

Chief Librarian's Report

2024 was a year of change and growth at Prince Rupert Library, with some new additions to our Board and the retirement of long time Chief Librarian Joe Zelwietro. We also saw some changes in staffing with a new Technical Assistant who brings a breadth of knowledge to our team, some new faces at the Circulation Desk, and two new exceptional Pages.

Our Strategic Plan, which was passed in January 2024, was put into action, with more outreach and an increased emphasis on community involvement. With the plan as a guide, and help from the province's COVID Recovery Enhancement Grant funding, as well as our annual funding from the City of Prince Rupert, Province of British Columbia, and North Coast Regional District, we've developed some new and exciting initiatives while maintaining the programs, collections, and services that the community relies on.



Our Children's programming continued to run with increased involvement. Baby Time Rhymes and Create & Make remained popular in addition to our already existing preschooler programs, and expanded the range of ages we cater to. Other in-house programming, like our weekly Knitters Group, Writing & Memoir seminars, and Monthly Book Club, contributed to the dynamic hustle and bustle of the Library. Our room bookings remained very full, as the need for affordable space to gather and host private meetings and events continues to be in incredibly high demand for an array of community groups in the Prince Rupert area. This was also reflected in increased bookings for study space and exam invigilation services.

We hosted a number of exciting events in 2024, like the springtime Seed Exchange, summer Puppet Show, a number of guest author readings, and the launch of Enhanced Mobility Kits, as well as a Canada Reads Watch Party, numerous school tours, annual Book Sale in February, a CICK Radio podcasting workshop in March, and our Summer Reading Club. Closer to the end of the year, we initiated a new technology program, Tech Time with Tye, offering group and one on one sessions in-house to help participants with technology questions, be it setting up an email, safety and security online, or learning to use Libby to access reading materials in digital formats.

Our focus on collections also expanded, with the development of a new and exciting Board Game collection, a concerted effort to continue the development of the Lisa Latimer Truth & Reconciliation Collection, and our acquisition through collaboration with Metlakatla (both BC and Alaska) and Libraries & Archives Canada of the digitized William Duncan Fonds, an incredibly valuable historical resource. This project was initiated in 2023 and funded by a portion of the Province's COVID Enhancement Grant.

Some other new digital resources, like Kanopy Film streaming and access to CELA services were also added in 2024, which align with goals to improve accessibility and affordability and are a response to a large increase in DVD borrowing (900 more than 2023). Our collections continue to grow and adapt in tandem with community needs and interests, and we placed a particular focus on diversifying, modernizing, and enhancing collections that reflect equity and inclusion, aligning with Strategic Plan goals and library core values around intellectual freedom.

Increasing our presence at community events and enhancing connections was another big focus, and is something we plan to carry forward in the coming year. Library staff and Board members travelled to Kitimat in September to take part in the Northwest Library Federation's bi-annual conference, providing a fantastic learning and networking opportunity. A key takeaway from professional development opportunities such as these remind us that even as a public library with a unique and isolated geography, the many successes of the 2024 year reflect the vibrant community we operate in: Prince Rupert, Port Edward, Dodge Cove, Kitkatla, Metlakatla, Lax Kw'alaams, Hartley Bay, and Oona River, all within the broader Northwest Library Federation system.

Mercedes Taylor, Acting Chief Librarian



Board Chair Report

In 2024 the library board worked to support the acting chief librarian as we move forward in making the library truly representative of our patrons and our city. We are grateful to Mercedes Taylor, the Acting Chief Librarian for stepping in to fill this role, as well as all of the library staff for their flexibility and dedication to their work and to the community.

This year, the library has worked closely with many community organizations, the Northwest Library Federation, and other groups to bring forward more programming opportunities, presentations, conferences, and community supports than we have been able to put on in the past. Our board and library staff are continuing to connect with local Indigenous nations and communities, building partnerships and supports for our patrons. There are plans to include more Sm'algyax signage for the library to further the library's goals of decolonizing the space and making further steps towards reconciliatory action.

Our Library Board has been working more closely with library staff than we have before, and has several strong new trustee voices sharing ideas back and forth with library staff.

The board is looking forward to the coming year, and to carrying this positive momentum forward.

Brendan Turner, Chair of the Board

Library Staff and Trustees

Trustees

Jolie Amante
Ronald Braun
Richard Butler
Carolina deRyk. Vice Chair
Teri Forester, City Council

Kate Lyon
Tiffany Prystay
Nina Purewal
Brendan Turner, Board Chair

Staff

Joe Zelwietro* - Chief Librarian

Mercedes Taylor - Acting Chief Librarian

Katherine Arendt - Acting Deputy Librarian

Lou Allison - Inter-Library Loan

Beth Dimond - Children's Programs

William McDuff - Cataloguing

Samantha Weir - Circulation

Kaitlyn Frolek* - IT

Tye Watson - IT

Rob Hooft - Part Time

Tim MacDonald - Casual

Lana Richardson - Casual

Kasia Helin - Page Aiden Lewis - Page Alexis Martin* - Page Kiri Orton - Page



^{*}Former Staff

Library Supporters in 2024

Shernaz Bhesania
Ian Bell & Susan Crowley
Janet Currie
Lynne Edwards
Deanna Hembroff
Victor Johnston
Justin LeFroy

Carol Manning
Helen Moore
Renata Thibodeau
James Toft
Andrea Wilmot
Ellen Witherly

Chances Casino
DP World
Macro Properties

We also appreciate the annual funding from the City of Prince Rupert, Province of British Columbia, and the North Coast Regional District. It is through your generosity that we are able to purchase new items, replace damaged items, and use these funds to purchase needed equipment for services and programs.

You are appreciated.

Thank Soul



Circulation **Statistics** 2024

53,979

Items borrowed from the library

3,307

Prince Rupert Library items borrowed from other libraries

4,096

Computer users

43,045

Visitors to the library (an increase of 4300 from 2023)

635

Scans and Faxes for community members

1587

Adults participating in library programs or events

1485

Children participating in library programs and events

437

New Library Members

10,289

Total Members