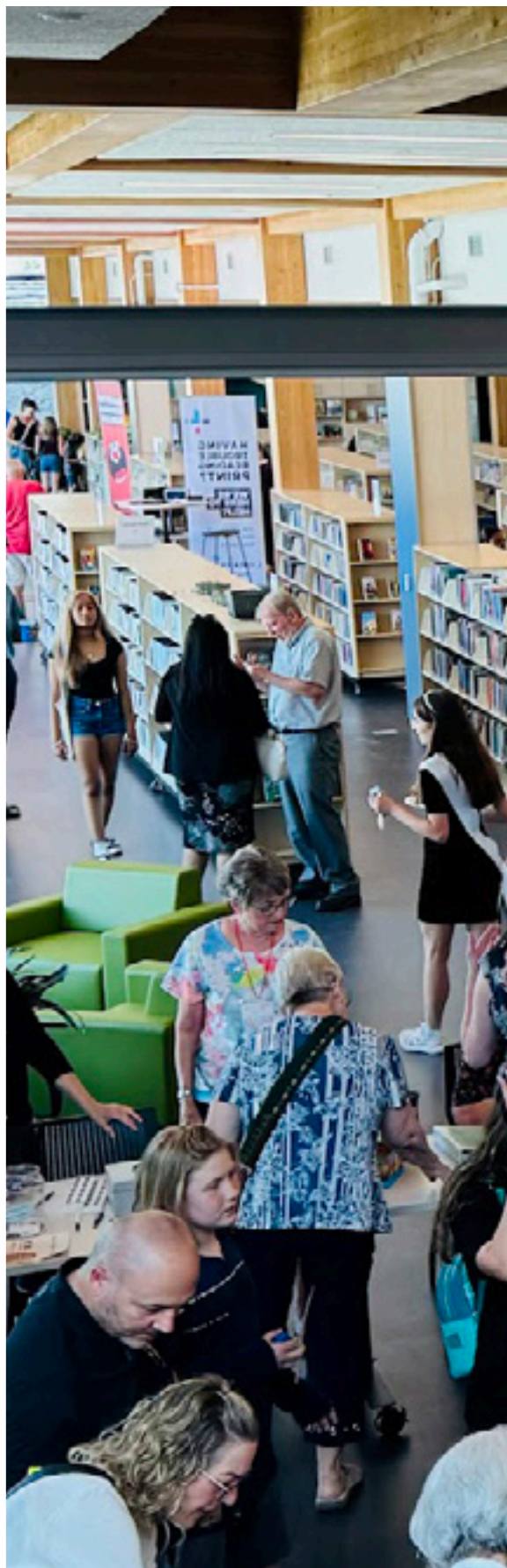


OKANAGAN REGIONAL LIBRARY

2024

Annual Report



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“To remain vital, libraries must respond to the changing needs of their communities.”

A Message from CEO Danielle Hubbard

I am honoured to serve as CEO of the Okanagan Regional Library, leading an organization that has a profound impact on individuals and communities throughout our region. It is with great pleasure that I share our 2024 Annual Report, a reflection of a year defined by momentum and transformation.

In August, we launched our 2024–2029 Strategic Plan, setting a bold vision for the future—one that places learning, connection, and community at the heart of everything we do. That vision is already taking shape. In 2024, we expanded public hours and increased staffing at several branches, enhanced library spaces through facility upgrades, and celebrated the opening of new branches in West Kelowna and Lumby. Our collections also grew, with more e-resources, audiobooks, and the continued expansion of our Library of Things.

Library program attendance reached an all-time high, demonstrating both the region’s enthusiasm for library services and the dedication of our staff. We saw record-breaking participation in our annual Summer Reading Club and rising circulation numbers across our collection.

To remain vital, libraries must respond to the changing needs of their communities. As we look ahead, we remain focused on expanding access, strengthening partnerships, and ensuring that everyone—no matter their circumstance—feels supported when they walk through our doors.

From championing childhood literacy to welcoming newcomers, from providing space for creativity to equipping entrepreneurs with the knowledge needed to grow their businesses, the ORL remains a trusted public resource for information, research, innovation, and community engagement.

The success of the ORL is made possible by our incredible staff, passionate patrons, and the many partners and volunteers who support us. I am especially grateful to our Board and 24 member councils—without the funding and goodwill of our municipalities and

regional districts, the ORL would not be the success that it is today.

To everyone who contributed their ideas, energy, and enthusiasm this year—thank you. Together, we are shaping a library system that serves and inspires.

Danielle Hubbard

CEO, Okanagan Regional Library



Okanagan Regional Library Branches are...

