



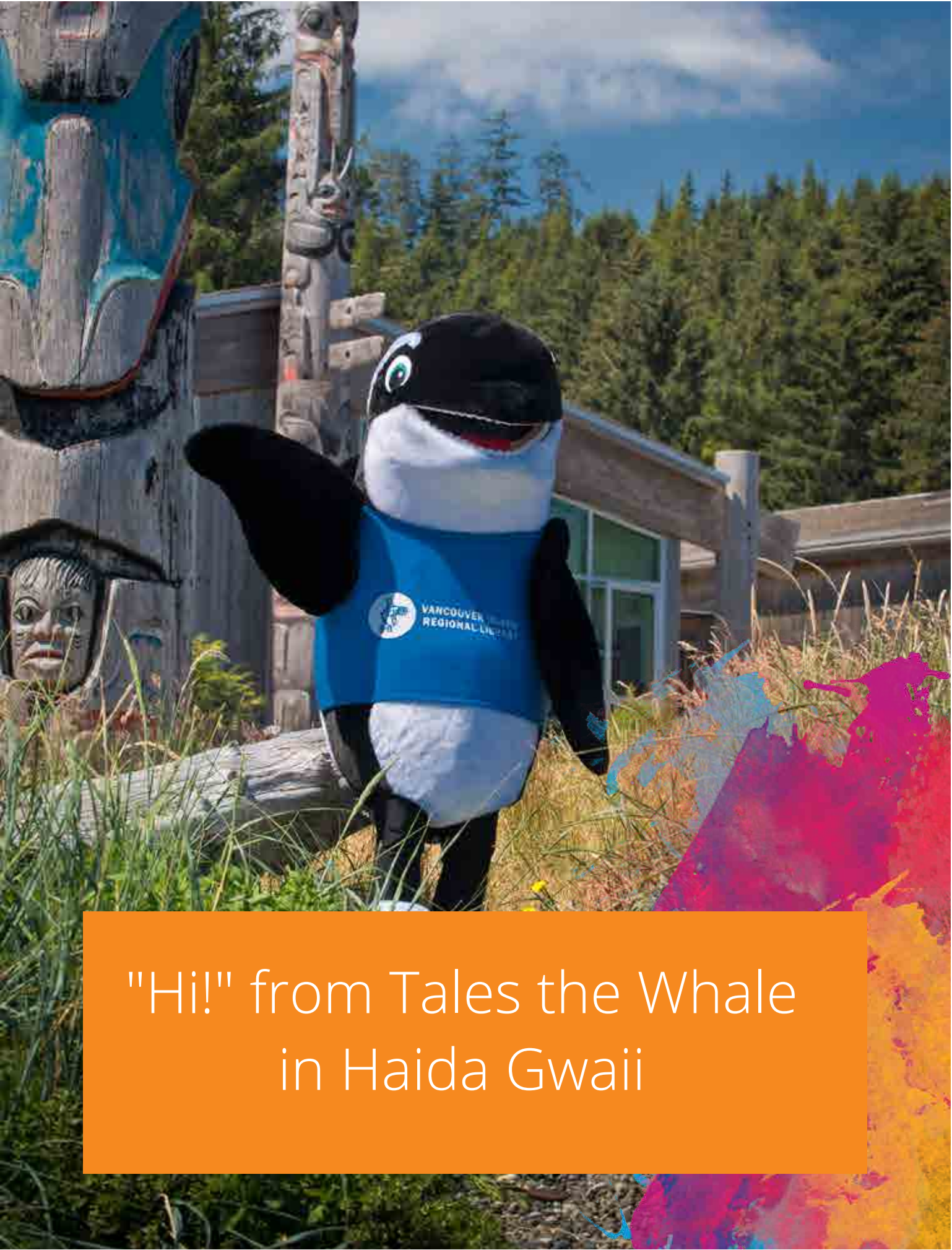
ANNUAL REPORT 2015



MOVING TOWARD SUSTAINABILITY

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From the Chair



Bruce Jolliffe

Chair, Board of Trustees

In today's environment of constant change, never has there been more demand for a focused and committed Board.

I believe that the dedication and governance demonstrated by our 38-member Board has brought Vancouver Island Regional Library (VIRL) closer to operational **sustainability** and to fulfilling its mission as an organization.

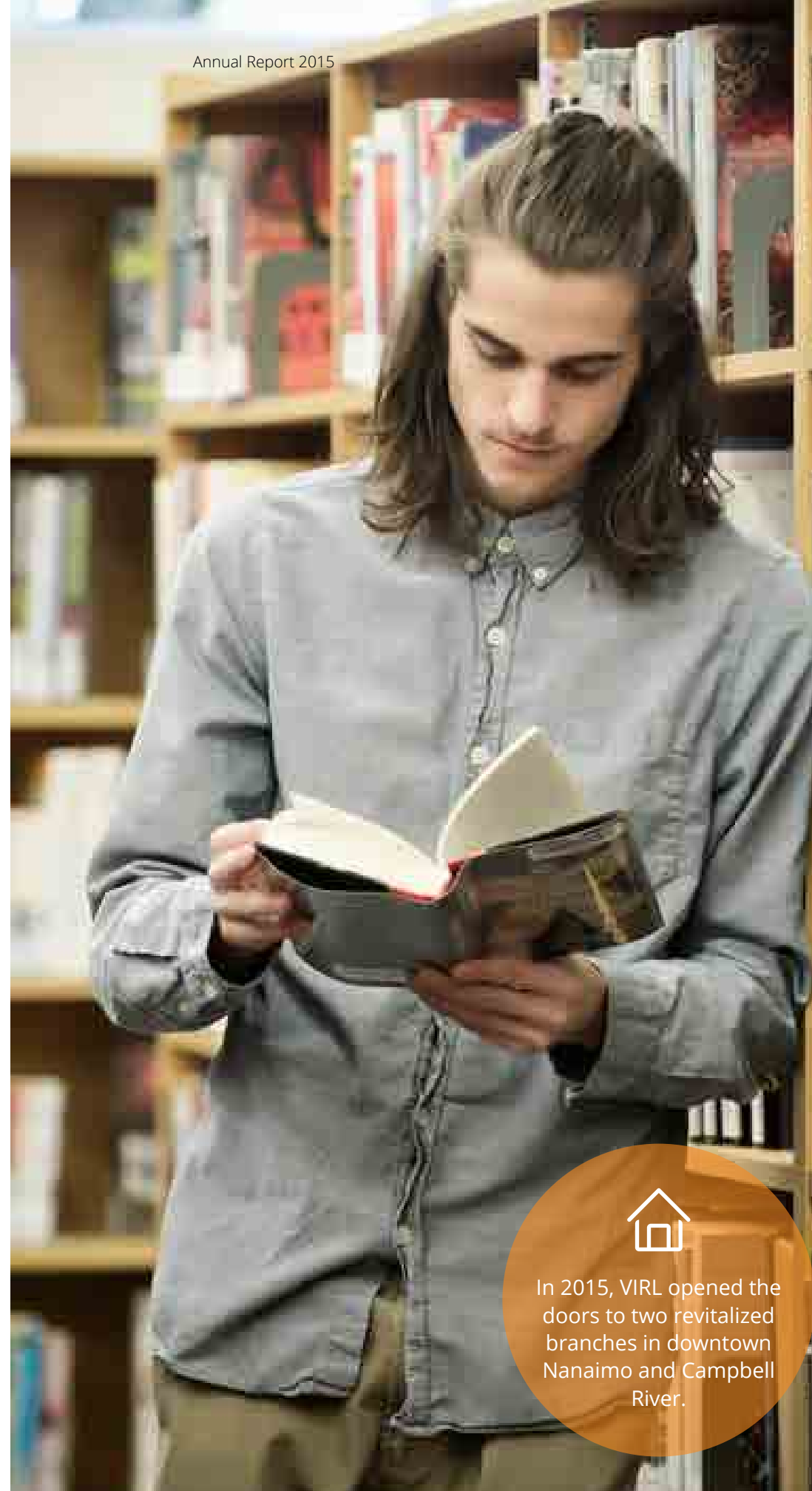
The goal to enrich lives and communities through universal access to knowledge, lifelong learning and literacy was a factor in the decision to revitalize two

