming storytimes and trivia nights on our Facebook and Instagram accounts, pre-recorded videos uploaded to our YouTube page, virtual author talks

- and educational sessions held via Zoom, and other online engagement program opportunities such as online escape rooms, book tournaments, and summer reading clubs
- Grab and Go programming that included Crafty Adults–At Home Edition and Holiday Craft Packs

for children

- Surprise Me grab bags for customers who need new material but leave the selection up to Library staff
- Curbside Pick Up service
- Cat Café, an opportunity for teens to play and cuddle with cats while also learning tips and tricks to manage stress

“I looked forward to receiving my letters each week from my young pen pal [in the Pen Pal Summer Program]. I loved the stories he told me, the pictures he drew for me, and the little crafts he sent in the envelope. It was lots of fun.”

~Library Customer

Created connections within our community:

- attended National Child Day celebrations
- in-person adult programs including: Author Talk with Dr. Jen Gunter, Banff Mountain Film Festival, In Stitches, Friday Night Films, Senior Café Chat, and partner programs including New Media Films, Cade Community Lectures, and Archaeology Society of Alberta meetings
- reinvented the Kids Summer Reading Club into the Pen Pal Summer Program where children were matched and connected via old-fashioned letter writing



Highlight Stories

2

2020 saw the launch of Lethbridge Public Library Grows: Seed Library, a program related to food sustainability in Lethbridge. It was also created to demonstrate the importance of land and natural plant life, as well as traditional medicines, in the Blackfoot culture. It further complemented a partner program with the University of Lethbridge that saw the screening of *Gather*, a film about Indigenous food sovereignty, as well as an Indigenous Knowledge Keeper Conversation about Blackfoot medicines. Over 90 people participated in the seed library and we handed out seeds to 50 different families in Lethbridge.

I

In 2020 we became home to two new collections. Our Adult International Collection contains materials in languages other than English that are most commonly spoken in our community. We currently have 202 items in seven different languages: French, Spanish, Dutch, German, Tagalog, Arabic, and Vietnamese. This is in addition to our French language collection. We also added the Anti-Racism Collection created by Lethbridge Public Library and the City of Lethbridge Diversity and Inclusion Working Group. It provides resources about anti-racism education, history, and perspective. We currently have 217 titles in the collection, and growing!



We Offer Access to Content and Ideas

Lethbridge Public Library provides access to content and ideas in a variety of forms, and encourages everyone in our community to participate.

eBooks, audiobooks, online magazines and newspapers, and our online digital learning resources were more popular than ever, and even more important in keeping our community connected to the Library in 2020!

- OverDrive/Libby
- hoopla
- PressReader
- Flipster
- TumbleBook Library
- Comics Plus
- Gale Courses
- Pronunciator
- SOLARO
- Creativebug – new for 2020

Many of our programs moved to online delivery to ensure members of our community were able to access and participate in them, and connect with the Library and each other:

- online storytime (Facebook)
- Dungeons & Dragons for Teens (Discord and Roll20)
- online trivia nights (Instagram and YouTube)
- author talks and Indigenous Conversations (Zoom and YouTube)
- online tutorials to help customers access digital services (website/pdf and YouTube)
- Read On Adult Literacy & Learning's services went online with tutors and students choosing the learning

platform most familiar to them—Zoom being the most popular. Those not comfortable with online learning used the phone

Bookmobile

- initiated a book bin delivery program to continue offering books to schools
- offered Curbside Pick Up service to communities throughout Lethbridge and Coalhurst that allowed customers to pick up holds, Surprise Me grab bags, and renew memberships

Lethbridge Little Libraries

- ongoing partnership with the Ability Resource Centre
- we continued to stock Little Lethbridge Libraries throughout our community with Library discards, so our community would continue to have access to physical books during our closure
- we also included children’s activities such as scavenger hunts, activity workbooks, coloring sheets and crayons, as well as information on our no fee memberships

“It felt great to know we weren’t totally disconnected [from] the library. Their efforts to keep us engaged through Curbside Pick Up, new additions to the eBook library, and virtual programs helped me feel a bit of normalcy again.”

