

## Okanagan Regional Library on the Westside

The **Westbank Branch** library location has long served the West Kelowna community. In February this year, we opened ORL's newest location, **Westside Learning Lab** on Westbank First Nation land with the goal of expanding service and offerings in the westside (including surrounding fast-growing West Kelowna neighbourhoods: Lakeview Heights & West Kelowna Estates/Rose Valley).

### AT OUR LOCATIONS IN THE WESTSIDE, THE COMMUNITY...

#### **Use and borrows library materials (books, dvds, cds, magazines)**

- 172,758 items checked out of the library so far this year\*
  - In 2018: 225,109
  - In 2017: 236,495

#### **Visits our space as a place to find information, learn and attend a program, meet with others and access material and technology**

- 85,119 people visited the library so far this year\*
  - In 2018: 106,642
  - In 2017: 111,794
- Our Westbank Branch is open 49 hours a week to the public including an evening and Saturdays.
- Our Westside Learning Lab is open 35 hours a week to the public including three evenings and Saturdays.

#### **Attends our programs (includes story times, after-school programs, community meet-ups, classes and workshops)**

- We offered 464 programs so far this year\*
  - In 2018: 377
  - In 2017: 333
- 6,938 people have attended a library program so far this year\*
  - In 2018: 7,131
  - In 2017: 9,171
- Every, we run Summer Reading Club for school aged children to encourage reading all summer long. This year was record breaking. 528 kids signed up for the reading challenge and 208 kids received medals for completing their reading log at the end of the summer. Total attendance at the SRC programs we ran throughout July and August was 1,441.

#### **Uses our makerspace at the Westside Learning Lab\*\***

- We've delivered 55 maker workshops/classes
- 204 bookings have been made of our maker stations (including our 3D printer, Cricut material cutter, audio recording booth, digital media computer) and our digitization stations

*\*Statistics for this year so far was calculated from Jan 1, 2019 to September 30, 2019*

*\*\*Statistics from the Learning Lab was calculated from Feb 23, 2019 to August 30, 2019*

## PATRON STORIES & HIGHLIGHTS 2018-19

### **Community Story: The Library & Westbank United Church Community Lunch**

For five months, the library visited the community lunch biweekly where we brought a selection of free (donated) books and magazines, crosswords and puzzles print-outs, and offered library card sign up. In this time, we had many interactions with the lunch guests including answering reference questions and providing readers advisory. We cultivated relationships with the guests whom some we know by name and some who would call out to us as “the library” when they saw us. We also built relationships with the volunteers and different community outreach workers who also provide services to the guests. This was a particularly meaningful outreach effort for us because we were able to extend our presence in the community by sharing a meal and being present to people who have often been overlooked or have experienced barriers or negative interactions inside our library branches. This has laid the groundwork for us in working with shelter society and Brown Road Interim Housing.

### **Community Story: The Library & the Westside Youth Centre**

Over the summer, the library made biweekly visits to the Westside Youth Centre where we brought activities and makerspace technology to engage the teens. At our first visit, the youth refused to speak with us and shouted for others to stay away from the table we had set up. Each visit, we adjusted in order to overcome challenges and create a warm approachable presence. Our staff continued to be consistent, friendly, and engaged with what we were offering. By our fourth visit, we made a breakthrough when a few teens joined us to learn to make vinyl stickers and browsed our giveaway books. We started to establish a positive reputation with the youth and by our last summer visit, the youth coordinator contacted us to say the teens were asking when we would be back and that they had projects in mind for our maker equipment. Together with the youth, one of the projects we worked on was commemorative vinyl decals designed in memory of a local teen they knew in the community who passed away recently. Fostering a relationship and building trust with the youth at the centre was not easy or quick but was incredibly rewarding after months of regular visits.

### **At the Lab: Library patron pursuing 3D modeling and design as a passion and career goal**

A young teen patron with a passion for creating model homes and a dream to pursue architecture, took a class at our Westside Learning Lab. He came with prior knowledge of 3D design with the application Tinkercad but needed support in how to 3D print. Our staff worked with him one-on-one during his first independent booking of the 3D Printer Station to support his understanding and lend an opinion for the settings needed. The patron said that his school had one printer but was only for use within a teacher’s course. Having access to one at the library he can freely approach was exactly what he was hoping for.

This patron returned to our library over several more visits where he was able to work independently as he mastered his skills and excitedly talked “shop” with our staff. The final product for his 3D printed architectural model turned out. This patron’s story demonstrates the value of the library in connecting our community members (of all ages) with access to technology (such as 3D printing) that sparks learning, creativity and innovation.

### **Comments about our Westside Learning Lab:**

“I want to live here!” “This is so good for our community.” “I love this space.” “Thank you so much for the use of the Learning Lab yesterday. We were able to digitize our slides and photos. This is a very exciting community asset.”

## CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WEST KELOWNA

- Library staff and patrons greatly appreciate the community safety and security measures the City has put into place for Westbank center including downtown patrol and the by-law officers. Our staff can rely on downtown patrol to aid in incidents and help defuse situations.
- We are concerned about the uncertainty of an emergency winter shelter this year. Without an emergency shelter, we will likely see more challenges in the branch this cold season such as sleeping, patrons who refusing to leave during closing time, and patrons using the space inappropriately because they have nowhere else to go to meet their needs.
- Looking ahead, a goal for our library in the Westside is to continue to extend our presence and services outside of our walls – reaching community members across the city. Currently underway are library programs/outreach at the Brown Road Interim Transitional Housing facility and the West Kelowna Pathways centre. In the spring, we will explore new ways of engagement at the Westside Youth Centre and will continue to work with the Westside Seniors Network at their programs. We are also forging new connections with Mount Bouchiere Secondary and our makerspace through class visits and programs.