branches in Campbell River and Downtown Nanaimo (Harbourfront). We embarked on an Integrated Library System to better facilitate staff and customers with digital resources. A new Intranet, designed to foster improved collaboration in our growing organization, was introduced. Finally, we turned the podium over to the public to hear directly from customers what our communities' vision of the library is to them. This was part of the 2016 - 2020 Strategic Planning process, which will be our operational compass over the next five years.

On behalf of the Board, I would like to thank our communities for their support and commitment. As a Chair, a community member and a customer, I thank the staff and the Board of Trustees for their continued work in delivering excellence in library services.

Bruce Jolliffe

"2015 was a cornerstone year in developing **sustainable** platforms for future exponential development."



In 2015, VIRL opened the doors to two revitalized branches in downtown Nanaimo and Campbell River.



VIRL staff launched a new Integrated Library System and two catalogues to the public to improve service delivery of the eLibrary.



VIRL polled the community! Over 2,000 responses from customers and staff helped create the 2016-2020 Strategic Plan.

From the Executive Director



Rosemary Bonanno

Executive Director

2015 was a cornerstone year in developing sustainable platforms for future exponential development.

With the support of the Board of Trustees, VIRL successfully implemented systems and platforms that will sustain the organization in key areas of growth: our growing digital collection, our growing demands for exceptional library services in smaller communities, access to facilities and equipment and the need for strong communications in our organization and with our community.

The catalyst for success in implementing these platforms has been the dedication and determination of staff, whose commitment to what we do cannot be understated. Without their commitment and support, these key initiatives would not have been possible.

The library of the 21st Century is responsive, adaptable and relevant. In 2015, we built the framework for sustainable development on which the new strategic plan (2016 - 2020) and continued launch of innovative services can grow upon.

To this end, I sincerely look forward to the next chapter of VIRL's evolution, innovation and progress.

Rosemary Bonanno

Our Board

Our [Board of Trustees](#) governs Vancouver Island Regional Library (VIRL), lobbies for library support, and advocates for literacy and learning. In short, the Board makes sure we keep getting **better for our communities**.

The Vancouver Island Regional Library Board of Trustees guides and supports the operation of all public library services in [VIRL's service area](#). In addition to governance, two of its primary functions are lobbying and advocacy to ensure that resources are available to fulfill the Mission, Vision and Values of Vancouver Island Regional Library.

The Vancouver Island Regional Library Board of Trustees autonomously guides and supports the operation of all public library services in VIRL's service area. **In short, the Board makes sure we keep getting better for you.**



The Executive Committee provides direction, makes recommendations and is accountable to the Board of Trustees. The Executive Committee includes the Chair, Vice-Chair, Board Past Chair and eight representatives elected from the Board. The 2015 Executive Committee (left image) and its members are (from left-to-right): Penny Cote, Tom Duncan, Ron Kerr, Steve Arnett, Barry Avis, Brenda Leigh (Vice-Chair), Bruce Jolliffe (Chair), Dave Rushton, Gordon Waterman, Rosemary Bonanno (VIRL Executive Director) and Diane Brennan. Absent: Bill Beldessi

"In short, the Board makes sure we keep getting better for **you**."

2015 Board Membership



Bruce Jolliffe, Chair
Comox Valley RD

Appointed to the Board of Trustees in 2009 by the Comox Valley Regional District and elected Chair from 2012 — present.



Brenda Leigh, Vice-Chair
Strathcona RD

Appointed to the Board of Trustees in 2008 by the Strathcona Regional District and elected Vice-Chair from 2012 — 2015.



Jan Allen
Port Alice

Appointed to the Board of Trustees in 2012 by the Village of Port Alice.



Allen Anderson
Tofino

Appointed to the Board of Trustees in 2012 by the District of Tofino.



Merrick Anderson
Powell River RD

Appointed to the Board of Trustees in 2006 by the Powell River Regional District.



Steve Arnett
Ladysmith

Appointed to the Board of Trustees in 2012 by the Town of Ladysmith. He also served on the Board's Executive Committee as a Member-at-Large in 2015.



Barry Avis
Qualicum Beach

Appointed to the Board of Trustees in 2015 by the Town of Qualicum Beach. He also served on the Board's Executive Committee as a Member-at-Large in 2015.



Mary Beil
Parksville

Appointed to the Board of Trustees in 2015 by the City of Parksville.



Appointed to the Board of Trustees in 2015 by the Skeena-Queen Charlotte Regional District. He also served on the Board's Executive Committee as a Member-at-Large in 2015.

Bill Beldessi

Skeena-Queen Charlotte RD



Appointed to the Board of Trustees in 2015 by the Town of Sidney.

Erin Bremner

Sidney



Appointed to the Board of Trustees in 2009 by the Capital Regional District.

Mike Hicks

Capital RD



Appointed to the Board of Trustees in 2015 by the Village of Sayward.

Janett Hoare

Sayward



Appointed to the Board of Trustees in 2012 by the City of Nanaimo. She also served on the Board's Executive Committee as a Member-at-Large in 2015.

Diane Brennan

Nanaimo



Appointed to the Board of Trustees in 2008 by the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District. She also served on the Board's Executive Committee as a Member-at-Large in 2015.

Penny Cote

Alberni-Clayoquot RD



Appointed to the Board of Trustees in 2015 by the Town of Comox.

Marg Grant

Comox



Appointed to the Board of Trustees in 2015 by the District of Port Hardy.

Jessie Hemphill

Port Hardy



Appointed to the Board of Trustees in 2015 by the Village of Port Clements in Haida Gwaii.

Christine Cunningham

Port Clements



Appointed to the Board of Trustees in 2015 by the Town of Port McNeill.

Jay Dixon

Port McNeill



Appointed to the Board of Trustees in 2014 by the Regional District of Nanaimo.