VITAL COMMUNITY SPACES

Expanding Possibilities: A Year of Growth at the ORL

Across a stunning Canadian geography of rapidly growing rural, suburban, and urban communities, Okanagan Regional Library branches provide vibrant, essential spaces that reflect the evolving needs of the residents we serve. The ORL's commitment to creating environments that anchor and enrich our communities is evident in all thirty of our branches, where extensive physical and digital collections,

adaptable meeting rooms and study areas, interactive STEAM Makerspaces, innovative cultural and educational programming, and local clubs and third-party special events are enjoyed by more residents than ever.

The Okanagan Regional Library celebrated the grand opening of the new West Kelowna Branch in June 2024, marking an exciting milestone for the organization and community. This state-of-the-art facility serves as a welcoming "living room" for residents of all ages to gather, read, study, and socialize. With an emphasis on natural light, clear sightlines, and flexible spaces, the West Kelowna library invites patrons to define their own path of exploration and engagement. Its design pays tribute to the

local landscape, incorporating materials and colours that reflect the beauty of West Kelowna and nearby Lake Okanagan.

As public spaces, libraries are challenged to provide collections and services for residents of all ages, backgrounds, aptitudes, and interests. Highlights of the West Kelowna Branch include meeting rooms for programs and presentations, accessible shelving, a STEAM Makerspace, a prominent Indigenous Collection, and an active Children's Zone featuring a play wall. Strategic partnerships with City Hall encourage increased

civic engagement and shared resources, while a seamless blend of indoor and outdoor spaces inspires productivity, creativity, and well-being.

In addition to opening a new branch in our third largest community, this year the ORL invested significant time and financial resources to improve our facilities system-wide. In November, over 300 community members celebrated the Lumby Branch's move to a new, highly visible location. Lumby's modernized branch is focused on flexibility and patron

interaction, with additional seating, a reservable meeting room, resources such as a Tech Hub Makerspace, Seed Library and ever-popular programs like the Cozy Corner Crafters and the Creative Writing Group.

In North Shuswap, the ORL opened a temporary branch to welcome returning patrons after a wildfire destroyed the original location, underscoring the Library's role in providing vital services and spaces during times of recovery and renewal.

To meet increasing demand



for library services across the region, the ORL increased open hours in Enderby, Armstrong, Oliver, and Peachland, added significant circulation and page staff hours at multiple branches, and implemented several facility improvement initiatives such as meeting room renovations, accessibility upgrades, HVAC replacements, audiovisual equipment installations, bike racks and exterior signage.

Finally (and best for last), the Okanagan Regional Library is tremendously excited to have received Board approval for two

new Kelowna branches: one in the Glenmore neighbourhood and another in Parkinson Recreation Centre. Patron visits, program attendance, and circulation numbers contained in this report show that residents are enjoying their libraries in ever-increasing numbers. As stewards of shared public spaces that prioritize learning and community engagement, the ORL’s efforts ensure interactions such as the following will continue:

“I was helping a patron learn how to restore old recordings on our digitization station. The

audio wasn’t great, and the age of the recording wasn’t doing it any favors, but we had the software to improve it. There was an incredible shared moment where her family member’s voice came through the recording clearly for the first time.”

—Vernon Branch Staff



Safe Spaces

The Okanagan Regional Library’s Downtown Kelowna Branch proudly became the first ORL location to earn Rainbow Registry accreditation in 2024, setting a benchmark for inclusivity within our library system. This national designation, awarded by Canada’s 2SLGBTQI+ Chamber of Commerce, recognizes businesses and organizations committed to creating spaces where 2SLGBTQI+ patrons and staff feel welcome, respected, and celebrated.

Earning this recognition involved a third-party evaluation of how the organization fosters inclusivity, handles negative experiences, provides staff training, and ensures leadership prioritizes equity. This achievement is a first step toward a broader vision: plans are underway to expand Rainbow Registry accreditation to other branches across the region. With the Kelowna Branch leading the way, the ORL invites patrons and community members to celebrate this milestone and embrace the shared goal of creating safe and inclusive communities.

Okanagan Regional Library Branches are...

FOR LEARNING

Summer Reading Club Participant: “How many marbles are in the jar?”

Staff: “I don’t know. I don’t count them until after the Marble Counting Contest is over.”

Child: “So...how many do you guess are in the jar?”

Staff: “Nope! Grown-ups are not allowed to guess. Only kids.”

Child: “But you’re as much fun as a kid!”



In August 2024, the Okanagan Regional Library celebrated the addition of Ukrainian children's books to its World Language Collection. This new resource, made possible through community partnerships with Okanagan 4 Ukraine and the United Way of British Columbia, offers over 100 titles that serve as a connection to heritage for Ukrainian families in the Okanagan.