~Library Customer

Highlight Stories

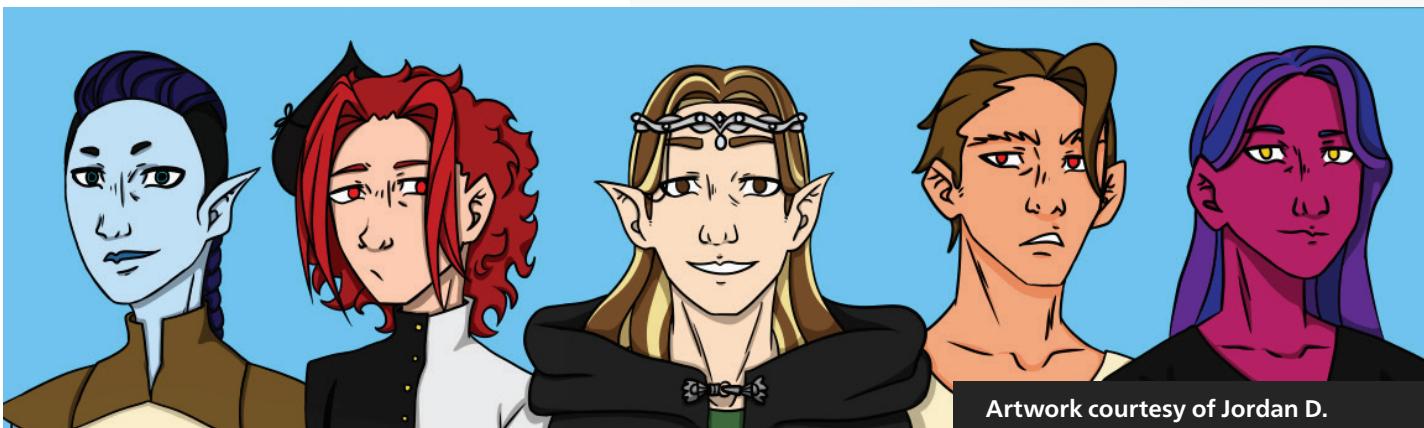
With the start of lockdown in March, everyone had time to catch up on their favourite TV shows. Streaming services became popular and well used – but what about those who didn’t use these services? We launched a collection of DVD Box Sets at the Crossings Branch. Each case held multiple seasons of a single TV show, ready for marathon viewing. Sets included favourites such as *The West Wing* and *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, and newer titles such as *Riverdale* and *Outlander*.

Creativebug: 220 customers signed up in the first 6 months of offering this online resource.

50 D&D sessions with 30 players and 2 DMs ran in 2020: friendships were forged, skills were acquired, and obstacles were overcome!

Bookmobile Book Bin Delivery Program: 23 classes, 9 schools, 780 books checked out.

From March–June 2020 Little Lethbridge Libraries were restocked 136 times with more than 3,000 items.



Artwork courtesy of Jordan D.

Thank You To Our Donors

Each year Lethbridge Public Library benefits from donations and support through a variety of partners, sponsors, and individual donors. These community-minded supporters are key to the Library's delivery of a number of programs, activities, and events. The Library recognizes individual donations through a personalized thank you, recognition in our Report to the Community, and official tax receipts. Thank you to our many donors and supporters who helped the Library deliver outstanding programs and services in 2020.





LethbridgePresents

discover your city

The Lethbridge Presents program, which allows Library customers to check out tickets or passes to local venues and events, is made possible through the generous support of our partners (each partner provides tickets or passes at no charge to the program). These partners helped us Connect YOU to community in 2020:

- City of Lethbridge arenas
- Escape from LA
- Fort Whoop Up
- Galt Museum & Archives
- Helen Schuler Nature Centre
- Movie Mill
- Nikka Yuko Japanese Garden
- Pass Powderkeg Ski Area
- Recreation Excellence Pools
- Southern Alberta Art Gallery
- Theatre Outré
- University of Lethbridge 1st Choice Savings Centre for Sport & Wellness
- University of Lethbridge Faculty of Fine Arts
- WordBridge
- VRKade



There are a number of sponsorship opportunities available for Lethbridge Public Library events, programs and spaces. In 2020 the following sponsors helped to make The Word On The Street a success:

- Allied Arts Council of Lethbridge
- B-93.3 and Country 95.5
- Canadian Children's Book Centre
- Cupper's Coffee & Tea
- CVS Midwest Tape and Hoopla
- Friends of the Lethbridge Public Library
- Global News Lethbridge
- Harper Collins Canada
- Lethbridge Herald
- Orca Publishing
- Penguin Random House Canada
- Raincoast Books
- Reconciliation Lethbridge
- Rocky Mountain Book Award
- Scholastic Canada
- Select People Solutions/ Teamworks Training
- United Library Services
- University of Lethbridge Bookstore
- University of Lethbridge French Language Centre