Howard Houle

Nanaimo RD



Appointed to the Board of Trustees in 2012 by the City of Campbell River. He also served on the Board's Executive Committee as a Member-at-Large in 2015.

Ron Kerr

Campbell River



Appointed to the Board of Trustees in 2012 by the City of Duncan. He also served on the Board's Executive Committee as a Member-at-Large in 2015.

Tom Duncan

Duncan



Appointed to the Board of Trustees in 2015 by the District of Lantzville.

Will Geselbracht

Lantzville



Appointed to the Board of Trustees in 2015 by the City of Courtenay.

Rebecca Lennox

Courtenay



Appointed to the Board of Trustees in 2014 by the Cowichan Valley Regional District.

Mary Marcotte

Cowichan Valley RD



Appointed to the Board of Trustees in 2015 by the District of North Cowichan.

Kate Marsh
North Cowichan



Appointed to the Board of Trustees in 2012 by the Village of Queen Charlotte in Haida Gwaii.

Greg Martin
Queen Charlotte



Appointed to the Board of Trustees in 2009 by the Regional District of Mount Waddington. He also served on the Board's Executive Committee as a Member-at-Large in 2015.

Dave Rushton
Mount Waddington RD



Appointed to the Board of Trustees in 2015 by the Village of Cumberland.

Sean Sullivan
Cumberland



Appointed to the Board of Trustees in 2012 by the Central Coast Regional District.

Cathi McCullagh
Central Coast RD



Appointed to the Board of Trustees in 2015 by the District of Ucluelet.

Marilyn McEwen
Ucluelet



Appointed to the Board of Trustees in 2013 by the Village of Tahsis.

Randy Taylor
Tahsis



Appointed to the Board of Trustees in 2015 by the Town of Lake Cowichan.

Lorna Dawn Vomacka
Lake Cowichan



Appointed to the Board of Trustees in 2009 by the Village of Masset in Haida Gwaii.

Andrew Merilees
Masset



Appointed to the Board of Trustees in 2015 by the City of Port Alberni.

Sharie Minions
Port Alberni



Appointed to the Board of Trustees in 2012 by the Village of Gold River. He also served on the Board's Executive Committee as a Member-at-Large in 2015.

Gordon Waterman
Gold River



Appointed to the Board of Trustees in 2015 by the District of North Saanich.

Murray Weisenberger
North Saanich



Appointed to the Board of Trustees in 2009 by the Village of Zeballos.

Debra Morin Brown
Zeballos



Appointed to the Board of Trustees in 2012 by the District of Sooke.

Kerrie Reay
Sooke

About Us!

[Vancouver Island Regional Library \(VIRL\)](#) is the fifth largest library system in British Columbia. We serve over 430,000 people on Vancouver Island, Haida Gwaii and the Central Coast (Bella Coola) through 39 branch libraries, our eLibrary and a books by mail service.

We go beyond books. We are a creation station, a community hub, a gathering room and a reading nook. We're a technology super highway and vendor of knowledge, opportunities and personal development.

Our Mission

To enrich lives and communities through universal access to knowledge, lifelong learning and literacy.

Our Vision

To develop strong library branches that are vital community destinations for knowledge, inspiration, innovation and renewal.

Our Values

- **Leadership & Innovation:** Provide excellence in library services through open communication, teamwork and cooperation, respect and recognition, education and learning, and by incorporating innovative solutions in a quality library environment.
- **Stewardship & Accountability:** We have been entrusted with public resources, and we optimize these resources through responsible and effective management and fiscal integrity.
- **Information & Literacy:** We believe in the importance of informed and literate communities, and we provide services and programs to support lifelong learning.
- **Intellectual Freedom:** We advocate for the right to freedom of expression and free exchange of information and ideas in a democratic society, within the laws of Canada. VIRL endorses the Canadian Library Association's Statements of Intellectual Freedom.
- **Collaboration & Partnerships:** We foster collaboration and partnerships in our communities to promote lifelong learning and universal access to increase the library's capacity and diversity.
- **Tradition & Technology:** We value the tradition of the library and the legacy of the printed word, and embrace the benefits that modern technology provides.



Our Service Area

From the remote communities of Haida Gwaii to the gateway cities of Nanaimo and Campbell River, Vancouver Island Regional Library is a cooperative of large and small. Collectively, we are the fifth-largest regional library system in BC, boasting a collection of over 1 million items and an almost limitless library of digital resources such as movies, eBooks, magazines and databases. We are proof that great things come in many small packages!

39 branches

More than 375
employees

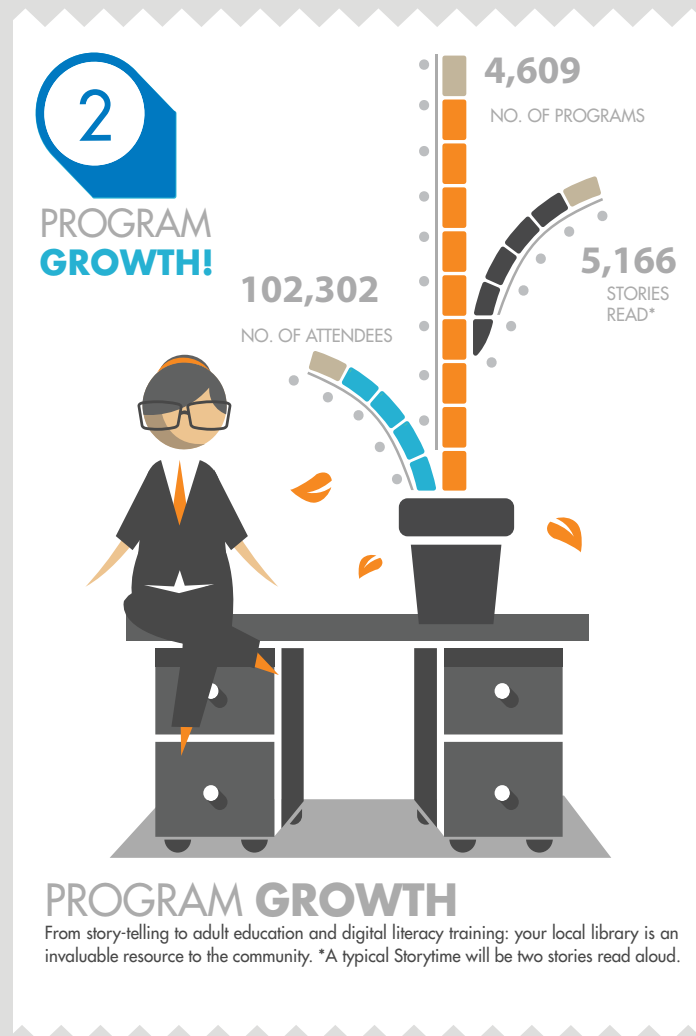
430,000 served

2015 at a Glance

1 THE
VALUE OF
YOUR CARD
\$1,028



The unique value of your library card is calculated by dividing the market value of resources borrowed from your library by the number of registered borrowers.