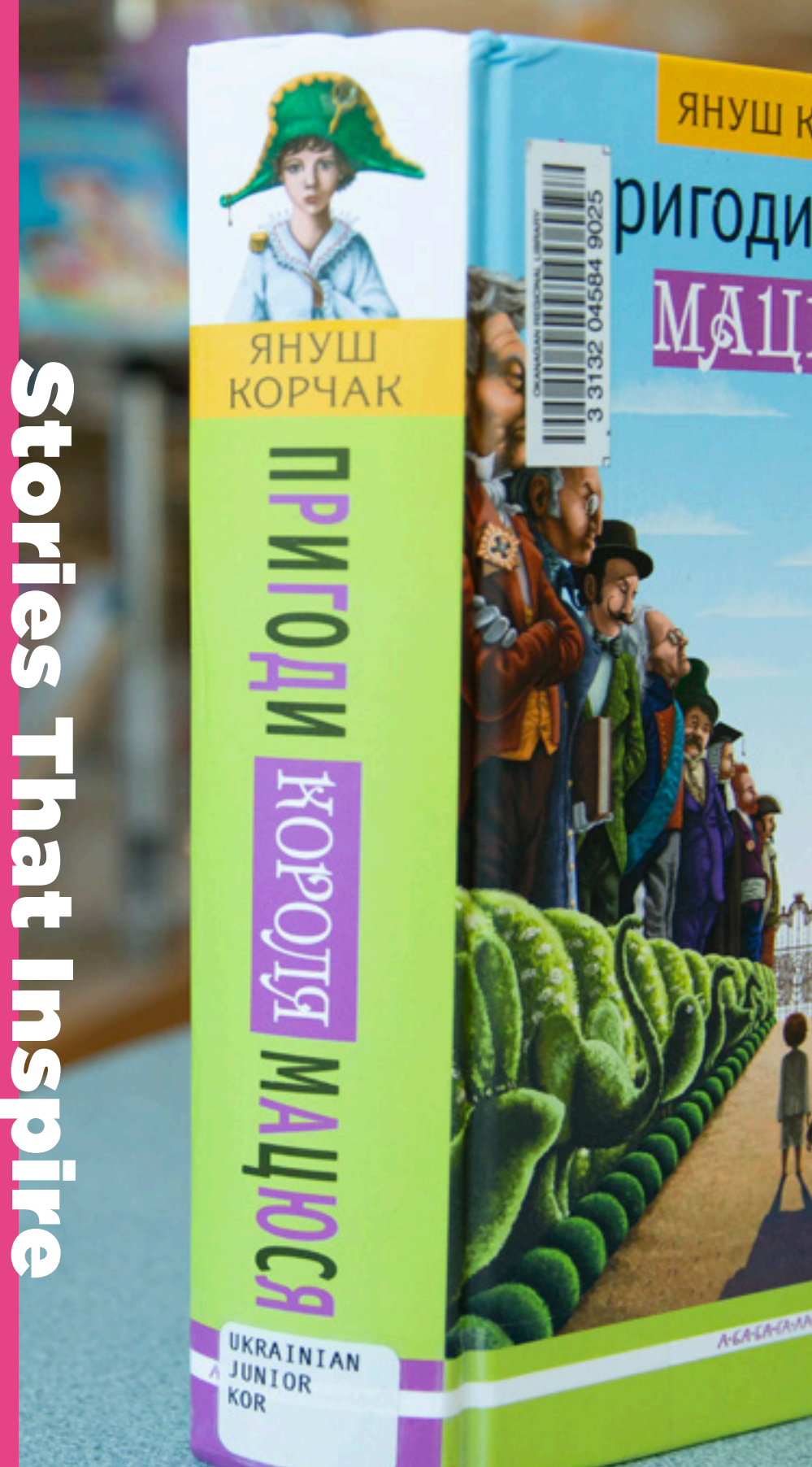
The collection was launched at the Kelowna Branch with a special event that brought together families, community members, and local organizations. Activities, treats, and a vibrant book display created a welcoming space where Ukrainian newcomers and locals could converse and connect.

At the launch event, nine-year-old Milana browsed the colourful book display while her mother quietly asked how many they could borrow at once. “These books feel like a little piece of home,” Milana’s mother said.

The Ukrainian books cater to readers from early childhood to about age 10, featuring beloved titles like *The Adventures of 36 and 6 Cats* and a trilingual version of Richard Scarry’s illustrated children’s dictionary in French, English, and Ukrainian. The books were carefully selected by volunteers, including Ukrainian parents, to ensure they resonate with the needs and interests of young readers.

The Ukrainian collection is available system-wide, offering families across the region a chance to access these cultural treasures. Future plans include expanding the collection with ebooks for Ukrainian adults, ensuring this vital resource continues to grow alongside the community it serves.