Thank You To Our Donors

Individual Donors

Many community-minded individuals and agencies also donate to the Lethbridge Public Library, helping to fund a variety programs, activities, events, and develop our collections. Thank you to these 2020 supporters:

- Joan Adams
- Alberta Association for Multicultural Education
- Anonymous
- Anonymous
- Anonymous
- Anonymous
- Anonymous
- Anonymous
- Anonymous
- Lorelei Bachman
- Margaret Blais
- Margo Carbert
- Larissa Collier
- Belinda Crowson
- Skye Curtis
- Michael Doughty
- Rob Fairfield
- Elizabeth Geremia
- Lorelei Harasem
- Chris Hibbard
- Nadia Hussain
- Sylvia Ananaba Kamara
- Cheryl Knight
- Sharon Lawson
- Camara Lerner
- Joan McNeil
- Tony Pargeter
- Tris Pargeter
- Chelsea Sherbut
- Janice Shigemi
- David Zaluski
- Toni Zobell

Granting Agencies

Granting agencies help make our events, activities and programs possible. Thank you to these 2020 granting agencies:

- Access Copyright Foundation
- Alberta Foundation for the Arts
- Canadian Heritage
- City of Lethbridge – Heart of Our City





Vic Mensch Chair

The Friends of Lethbridge Public Library is an organization that supports the Library through advocacy and fundraising. Through fundraising activities held throughout the year, we are able to provide funding for extra projects. The objectives of the Friends of the Lethbridge Public Library are:

- to publicize and promote library services and advocate the Library's mission.
- to aid in providing funds to meet special library needs or to benefit library services.

Without our dedicated volunteers, none of the above would be possible.

2020 was an unusual year for the Friends of the Lethbridge Public Library. With the global COVID-19 pandemic that saw the closure of the Library in March, we were unable to carry out many of our plans and our sources of

revenue stalled. Once the restrictions were loosened somewhat, we were able to access Library sites, but were unable to engage our programs.

The Booktique sites were available at the beginning of 2020, but since the initial March closure, have not been operational. Our spring and winter book sales were also cancelled.

We were; however, able to support the following Library initiatives in 2020:

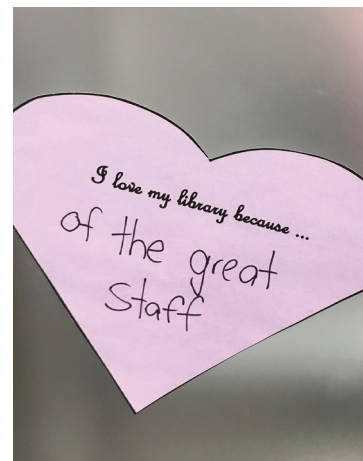
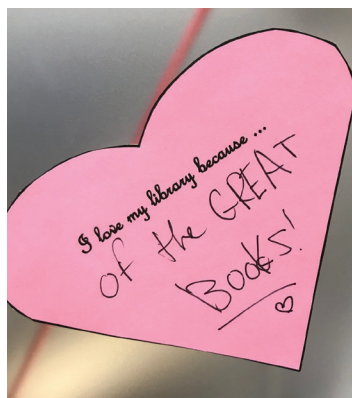
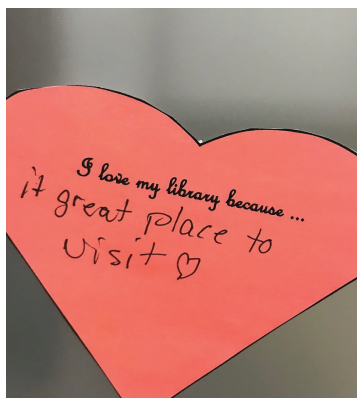
- The Library ran The Word On The Street in September virtually, and the Friends acted as the title sponsor for the event.
- We supported the Lethbridge Presents program while there was opportunity.

We made a \$100,000 commitment to facilitate improvements to the Children's area of the Crossings Branch as well as some equipment, but these projects have been put on hold.

The Friends' support is key to providing value-added programming and services at the Library, and is a great volunteer opportunity. We appreciate our volunteers immensely; however, we had to limit volunteer participation for much of 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. While many of our projects are on hold for now, rest assured, as a board we are continuing to meet and plan for activities so that we will be ready to work once we are able to proceed.