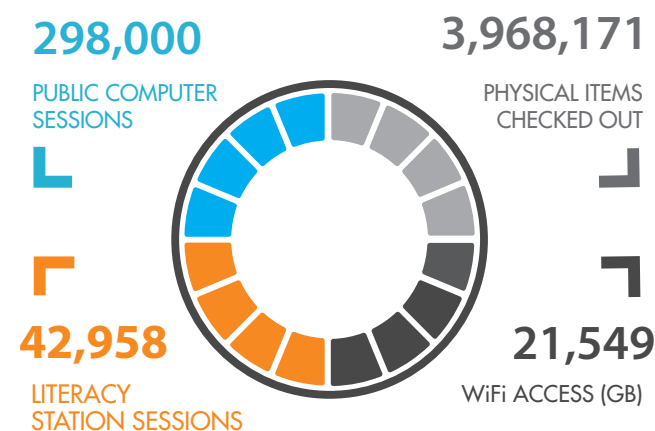


3 TOTAL CIRCULATION

4,975,366



*A total of physical and digital items circulated.



4 BRANCH USAGE

The chart above breaks visitorship down by usage. Note that one customer can use an internet station, tap into the wifi, and take out a book within one visit! The chart does show the popularity of internet use to total visitorship.



TOTAL VISITORS:

2,471,287

So How Did We Do in 2015?

2015 represented a year of new foundations. We introduced a new [Integrated Library System](#) and two public facing [catalogues](#) to our customers. We launched a new Intranet, called "Inside", with leading Microsoft Sharepoint software that offers staff collaboration, creation and participation opportunities never available before. With the addition of new software and systems successfully launched to customers and staff, we are in an even better position to excel. Oh yeah, and in the midst of learning so many new things...we also achieved:



Just a few awards...(no big deal)

In 2015, VIRL was the recipient of the BCALA (British Columbia Library Association) Merit Award for VIRL's [Librarians on the Radio](#), the [Vancouver Island Commercial Building Awards](#) for VIRL's Nanaimo North branch, and a Merit Award from Woodworks BC for the Nanaimo North and Cowichan Lake branches.



102,000 people attended our programs in 2015.

25% increase in program participation in ONE year (since 2014).

2,471,287 people walked through our doors.

81% of people say that "Libraries provide a service hard to find elsewhere in the community."

\$1,028 is the average value of a VIRL card!

94% say that "A public library improves the quality of life in a community."

THE
VALUE OF
YOUR CARD
\$1,028



The unique value of your library card is calculated by dividing the market value of resources borrowed from your library by the number of registered borrowers.

Let's Talk About Programs

From [downloadable movies](#) to librarian-led [podcasts](#), and award-winning library spaces to brand new catalogues, our libraries were busier than ever. That didn't stop our innovative programs, however: our librarians were at work cultivating new connections in our communities in some of the least expected places.



In 2015, VIRL librarians led our first book club at the Nanaimo Correctional Centre. Much to our surprise, it's unbelievably successful — and growing. Enriching people's lives in our community goes beyond branch walls. It's everywhere we go!



Kids

Whether you're into monsters or dinosaurs, puppies or play-doh, sharks or robots! Kids have it all at our branches — because early literacy is about combining what we love with learning something new! Choose your adventure and start learning at [VIRL Kids!](#)



Teens

Connecting with teens is more than talking to teens. It's about listening. We're hearing what teens want from their libraries, and we're whipping up some *killer* DIY projects and crafts.. and we gave away some iPads ;) See what's in store for teens at [VIRL Teens!](#)



Adults

Adults ask us: Where's the Summer Reading Club for adults? And who are we to deny them? Welcome the Summer Reading Challenge. On top of reading awards, we have adult training, tech help, language clubs and video games (because adults do that too).



LIBRARY MONTH

October is ♥ Library Month and we're sharing the love. Come visit a branch or visit [virl.bc.ca](#) to learn more...



Moving Toward Sustainability Software for Operations

One Integrated Library System: Two Catalogues

In 2015, VIRL took the leap and successfully implemented a new operations software (Integrated Library System) that could support and showcase VIRL's growing eResource collection (eBooks and audiobooks). The launch of a new Integrated Library System (or ILS) also meant that customers could choose from two catalogues as a means of transitioning our community to something new. Check out our new catalogue at search.virl.bc.ca or enjoy what you already love at virl.bibliocommons.com!

VIRL's new catalogue makes accessing eResources simpler.



It's on the Inside!

With over 370 staff spanning a large geographic area, (from Port Renfrew to Port Clements, and from Sooke to Sointula), communication and collaboration can be challenging ... without the right tools, that is.

That's why VIRL chose new software that could connect every member of the organization under one roof, or in this case, cloud. Colourfully referred to as "Inside", VIRL's new intranet uses [Microsoft SharePoint](#) to warehouse documents, create collaborative projects and worksites, manage contacts, and provide a one-stop shop to all of the information staff need to do their jobs. VIRL's operational manual has become a wiki, making it peer-reviewed, editable by staff, and continuously receiving contributions from all levels of the organization — in real-time!

ASK US
ABOUT OUR NEW



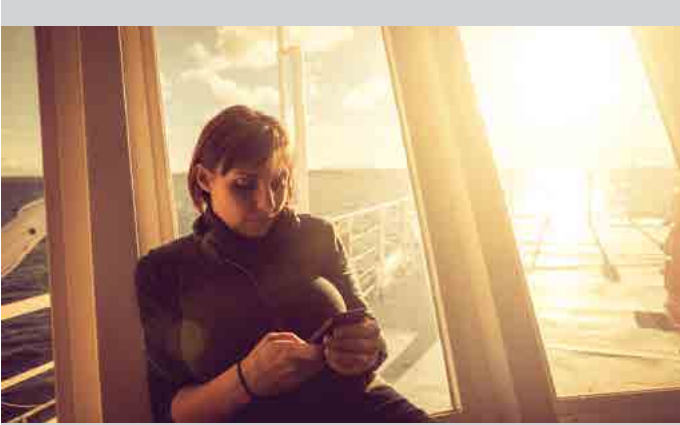


Have the courage to act on their suggestions and show teens we are listening!

Connecting with Teens @ Their Library

By Amy Dawley
Gabriola Customer Service Librarian II

It's no secret that reaching and connecting teens with their local public library presents its own set of unique challenges, and VIRL's Teen Services Committee is dedicated to meeting this need. In 2014, VIRL delivered its first ever [Teen Summer Challenge](#), a summer-long program that engaged teens all over Vancouver Island with fun tasks and activities designed to keep them active, creative and reading throughout the summer. In 2015, VIRL continued to build upon the previous year's successes, reinvigorating the Teen Summer Challenge and raising it to new heights with even more challenges and creative ways to engage. From the urban branches of Nanaimo Harbourfront and Cowichan, to the smallest rural branches including Bowser and Port Clements, teens from all over VIRL's communities took part.