Stories That Inspire



A Place for Everyone

As public institutions mandated to provide fair service for all, libraries play an important role in confronting systemic bias and promoting diversity and inclusion. In spring 2024, the Okanagan Regional Library completed system-wide Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) training for employees. This training reflects the ORL's commitment to fostering social equity and building understanding throughout the diverse communities in our region.

The training provided staff with essential tools to understand and support LGBTQIA2S+ individuals, including insights into inclusive language, respectful service practices, and strategies for reducing barriers to library services and resources. These skills empower staff to create spaces where all community members feel welcome and respected.

"Inclusion starts with understanding," said the ORL's Director of Public Services Mark Reinelt. "SOGI training gives our teams a common language and starting point to ensure our libraries remain safe, supportive spaces for learning, discovery, and connection. For many in the communities we serve, knowing there's a welcoming, accepting place to go offers a sense of safety and belonging. At the ORL, we're proud to be that place, and SOGI training plays a key role in making it possible."

Growing to Meet Demand

To better support our branches and move key operational initiatives forward, the ORL made significant staffing investments in 2024. New positions include two Regional Managers, an Occupational Health and Safety Advisor, a Copywriter, a Facilities Lead, and additional Page positions in smaller branches. These roles enhance operational support, safety, and communication, ensuring that the ORL continues to provide exceptional service system-wide.



A Summer of Curiosity

For over 25 years, the Okanagan Regional Library has proudly participated in the BC Summer Reading Club (SRC), an annual, province-wide initiative to promote childhood literacy and learning. The 2024 theme, World of Curiosities, ignited children's imaginations, inspired creative programming, and filled ORL branches with excited young readers and their families.

Our libraries welcomed children aged 5-14 to explore the joy of summer reading with physical and digital reading records, vibrant bookmarks, and themed stickers. Feedback from parents and caregivers highlighted a

strong preference for physical reading records and prizes, reflecting the value families place on tangible ways to connect and spend time with one another.

Summer Reading Club saw record-breaking participation in 2024, with 8,139 children joining—an 8% increase from 2023 and a remarkable 35% growth over pre-pandemic levels. "Summer Reading Club is one of the biggest events at our libraries," said Ashley Machum, Head of Youth Services. "I handle the behind-the-scenes logistics so our incredible staff can focus on bringing creativity and magic to their branches. The connections they build with kids and families during SRC are truly special."

This remarkable growth reflects Summer Reading Club's enduring appeal and the vital role it plays in supporting childhood literacy and community engagement.

Okanagan Regional Library Branches are...

FOR CONNECTING

Friends of the Library: Committed to Community

At the ORL, libraries are more than places to borrow books—they are hubs of connection, learning, and community spirit. We recently spoke with a member of the South Shuswap/Salmon Arm Friends of the Library to learn more about their impact and connection to the ORL.

What is Friends of the Library, and what role does it play?

The South Shuswap/Salmon Arm Friends of the Library is a volunteer group with over 130 members who are dedicated to supporting local libraries. We raise funds through semi-annual book sales at both branches, helping to fund programs and special requests from library staff.

What inspired you to volunteer with Friends of the Library?

As an educator for 45 years with a passion for literacy, I wanted to give back when we moved to the Shuswap six years ago. The warm welcome from a community librarian led me to join, and it felt like a perfect fit.

What library services do you use?

Beyond borrowing books and materials, I regularly attend programs. The Garden Club at South Shuswap has been an inspiring experience, and my husband and I enjoy the Ukulele Circle in Salmon Arm, which is always uplifting.

In 2019, I started a book club for elderly neighbours. With the support of the library and ORL Book Club Kits, we've read 43 selections (!) and even met virtually during COVID lockdowns. The club continues to thrive, strengthening connections in our community.

How does the Okanagan Regional Library contribute to your community?

The library has served as a cooling centre during the summer and a warm refuge in winter. The variety of programs—from children's activities to tech support for seniors—is invaluable. I also appreciate how responsive the staff are, continuously adapting services to meet community needs.

—F. Morrison, South Shuswap/Salmon Arm Friends of the Library



“Leif David’s SRC 2023 performance was nothing short of magical. The North Shuswap Branch saw a huge turnout, and for an hour, we forgot about the fires and smoke surrounding our community. After the show, Leif gave a quick performance for staff and a small group of patrons. One attendee was so mesmerized he left without his phone. There was laughter, even joy—and we needed it.”

— North Shuswap Branch Staff

RAINBOW REGISTRY

Kelowna Branch First To Receive Rainbow Registry Accreditation

The ORL is committed to creating welcoming spaces for everyone in our communities. We spoke with members of our Queer Advisory Committee about what Rainbow Registry accreditation means for the library—and for the people we serve.

