

Director's Report June 2024

1. Operational Highlights

Community Volunteer Income Tax Program (CVITP)

CVITP clinics support individuals with modest incomes file their tax returns, ensuring that they receive government benefits and entitlements. This year, volunteers filed 480 returns that resulted in \$464,392 in tax refunds and \$1,202,618 in benefits such as the Child Tax Benefit and the Climate Action Incentive. For some residents, this money may impact food insecurity and housing. Special efforts were made by Program Co-ordinator Nancy Kuhl this year to recruit new volunteers so that BCPL could continue offering the program at the Chesley, Port Elgin, Kincardine, and Walkerton Branches.

BCPL, with Jill Umbach from the Bruce Grey Poverty Task Force/United Way Bruce Grey, and Shannon Petryk from Bruce County Human Services, will co-host a wrap-up and thank you lunch for all coordinators and volunteers in Grey and Bruce at the Walkerton Water Centre on June 25. Director Brooke McLean and Program Coordinator Nancy Kuhl will share BCPL's successful volunteer recruitment and impact numbers.

Emergency Preparedness

Bruce County Public Library partnered with Bruce County's Community Emergency Management Coordinator and the Canadian Red Cross to offer Emergency Preparedness workshops in each Home Service Area. These sessions provided vital information on how to plan for an extended emergency including what items to have available. The Lion's Head branch had the highest attendance, with 17 adults participating.



United Way Colouring Contest

Building on the success of last year's partnership, the United Way again offered a colouring contest in libraries through Bruce and Grey County. This activity helps to increase awareness of the services provided by the United Way. Contest winners received a container full of Marvel swag and activities.



Outreach Events

Branch staff have been very busy in May and June with several classroom and school visits. BCPL staff attended Kindergarten Orientation/Registration at Paisley Central School, Arran-Tara Elementary, Mary Immaculate Catholic School in Chepstow,

Director Brooke McLean and Branch Supervisor Michaela Posthumus attended Kincardine's Multicultural Festival and shared information about library collections, services, and technology with 114 community members. This welcoming event offers a wonderful opportunity to connect with residents who may not be familiar with the library.



Program Coordinator Nancy Kuhl and Summer Outreach Student Nathan Hill attended the Arran-Elderslie Family Fun Day in Chesley on Saturday, June 8. They promoted library services and the Summer Reading Club to 169 attendees.

The Bookmobile had busy weekends at the Paisley Volkswagenfest and Walkerton Touch-a-Truck with 109 and 288 visitors respectively. Staff engaged with people of all ages who borrowed books, played giant Connect Four, and learned about the Summer Ready Club and other events.



The Bookmobile will attend the following upcoming events:

- June 15- Walkerton Summer Reading Club Kick-Off
- June 22- Kincardine Pride Parade
- June 29- Lion's Head Canada Day Parade

2. Facilities

Paisley Branch

Staff from BCPL and Arran-Elderslie continue to work together on relocating the Paisley Branch. Supported by municipal staff, we were able to begin shelving installation on June 10. Public computer stations have been delivered, and furniture is scheduled to arrive the week of June 17. It is still unknown when the elevator will be inspected and approved for public use. Once this date is determined, BCPL staff will relocate the collection and plan for a grand reopening. We hope this can coincide with Paisley's 150th anniversary celebrations on July 13.

Teeswater Branch

Beautiful new flooring was installed in the staff area of the Teeswater Branch. We appreciate the support of County Facilities staff in relocating the furniture.



3. Administration

Program Review Survey

BCPL received 665 responses to our program survey. The following table shows that most respondents were over 65 years old, with those 45-64 years comprising the next largest group of respondents.

Age	Percent of Respondents
Adult on behalf of a child	6%
13-18 years	2.4%
19-29 years	5%
30-44 years	21.5%
45-64 years	29%
65+	38%

Program Suggestions

Respondents identified that they were interested in traditional library program offerings as well as opportunities for self-improvement and development. Preferences included:

- author visits, book clubs, and writing groups.
- nature, environmental programs, and gardening.
- creative classes and workshops.
- makerspace equipment and activities.

There were mixed opinions on virtual and in-person programs, with some indicating a strong preference for in-branch programs while others were interested in virtual programs. Some noted that hybrid programs offered more flexibility for attendance.

Many respondents shared thoughts on how BCPL could improve engagement with residents. The most frequent suggestions included:

- Offering programs for babies and toddlers.
- Networking opportunities for seniors.
- Inclusive and diverse programming to appeal to a wide range of individuals.

Submitted by Brooke McLean, Library Director/CEO



- Provide an avenue for residents to share their skills, knowledge, and experience.
- Continuing to use social media and branch calendars. Some were unaware of our eNewsletter.

Accessibility and Convenience

Accessibility and convenience of library hours and programs was a recurring theme. Respondents noted that many branches have limited or no evening hours, making it difficult for those who work during the week to utilize the branch. Similarly, there was interest in having some adult programming in the evening or on weekends to meet the needs of those who can't attend during regular working hours. Ensuring that spaces are physically accessible and welcoming was also highlighted.

Staff

Several comments praised the knowledge, friendliness, and helpfulness of library staff.

"I would just like to say how much I appreciate our library and the librarians who work there. Always helpful."

"The local library is a great asset to the community and I'm impressed with how the Bruce County Library system is run. Extra informative programming would be beneficial to the community."

"The librarians are all very helpful, personable, and provide good assistance."

"This is a wonderful resource in a small community. Lots of variety offered and accessible for everyone. Staff are friendly, knowledgeable, and welcoming."

Next steps

Staff are reviewing responses from their Home Service Area to identify opportunities to revitalize programming, including:

- How evening and/or weekend programming could be supported.
- Expanding cultural celebrations to include adult programming.
- Finding outdoor or alternative space to host larger programs.
- Working with local experts to share their knowledge and skill sets.
- Registering existing library patrons for the eNewsletter so that they get the information they need.