We also took the opportunity in 2015 to further engage young people through a teen-focused online survey that dared teens to "boss us around." We wanted to hear directly from teens and gather their thoughts and opinions: What did they like best about their library? What could we do better? What would bring them to their library branch more often? What did they find confusing? From programs to services and everything in between, we heard from over 100 youth and we are proud to say we are acting on their suggestions.

Armed with feedback and ideas from our teens, we are continuing to build the foundations of VIRL's teen services, focusing on delivering relevant, teen-friendly programs and services to youth in our communities. Supporting our library staff as they work to build relationships with teen customers in our communities is paramount. VIRL's enormously successful Summer Reading Club and school-aged programs that happen throughout the year mean we are already engaging with and attracting older children to our libraries. Moving forward, our challenge is to focus on achieving a continuity of service as children move into their teenage years, connecting older children with a suite of programs and services designed especially for them.

Asking teens to share their thoughts and opinions is one piece of the puzzle, but the most important piece is having the courage to act on their suggestions and show teens we are listening. By consistently delivering on our promises, acting on their suggestions, and listening to their feedback, VIRL is demonstrating its commitment to teens and is working hard to position itself as a teen-friendly destination for all youth in our communities.

Teen Surveys

Relevant Programs

Something for Everyone



The award-winning Nanaimo North branch

Revitalized Libraries

Spaces, places and home bases. Our facilities are gathering spots in our communities. A hub for students, families, friends and seniors. We take a one-size-fits-none approach and tailor each and every branch to the unique needs of its locale: embracing unique attributes of its customers, its culture and its history.

Since 2011, VIRL has renovated or redesigned nine libraries in its 39-branch regional system. That's approximately two a year, or 1/3 every three months. Our Board of Trustees is busy ensuring

that every community - large and small - is on the list for improvement. To find out if your branch is due for something new, visit us online!



It's always a party when a new library opens! We can't thank our customers and the community enough for the enthusiasm and support. From a fresh coat of paint to a complete renovation, improvements are driven by our customers.



Campbell River Branch

On [November 28th, 2015](#), an open house kicked off the City of Campbell River's refurbished branch - as well as Sunday hours of operation (new!). The branch boasts new furniture, additional computer stations, a laptop bar and a literacy area for kids.



Nanaimo Harbourfront Branch

One of VIRL's most popular branches, the [Nanaimo Harbourfront branch](#), received a much needed refresh after two decades of loyal use. Our city centre branch opened to hundreds of customers on November 7, 2015 who were excited to check out the new Creativity Commons!

Grants and Donations

Our libraries enrich lives and communities through universal access to knowledge, lifelong learning and literacy. Through the [support of donors](#), Friends of the Library, and funders, our library branches are transformed into vital community destinations. With great thanks, we recognize the generous support of volunteers, organizations and individuals who contributed a total of \$17,906. Thank you for your invaluable contribution to your library!

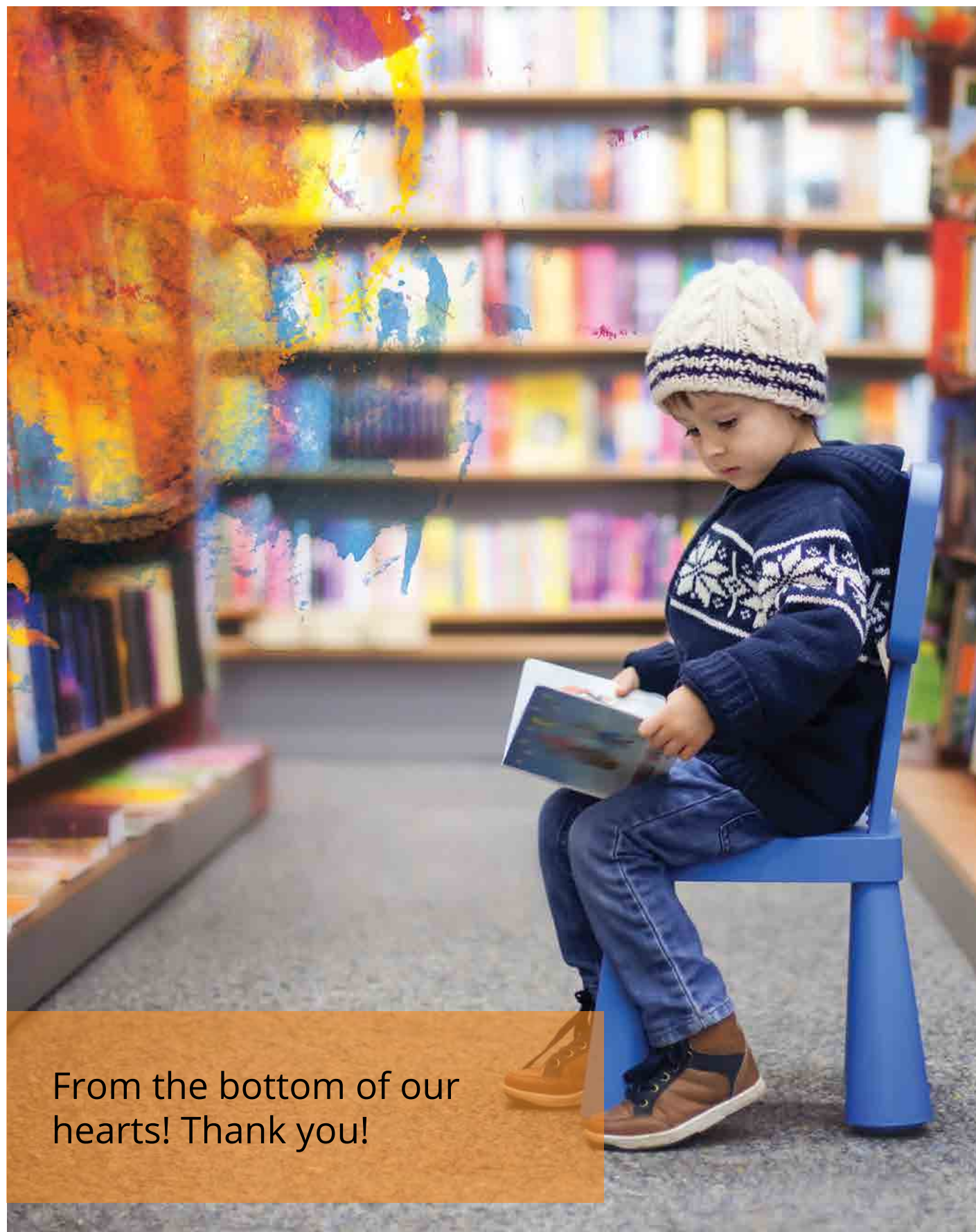
Provincial Grants		Amount
	Per Capita	\$1,179,056
	Literacy	46,324
	BC One Card	24,000
	Resource Sharing	7,101
Federal Grants		
	Canada Council BookFest	4,600
Partners		
	LawMatters	2,550
Total:		\$1,263,631

Friends of the Library

Vancouver Island Regional Library is fortunate to have the support of committed volunteers who give their time to support the activities and objectives of their public libraries. [Friends](#) work to enhance the services and resources of their library, focus public attention on the library and its needs, and support fundraising activities.