Why is Rainbow Registry accreditation important?

The Rainbow Registry provides an objective, third-party reviewed method for organizations and businesses across Canada to demonstrate their commitment to inclusivity. Being Rainbow Registered signals to our communities that the ORL strives to be a safe environment for all residents.

What does Rainbow Registry accreditation mean to you?

For the library, being Rainbow Registered is a pledge to uphold a safe and supportive space for 2SLGBTQI+ individuals. It’s a commitment to ensuring that everyone feels welcome and valued within our walls.

How does Rainbow Registry accreditation contribute to vibrant community spaces?

The 2SLGBTQI+ community continues to face challenges with visibility in public spaces. By joining the Rainbow Registry, the ORL actively embraces diversity and inclusion, weaving these values into the fabric of the Okanagan. This accreditation helps break down barriers, encouraging individuals who may have been hesitant to visit the library to step through our doors.



Okanagan Regional Library Branches are...

FOR EXPLORING

"We Commit To: Embrace local heritage and culture. Represent and highlight Indigenous culture, histories, and knowledge. Showcase local talent including artists, writers, musicians, and filmmakers. Offer and actively celebrate local community events."

—ORL Strategic Plan 2024-2029

An Expanding Collection of Local Talent

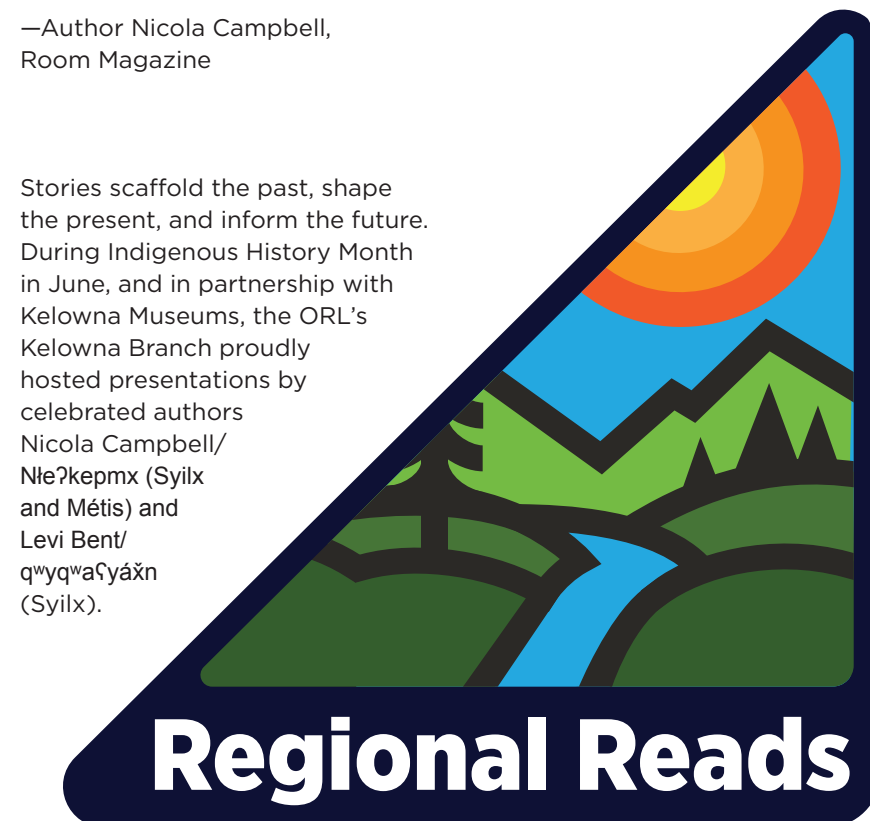
The Okanagan Regional Library proudly supports local writers and illustrators through our Regional Reads Collection—a showcase of creative works by independent and self-published creators in our communities. This initiative reflects the ORL's commitment to celebrating community, fostering cultural growth, and offering readers the opportunity to explore unique perspectives rooted in our region. Through supporting local talent, the ORL strengthens its role as a cultural bridge, offers a chance for emerging writers to share their voices with a wider audience, and connects readers with the voices that make our region extraordinary.

Hi-Story! Celebrating Indigenous Voices

"Many Indigenous writers and storytellers share this teaching that we have to be conscious of our words, because stories are alive. Once stories are released, they go out into the world, and they do their work."

—Author Nicola Campbell, Room Magazine

The authors shared their stories, their work, and discussed the importance of reclaiming Indigenous narratives and celebrating *capitkwat* (ways of life and living).



Pitch Perfect

Entrepreneurs often focus on what they want to say, but a great pitch is about what the audience needs to hear. Founder's Hot Seat, hosted by Okanagan coLab at the ORL's Kelowna Branch, helps founders bridge that gap, ensuring their message resonates with investors, customers, and potential partners alike.

