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[How are you reaching the hard-to-reach youth and families during the pandemic? What are some effective strategies for connecting and collaborating with local primary and secondary teachers?](#_prcotg2jvkge)

* Reading Link Challenge - changed but kids are still enjoying
* Teachers are so overwhelmed, not as much connection as we would like but we understand! NVDPL Capilano connecting with local indigenous school.
* Surrey library working with schools to make sure students have library cards. Emailed teachers and made connections that way around Teen Summer Adventure. Reading link challenge with elementary schools is going well.
* Visiting Foodbank, indigenous community partner outdoor events, lending devices to youth during the pandemic
* Story Walk or Trail Tale activities
* Ready Set Learn collaboration with teachers and preschooleres
* Share about library contests, activities etc - share to parents through teachers
* Reading Link Challenge - engagement seems more than usual, feels like students are looking for something “normal”, has been great to get back in the classrooms virtually and interact with students
* Have been able to welcome small school groups into the library for class visits, which has been a great way to connect

[Is anyone doing/considering outdoor programming? Summer Reading Club plans?](#_izzwvka9fh7g)

* “Hula hoop method” for extremely limited number outdoor programming
* Conscientious storytelling - pausing when little ones have moved away from families/space
* hybrid method of livestreaming + limited number in person
* Run teen programs twice with small groups of tekidsbens
* Scavenger hunts, with puzzles to solve along the way
* Escape room in the library, following safety protocols
* Using the online registration option and if people go into a local branch they can register at the counter. Not doing in person registration.
* Work with the teachers and find the kids that will benefit the most from having a print version of materials and give them those resources.
* Still figuring out how to host in person while maintaining safety, open and curious. There’s no right answers right now!
* Shifting from storytime in the park to a drive through activity with online component
* Hybrid opportunities? Space is large and open.
* FVRL was hoping to do a festival style event with a community table, sidewalk chalk, other simple activities,
* FVRL is promoting their bat packs!
* FVRL mostly virtual programs, bought beanstack which is a reading challenge software
* Outreach is still happening
* Partnering with VanDusen Gardens to offer an outdoor program for teens. They already have covid-safety protocols in place!
* Outdoor scavenger hunt on a pop-culture theme like Pokemon (VPL did this last year)
* Generating a basic idea /template of what we might be able to do if circumstances change and outdoor programming is possible, but largely planning for online programs
* Geotourist is a great smart phone app to use to pre-record storytime segments that can then be accessed at specific geographical locations -- like a park!
* Richmond PL has been doing story time in park; limited to 20 families, register ahead; everyone spaced apart, have staff at front with mics so no yelling; weekdays, one per month
  + Question of ensuring safety when kids like to move around: at RPL story times, caregivers responsible; librarian will stop if they have to do a reminder to stay distanced
  + Often use ‘Big Books’ so kids can see from farther away; libraries could consider projecting books on screen, or having copies for each family to follow along
* Storywalks at Sechelt Public Library
  + some libraries have storywalks lead by staff, Sechelt PL leaves storywalk materials out all week so people can follow at own pace
  + funding for materials provided by local literacy coalition (need two copies of each book, etc.)
  + would normally need special permission to leave things out, but have an agreement with a local park to do so
  + take two copies of books and cut out all pages, laminate and put up along storywalk in order, so people read pages as they go along
  + Did one per day for literacy week, but now do monthly (leave up for a week, longer can get rain issues and vandalism issues)
  + Halloween story walks are fun!
* Some libraries have activity packs so kids and caregivers can get outside in unstructured way

[What has been the most surprising positive/silver lining of the past year, YS Programming-wise?](#_6exbbwqhshiy)