Vancouver Island Regional Library currently enjoys the support of the following Friends of the library groups who are always welcoming of new members: Gabriola Island | Gold River | Nanaimo Harbourfront | Nanaimo Wellington | Sidney/North Saanich | Cowichan.





From the bottom of our hearts! Thank you!

Thank You

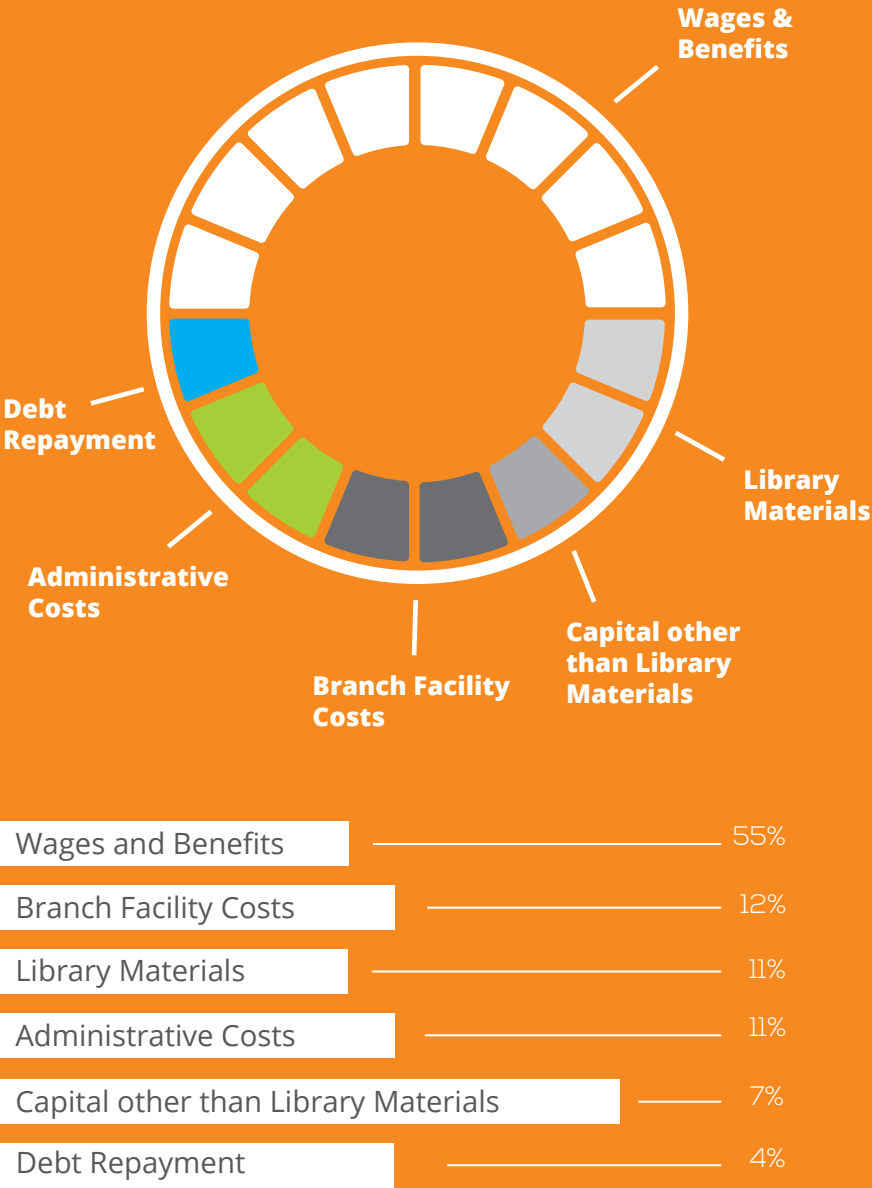
Many thanks to those who have [donated to their library](#):

Terry Akerman • Leonard Appel • Gillian Baker • BC Chamber of Commerce • Dr. Maija Bismanis • Bruce Bjornson • Connie Blunden • Rosemary Bonanno • Cheryl Bourgeois • Linda Braid • Kim Burden • David Carpenter • Martina Carriere • Deborah Cawston • Vinay Chefekar • Chemainus Crofton Fraternal Order of Eagles Ladies Auxiliary 4400 • Patrick Chenier • Esther Christopher • Carol Clay • Clements Centre Society • Barbara Cooper • Friends of the Library – Cowichan Branch • Cowichan Valley Intercultural & Immigrant Society • Douglas Davies • Yvon Demoissac • Alja Den Boer • Aileen Fabris • James and Lorraine Fontaine • Deborah Francis • G.R.O.W.L.S. • Friends of the Library – Gabriola Branch • Carole Gaily • Robert Giroday • Friends of the Library – Gold River Branch • Stanley Goodrich • Paul and Sheila Greenwood • Alan and Marlene Gustafson • Elaine Halliday • Weisia Harrison • Byron Henriques • Andry Isaksen • Katherine Jackson • Jeffrey James • Lila Johanson • Joy John • Barbara Jordison • Rohinton Kerravala • Jennifer Kimber • Maureen and Dave Kirk • Dianne Lafleur • Lucas Law • Diane Leu • Arthur Lionel • Ian MacArthur • Nassim Madjzoub • Andrea Martin • Nannette McKay • Art McQuade • Donald Miller • Friends of the Library – Nanaimo Harbourfront Branch • Amy Neary • Hai Van Nguyen • Linda Olson • Kyle Palmer • Parksville Quilt House Quilters Guild • Parksville Rotary Club • Louise Parsons • Glenn Pedersen • Peninsula Lifetime Eyecare Centre • William Pincock • Martha Pow • Probus Investment Club • Gail Revesz • John Riendl • Amie Roman • Alice Setter-Gross • Lorentz Shack • Nancy Sherry • Mao Shuging • Friends of the Library – Sidney/North Saanich Branch • Stephanie Sulentic • Suncor Energy • Linda Tchorz • Rima Tekutis-Collins • Tigh Na Mara • Gae Van Siri • John Venema • Brenda Westmacott • Roderick Wheatland • Bert Wolfe

2015 Expenditures

The budget of Vancouver Island Regional Library is firmly grounded in the deliverables designated by the Board and follows the direction provided and supported by a 10-year Master Facility Plan. The Board of Trustees take the management and stewardship of public funds very seriously and continue to demonstrate financial leadership and discipline, ensuring value for the tax dollars spent. The 2015 budget continued to build on those core values and business practices to move the Strategic Plan forward.

Financial results for 2015 were positive with operational expenditures below budget and producing a surplus, that has been used to increase reserve balances for long term maintenance and new/extended branches in support of the Master Facility Plan. 2015 also marked the completion of renovations to the Nanaimo Harbourfront and Campbell River branches.



This chart is representative of financial operations for VIRL. Complete Audited 2015 financial statements can be found at www.virl.bc.ca.