With expert feedback and hands-on practice, participants refine their pitch delivery, making sure they stand out when it matters most. By the time Pitch Night arrives they're ready to present with confidence, clarity, and impact.

One entrepreneur shared, "The insights from Founder's Hot Seat completely transformed how I talk about my company. Now, investors don't just hear my pitch—they're motivated by it."



“

"I just want to say how wonderful West Kelowna's Traditional Skills Workshop was. I have participated in two workshops at the library and have felt a great sense of community. I can't say enough how much I appreciate the library. Thank you!"

—West Kelowna patron

Maker Educators: Inspiring Creativity and Innovation

Meet Heather Marnier, Maker Educator at the Westside Learning Lab, who shares how hands-on learning and creativity come to life in our Makerspaces.

What is the role of a Maker Educator?

Maker Educators are often our patron community's first point of contact with new technology. Technology is a tool that's integrated into almost every part of our lives, and it's crucial to know what's available and how to use it to achieve your goals. Whether it's getting started with an eReader, troubleshooting a new iPad, or diving into Makerspace technology like the 3D printer, Audio Room, or Digitization Stations, Maker Educators provide friendly, knowledgeable assistance, one-on-one tech support, and STEAM programming.

Our Makerspaces are designed to spark creativity and exploration. We support patrons at every stage of learning—whether they're observing, experimenting, or fully immersed in a project. When a new patron arrives in our Makerspace, I make sure to ask if they need help, often telling them, "I'll stay with you until you feel comfortable with this technology."

What inspires the programs you create?

I'm most inspired by questions that don't have clear answers—those unsolved puzzles that spark curiosity. I design programs that encourage hands-on learning, where young patrons can create something tangible while exploring real-world concepts.

I'm so fortunate to work with a group of young Makerspace patrons, ages 7 to 12, who have attended monthly for over a year and a half. A recent program was inspired by the Fintry Queen, a paddle ferry that once operated on Okanagan Lake. It led to an exploration of how paddle boats work—why their paddles are shaped a certain way and how water displacement plays a role. We used our laser cutter to build and test different paddle designs, asking questions, making predictions, and learning through trial and error.

When I'm genuinely excited about a project, that enthusiasm becomes contagious!

How have Makerspaces grown over the years?

I've had the incredible privilege of watching our Makerspaces grow and evolve from the beginning. There's been tremendous growth in terms of community outreach, new technology, creative programming, and patron enthusiasm.

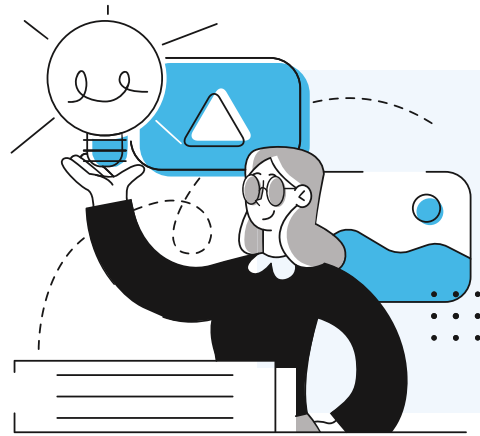
I've seen patrons connect over projects, exchanging ideas and learning from each other. Whether it's our Quilting Group, the Artist Circle, or the Amateur Radio Club, our Makerspaces are where people with shared interests come together. The Westside Makers group even supports assistive technology learning, making a real difference in people's lives.

It's inspiring to witness these connections grow. Every day, I get to see the spark of curiosity turn into something real for our patrons—and that's the joy of being a Maker Educator.

—Heather Marnier, Maker Educator, Westside Learning Lab



I'm most inspired by questions that don't have clear answers—those unsolved puzzles that spark curiosity.