* Have become more nimble. Discovered we have great resilience. Will be able to adapt to unexpected events better in the future.
* Connections with other library systems can be so powerful. Hoping to maintain that after pandemic. The support can be powerful.
* Have discovered a whole new way to serve. A way to reach people we haven’t been reaching before. Will need to decide what to keep and what to leave behind after pandemic, because we don’t want to burn staff out.
* Been able to do programs could have never done before (e.g., live musicians from afar - Fred Penner!). Will continue to be virtual for a number of events (big author events, at least one storytime a week, etc).
* Being able to reassess values -> being able to use to be flexible
* Opportunity to develop stronger relationships between our staff, work together and learn from each other more, in the virtual format, figuring out how to deliver kids programs together (large geographically distant system)
* Backburner projects - at last! E.g. Storytelling Kits for lending.
* Book club successes - easier for kids to attend, better attendance and participation
* Kids able to connect with library staff independently
* Had fun making videos and sharing to a wider audience - and also discovered how much I love in person programming for personal connection.
* Reading Link has been great (thanks FVRL).
* Reading Buddies has been amazing! Having the buddy pairs in their own break out rooms keeps it distraction-free and they are super engaged with each other! It’s more convenient for teens and families
* Great opportunity to strengthen partnerships with community partners, other libraries, and coworkers in other parts of the organization that we wouldn’t normally get to work with
* Team has become more resilient and open to trying things knowing they might fail
* Able to reach more people virtually - getting authors from across the country for programs
* Seeing pets during video programs
* Knowing how much we’re needed and how much we were missed when doors were closed; reminder we’re doing something important
* Being able to see other colleagues do story times online
* Seeing patrons learn how to use online tools and be proud of learning new skills
* Having to pivot quickly helps us be able to learn and grow and make connections
* We’re all learning to break out of what we always thought we were ‘supposed’ to do or what libraries ‘should’ provide; realizing we can keep doing more virtual programming and reach more people; breaking patterns
* Have met many people online whom we wouldn’t have gotten to meet in ‘real life’

[What is something you’ve learned from working during covid that you want to take with you when things “return to normal”?](#_2ijwkflj9ixq)

* Setting boundaries; physically and space
* Heart-based approach and keeping empathy first
  + And learning how to do both
* The potential to keep some virtual options open, ie discord, zoom
* Higher rates of participation as a result of virtual options - provides teens with more time to participate after school
* Accessibility - we’ve had feedback that some parents couldn’t bring their children to the library due to mobility/accessibility reasons but virtual programs enabled them to attend
* You can invite more people to participate in virtual events, whereas in person you’re more limited in how many people can register
* Working to ‘protect ourselves’ from burn out
* Being online has facilitated meeting many different individuals
* Easier to have staff meeting virtually
* Realize how much energy we draw from in person connections
* Discovered many of the barriers to change are imaginary - right now there is no ‘how we’ve always done it’ and it’s easier to make dramatic progress.
* Experiencing new audiences - trying out programs for adults for instance
* Teen participation virtually is higher, so clearly the virtual environment is meeting needs.
* Using recorded online programs to review your work and remember how you did something
* Capacity - just because you can do something doesn’t mean you have to; quality over quantity of programming
* Keeping some working from home
* Clearly setting boundaries with patrons (especially as a new library worker)
* Taking more of a heart first approach in designing programs, working with patrons in challenging situations, etc; leading with empathy

[What can we do to improve our practices to be more accessible - and low barrier as possible?](#_je679dl16wl)

* Empathy first
* Removing fines has been huge to remove barriers
* Eliminating the transportation and logistical barriers to attending in person
* Removing fines has been a wonderful step towards removing barriers
* When we return to normal would like to consider a hybrid approach to programming so that in person and virtual offerings can continue
* empathy, care, heart-first service
* Going fine free (may not have gotten there so quickly without pandemic)
* Being able to know what’s at core and really important about library values or about rules and regulations - using this to respond in flexible way to situations

[I am interested in how other libraries are making justice equity and diversity part of what they do](#_g21rpkfleawy)