Revenues and Expenditures

Consolidated Statement of Operations (for the year ended December 31, 2015)	BUDGET (Unaudited)	2015 (see Audited Statements)	2014
	▼	▼	▼
Revenues			
Municipal levies	\$13,528,552	\$13,528,560	\$12,815,782
Rural levies	6,125,232	6,125,232	5,862,577
Government grants	1,269,374	1,307,405	1,264,927
Fines and other income	483,669	427,910	531,829
Interest earned	60,858	54,648	78,819
Total Revenues	\$21,467,685	\$21,443,755	\$20,553,934
Expenditures			
Wages and benefits	12,240,543	11,970,003	11,150,518
Branch costs	3,393,797	3,150,372	3,271,957
Miscellaneous library materials	198,662	192,623	167,900
Administrative costs	2,382,230	2,427,623	1,855,225
Retirement benefit accrual	64,282	11,857	52,129
Amortization expense	3,412,899	3,412,899	3,219,737
Total Expenditures	\$21,692,413	\$21,165,377	\$19,717,466
Annual surplus (deficit)	(224,728)	278,378	836,468
Accumulated surplus beginning of year	14,160,334	14,160,334	13,323,866
Accumulated surplus end of year	\$13,935,606	\$14,438,712	\$14,160,334
Which is composed of:			
Internally restricted funds		4,349,806	4,692,112
Unrestricted		391,814	458,843
Investment in tangible capital assets		9,697,092	9,009,379
		\$14,438,712	\$14,160,334

The above chart is representative of financial operations for VIRL. Complete Audited 2015 financial statements can be found at www.virl.bc.ca.

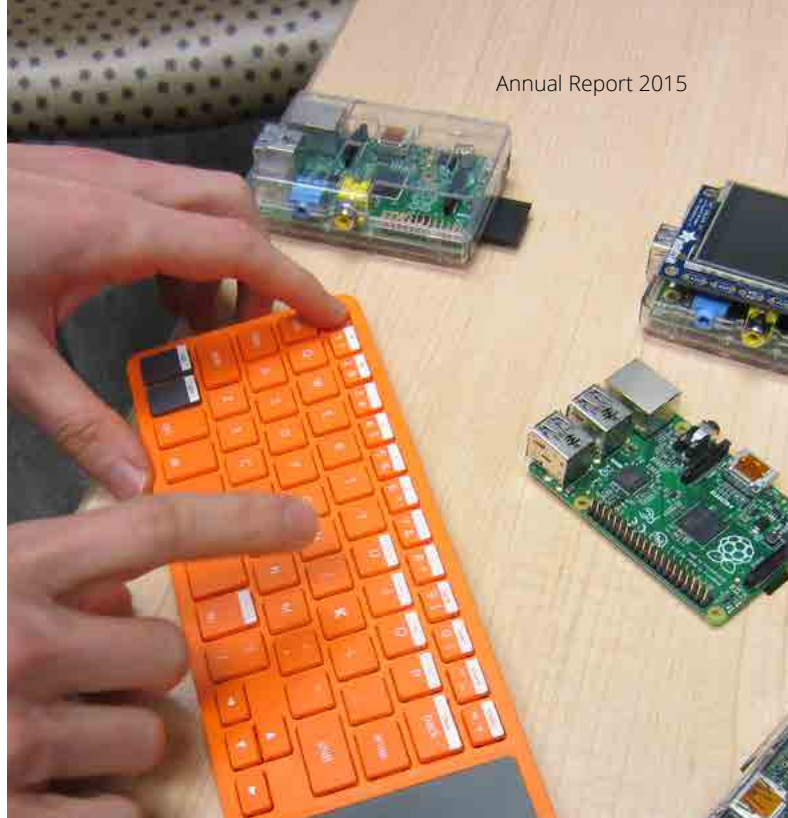


Mobile Media Kits by Emily Orr eLibrarian

If you see a toolbox in the hands of your local librarian, don't be too disappointed that they haven't arrived to fix your wobbly doorknob; chances are they're actually about to unleash some fun and innovative technology programming. In December of 2015, VIRL gave its users the gift of Mobile Media Kits (MMKs): portable totes containing a variety of micro computers, tablets and digital media recording equipment that will expand the technology resources available for library activities.

How They're Used (a Case Study):

Patrick Siebold, Adult Services Librarian in Campbell River, is currently working with a customer on an oral history project to record this man's recollections of his time in the logging industry, combined with rare historic video footage of logging on Vancouver Island.



While each kit lends itself to certain activities, there is enough flexibility in the components that users can get creative and think outside the box. The components also all share the characteristic of being small and lightweight, so they are easy to carry and transport. This portability also means the kits are ideal for outreach activities at festivals, schools, community centres and seniors' homes. The hope also is that these kits will be much-used in the Island's smaller, remote communities, where access to technology can be sparse. "The Tablet Tote was a big hit in Port Renfrew. The devices could likely be the only exposure [to iPads] many of our patrons will ever get," says Circulation Supervisor Anne Tremblay.

The Mobile Media Kits are shared around the VIRL service area, and thus far have been so popular that they are rarely at their homebase of Harbourfront's Creativity Commons. Staff members in Campbell River, Port Alberni, Duncan and Nanaimo have experimented with the kits with their customers, and the equipment was especially in-demand during Teen Tech Week. Staff have also participated in hands-on "tinker time" and training sessions, so that they are comfortable guiding customers.

With these tools, library staff are poised to create unique multimedia content, make connections, and support their community members' digital literacy needs. There is room in the boxes and VIRL imaginations for the kits to grow and potentially be made available for library members to borrow in the future. We are looking forward to seeing what amazing projects VIRL staff and customers build together.

These kits share the goal of increasing digital literacy using carefully selected tech tools.

Audio-Visual Kits

A multimedia recording kit and an editing kit work in conjunction with each other to capture library events as well as Islanders' stories and creative projects in high-quality specification that will stand the test of time.

Circuitry Kit

The littleBits magnetic circuitry collection is hugely popular with elementary-age kids and tweens, with the ability to build fully-functional custom electronics projects like alarm clocks, synthesizers, art-bots, and automated dog-feeding machines.

Microcomputing Kit

A set of Raspberry Pi contain enough microcomputers and peripherals to teach all ages the foundations of hardware and coding in a collaborative group setting, and a set of iPads offers a world of digital storytelling and tech literacy potential.



YOU
SPOKE.

WE LISTENED!

VANCOUVER ISLAND
REGIONAL LIBRARY

Building a Strategic Plan (2016 — 2020)

Our guiding principal in long-range planning is that every voice in our community should be heard.

In 2015, we enlisted the help of strategic planning consultants ReWerx of Victoria, BC, to help us craft a strategic plan that captured the diverse voices in our community.

A part of the process included empowering staff to own the feedback, generate new ideas and ways of thinking and match tactical initiatives to smart objectives. Phew!

Stay tuned in 2016 for the launch of the 2016-2020 Strategic Plan: Your Voice, Your Library!