11,297

Total number of
programs offered

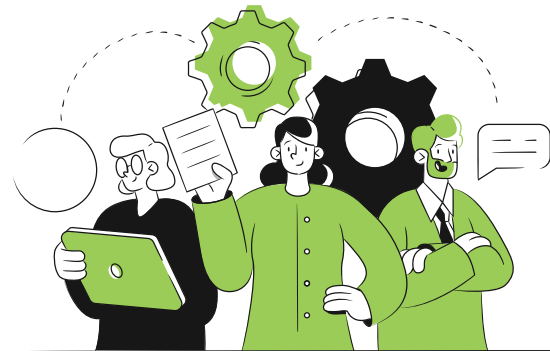
15,089

Niche Academy
Tutorials Viewed



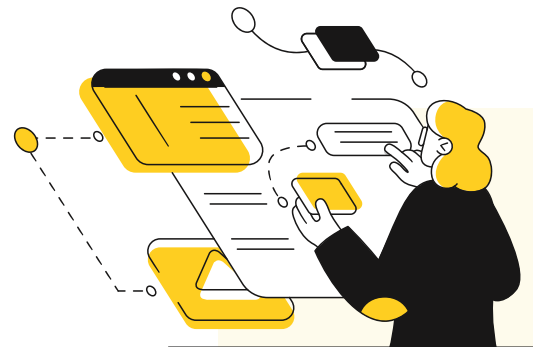
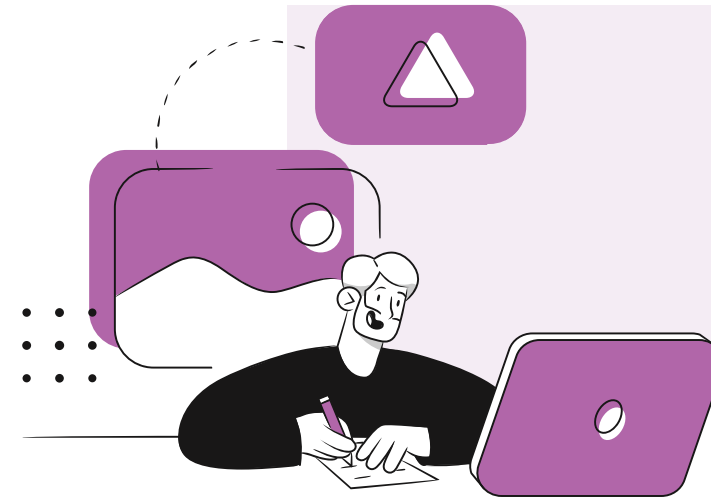
209,114

Total attendance at
ORL programs



2,576

Hours spent learning new
skills through LinkedIn
Learning for Libraries



1,275,840

ORL eBooks & eAudio Checkouts

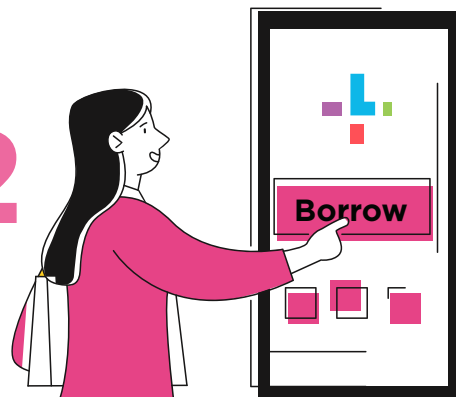
1,436,980

Number of Patrons walked
through our doors



2,192,582

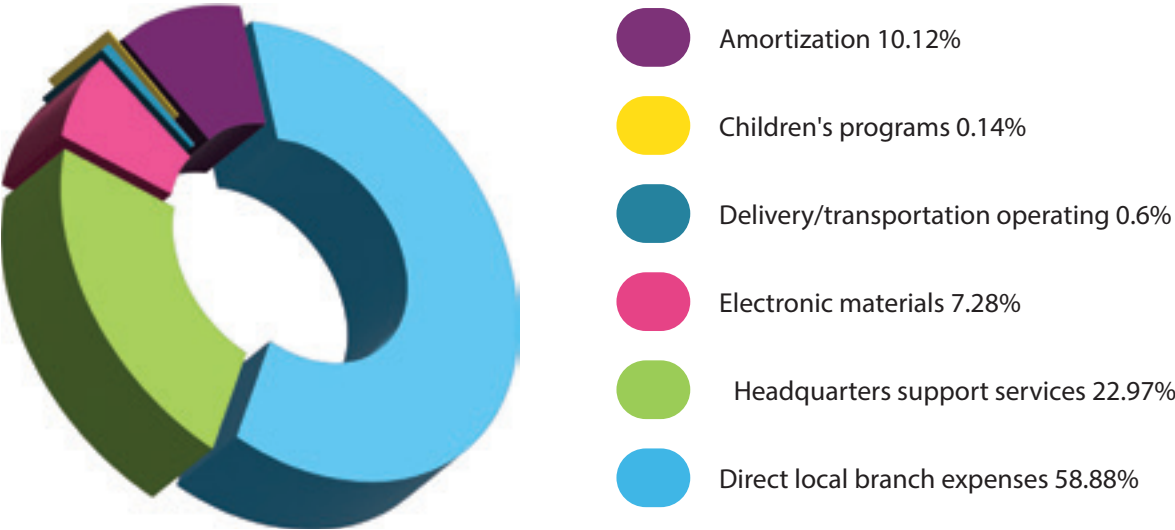
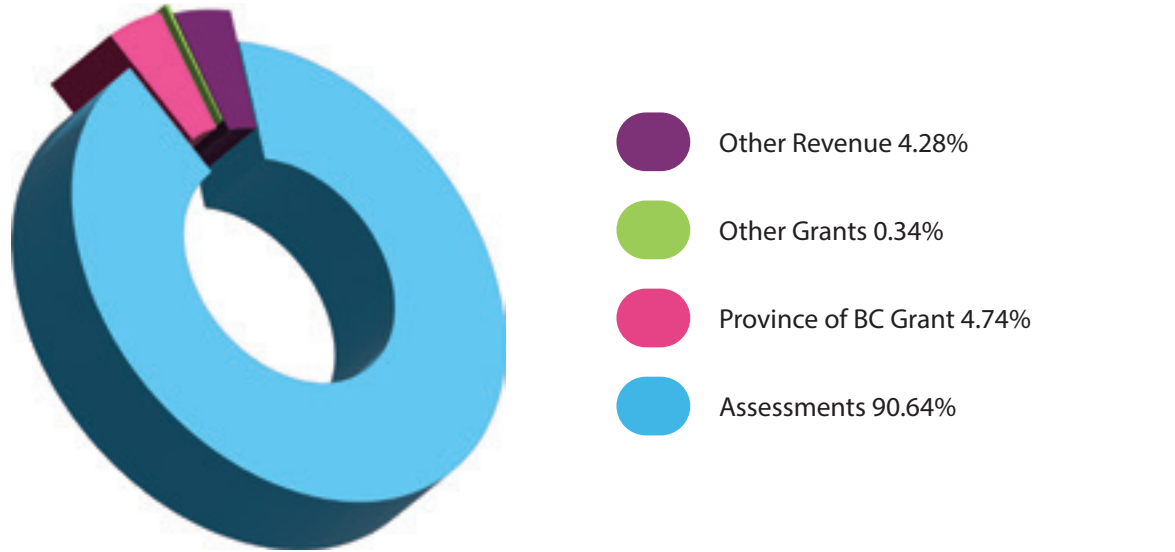
Books, magazines & other
materials borrowed