* Teen voices have a good deal of power and help us move in the right direction.
* FVRL has picture book display. The rule is that it has kids of colour, regardless of theme, etc. Currently also have an #OwnVoices display. Try to be intersectional. Have been popular, even though community is fairly conservative.
* VPL has created new #OwnVoices booklists (early years is out, middle years and teen are pending).
* Diana Marshall at FVRL sends out intriguing emails asking about email signatures, etc. She gathers the answers and then sends out the responses. Gradual, persistent voicing of needs makes change.
* Can be difficult when there is a group who is voicing their needs and another group that is not listening. Try to encourage and assure that change will come as we work towards it.
* Enabling the ability to include a person’s chosen name in their account, if it does not match ID. Bigger systems doing this helps to provide pressure and example for other systems.
* Incorporating EDI lens into all our professional development workshops, like storytime, readers advisory
* Big learning curve to learn how to incorporate more culturally diverse titles into storytime - want to do so sensitively!
* Connecting with partners and resources - like North Shore Multicultural Society - training - still lots of room for growth
* Invite guest speaker from multicultural resource institutions - even in virtual storytimes
* Consultation with local Indigenous communities, invite their input into our work. Takes more time.
* Incorporating different kinds of picture books into storytimes to consciously represent diversity
* Our teens have helped guide us when it comes to diversity and social justice
* Strategic priority of our organization to make inclusivity visible
* Diversifying our recommended book lists

[What does everyone do to keep fresh and not burn out ?](#_2jms03gb3e2)

* Support system
* Remembering that it’s okay to be not okay - what are you feeling right now - what have you done the past that has worked in the past (tea/running - searching for those little joys)
* Prioritization; identify what’s essential and focus on one thing at a time
* Snuggle time with pets to recover
* Daily SCRUM meetings where everyone working is required to attend help everyone stay up to date and connected making more opportunities to support each other; acknowledging the personal effects of covid
* Actually taking your breaks when working from home - if possible getting outside at least once a day
* Acknowledging the emotional labour of our work - recognizing that we don’t have to be “on” all the time
* Support from systems and supervisors, people checking in; support can differ at different library locations
* Support systems are important; burnout always was a thing in libraries, maybe we can take coping strategies forward
* Can be difficult to connect as casual employee who doesn’t know people as well, but also has been easier to connect virtually lately
* Knowing it’s ok not to be ok; when not in good place, thinking how are you feeling now, when else have you felt that way, what did you do to cope before that you could use now; knowing “little joys” won’t make everything ok but will help

[What are your best places to search for programming ideas/inspiration?](#_ser8mf5qbch)

* Follow blogs(Storytime Underground),, social media accounts (ALA ThinkTank FB)
* Recycling ideas from what you’ve done already, but reinvent and re-do it
  + Rewriting programs to virtual programs
* For SRC need to offer 1 new thing every week
* Maybe you need to “unprogramming” and get out of the mentality - take naps :P
* Harvest ideas from your regular participants - get them to “design” the summer programs
* Reflective programming - what they like/didn’t like at the end of the program to get ideas - informal ways to gather ideas
* JBrary, Toolshed
* More available on the Internet right now just because of COVID, virtual working environ right now

[What's one thing that would make you feel more connected to other youth service staff across the province?](#_k1eqjjdffwjf)

* Collaborative projects that people across the province can work on together
* Having a directory of youth service staff across the province in addition to ListServs
* ListServs ListServs ListServs
* Low key bookclub - lower stakes sharing of resources - books connected to movies
* Connect with staff/ informally outside of work
* Shared study time with mics off
* Easier way to find who’s where doing what! Directory?
* Listserv does a good job already
* Groups outside work such as low-stakes book clubs (YAACS student chapter at UBC has started this - emphasis on low key and low pressure)
* Staff facebook group can be a way to connect outside work (informal spaces)
* At university, have things like clubs and quiet study (students on video call all muted doing work together); accountability and company; could do this for workplaces

[How are you assessing the impact of your programs and services during COVID?](#_cofaei20c8wb)

* For middle years programming, received special grant money so did online survey after program so could report back to Foundation. Asked about programming that they wanted to see, did it make them feel better, did they feel connected, what were their favourite parts of the program, what are the best times to run programs. Have used that info to plan. Used Simple Survey.
* Been doing a lot of virtual school tours and then follow up with informal email to teachers afterwards. Get suggestions and also simple appreciation. Been also recording numbers as to how many attend what.
* Been discussion about how important foot count actually is, especially in context of SRC. The aim is to encourage reading, the joy of reading, engaging with the library.
* Big appreciation to BC SRC for providing online registration. FVRL is planning to use Bean Stack. It will be interesting to see if it tracks engagement over summer a bit better (i.e., track those who fizzle out at some point during the summer) than paper calendars.

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