From a Library Manager's View by Lara Wright, Wellington Library Manager

In my role as a Library Manager, I had the opportunity to help coordinate the strategic [planning sessions](#). Being a part of the process provided a fascinating glimpse into the diversity of our communities, and into the different priorities that each community holds dear. It quickly became clear that despite any differences, we are all strongly connected by our passion for libraries. It was truly gratifying to hear about what our libraries, including our front-line library staff, mean to our users.

Based on the information [we received](#), Library Managers were able to reflect on where we stand currently, as well as where VIRL needs to go next. You gave us your views on hours of operation,

facilities, technology and programming. Moving forward, we will continue to create comfortable gathering spaces for all, and to connect people with knowledge by providing access to books, media and technology, as well as to the skills needed to access these resources. Library Managers heard that we need to do more to engage and support all members of our communities, including First Nations people, seniors and young families, as well as our staff. We know that the vitality and vibrancy of our communities can be measured by the strength of the connections between each of us as individuals. As a Library Manager, I look forward to reducing barriers to the services we provide and to enhancing trust, cooperation and reciprocity between all of our stakeholders.



Into the Wilderness We Go!

With so much to offer on Vancouver Island and coastal areas — the mountains, the trees, the ocean breeze - it's no wonder our librarians are taking to the outdoors to host some of their most creative early literacy programs. And the kids? Well, they love it.

Combining literacy programs with the great outdoors is a natural fit for our communities. Whether it's storytime with farm animals or bringing a bookclub to the backyard - enjoying your local library is just a fair-weather day away!

If you're willing to get a little wild, check out our [programs and events](#) online to find out what's happening at your branch. Here's a sneak peak at some of the nature-inspired programs at VIRL!



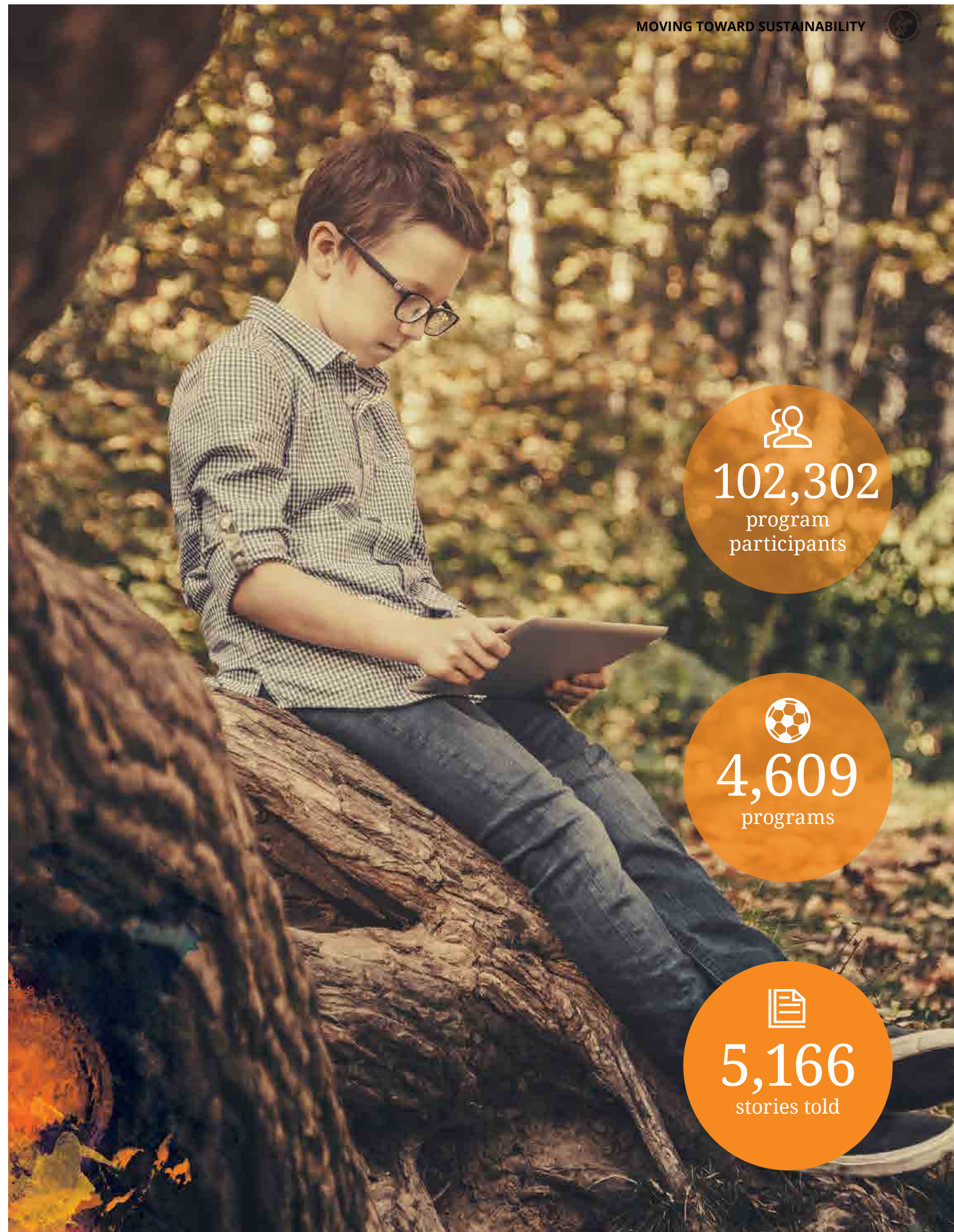
We packed up the tents and our teddy bears and headed to the beach for PacifiCare's Teddy Bear Picnic at scenic Departure Bay beach. Courtesy of the Wellington branch, Nanaimo.



Guitars, a grassy meadow, and storytimes made for a popular program on three warm Wednesday mornings in August. Courtesy of the Port Alberni branch.



The immensely popular chicken storytime features a literacy-based craft and, of course, the opportunity to socialize and hang out with baby farm animals! The event attracts locals that are visiting their library for the first time.




102,302
program
participants


4,609
programs


5,166
stories told



Welcome to the Creativity Commons!

In 2015, the downtown Nanaimo Harbourfront branch unveiled its new inclusive space for innovation and collaborative projects: the Creativity Commons. This is a new learning centre and innovation space where access to technology is provided to everyone in the community, supporting digital literacy and the creative economy. It is a flexible and collaborative environment where people come together to gather new skills and share materials and ideas.

The [Creativity Commons](http://virl.bc.ca) is also home to VIRL's first self publishing Espresso Book machine located at the Second Storey Press (on the second storey. Oh, yes, you got that.)



The Story Lab is the home of VIRL's Second Storey Press, a publishing imprint enabled by the Espresso Book Machine, where independent authors and content remixers around the service areas can print and bind custom paperback books.



Kickstarter videos, logos, audiobook, digital versions of home movies — these are a few things you can make at the Creativity Commons. We've also held writer's workshops on tax essential and copy editing!



A collection of microfilm dating back to the press stone age can help you discover your family's history. We're planting the seeds now for genealogy classes and workshops to map your family tree — stay tuned for more in 2016 and 2017!





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