119,444

Active Cardholders

Expenses by Object	2024	2024	2023
	Budget \$	Actual \$	Actual \$
Advertising and marketing	89,979	122,171	123,563
Amortization		2,356,411	2,291,717
Association dues and memberships	20,972	15,772	14,078
Board and committee expenses	20,745	10,684	13,390
Board strategic planning		8,390	63,910
Book binding and mending	22,545	2,180	2,768
Collection agency	3,000	1	354
Communications	83,175	92,646	91,577
Computer maintenance and telecommunications	609,273	799,785	730,781
Electronic materials	1,685,608	1,694,323	1,672,143
Insurance	63,732	97,110	60,782
Interest, bank charges and foreign exchange	11,500	13,710	12,868
Long tern debt interest	430,650	511,260	493,800
Maintenance and utilities	1,974,396	2,552,258	2,023,051
Penticton library contract	48,328	44,220	42,020
Postage and freight	65,143	45,824	48,274
Professional fees	90,345	139,347	117,866
Programs	162,733	123,255	113,853
Rent	1,770,218	1,744,598	1,845,012
Staff development	275,911	259,938	239,060
Supplies	149,344	539,741	278,625
Transportation	143,583	178,914	135,402
Wages and benefits	11,782,542	11,954,111	11,065,411



A special thanks to these contributors

Baird, Michael. HQ

Best, Marion. NA

Beischer, Lois. WK

Bergeron, Lucie. RE

Burnham, Ardie. SA

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Schneider, Christa. AR

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Thompson, Tara. HQ

Thoreson,
Stephanie. VE

Vercholuk,
Trudy. SA FOL

Ward, Michelle.
KL FOL

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Visit us at your nearest ORL library,

www.orl.bc.ca/hours-locations or email us at help@orl.bc.ca

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Cherryville	250.547.9776	Peachland	250.767.9111
Enderby	250.838.6488	Princeton	250.295.6495
Falkland	250.379.2705	Revelstoke	250.837.5095
Golden	250.344.6516	Rutland	250.765.8165
Hedley	250.292.8259	Salmon Arm	250.832.6161
Kaleden	250.497.8066	Sicamous	250.836.4845
Kelowna	250.762.2800	Silver Creek	250.832.4719
Keremeos	250.499.2313	South Shuswap	250.675.4818
Lake Country	250.766.3141	Summerland	250.494.5591
Lumby	250.547.9528	UBC-O	N/A
Mission	250.764.2254	Vernon	250.542.7610
Naramata	250.496.5679	Westbank	250.768.4369
North Shuswap	250.955.8198	Westside Learning Lab	778.755.6235
Okanagan Falls	250.497.5886	Administration	250.860.4033
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