We sincerely thank all our board members and volunteers for their service during the past year, and were very sad to lose Karran Thorpe and Leslie Vaala to retirement. They willingly dedicated 13 years of volunteer services to the Library and Friends. We wish them well.

You can learn more about what the Friends do at: lethlibfriends.ca.

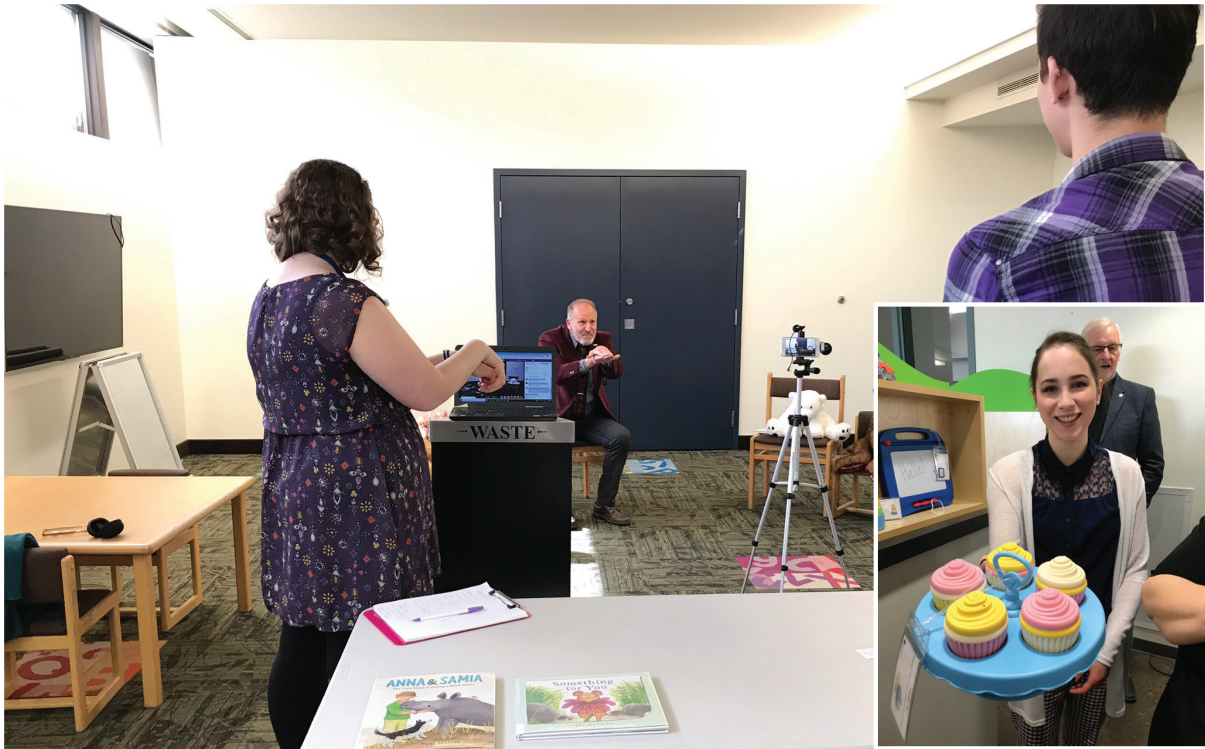




“I want to thank all of you for going far beyond that extra mile during these challenging times. Reading has always been important to me, but has become a lifeline as I am confined to my house day after day and now month after month.”

~Library Customer

**"I love our Lethbridge Public Library. Your staff are wonderful. During Covid you have done unique things to keep us connected to resources. You answered my email questions quickly. Thank you for curb side pick up and your cheery attitude and faces even covered with a mask."
~Library Customer**





@lethlib



facebook.com/
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@lethlib

Main Branch
810 5 Ave. S.
403.380.7310

The Crossings Branch
255 Britannia Blvd. W.
403.320.4037

Bookmobile
403.330.4775

www.lethlib.ca
questions@lethlib.ca

The Lethbridge Public Library acknowledges that we are gathered on the lands of the Blackfoot people of the Canadian Plains and pays respect to the Blackfoot people past, present and future while recognizing and respecting their cultural heritage, beliefs and relationship to the land. The City of Lethbridge is also home to the Métis Nation of Alberta, Region III.