

Library Report

Compiled by Ian White



Staff profile

Mahala Sears

Mahala Sears has been a library clerk, an automation trainer, and, now, Western Counties Regional Library's programs and services manager. "My previous roles in the library have helped greatly with my transition to management," she says. "I have already developed strong relationships with the other staff at the library, making it easy and open to work with them."

Her work in the branches and with the branch staff has given her an understanding of the day-to-day work the clerks encounter and valuable experience with programming in the communities.

"Our branch staff are very busy and I have seen first-hand the need for a programs and services manager to take the lead for the region," she says. "This has all allowed me to jump right in and get started developing new programming to come, region-wide."

She believes one of the biggest challenges is providing equitable and accessible programming and developing meaningful partnerships with the library.

She has high praise for the branch clerks who are busy producing regular, well-loved programming, but says there is a gap in regional programming.

"With my new position I aim to build on the programming and services throughout our organization and make connections with the different community groups," she says.

Community shows its love of the library during Adopt-A-Book



Library staff show their appreciation of the community support for the 2022 Adopt-A-Book campaign, which concluded Nov. 30.

People showed their love of Western Counties Regional Library by adopting 974 books during the 2022 Adopt-A-Book campaign.

The Adopt-A-Book campaign, which ran from Oct. 1 to Nov. 30, crushed its goal of having 750 new books adopted by the public to put on library shelves.

"The support people give this campaign is heartening," says Library Executive Director Erin Comeau. "It shows their love of reading and the library."

"It also is a 'thank-you' to our staff for their hard work and the service they provide," she says.

The fundraiser allows people to adopt (purchase for the library) books to put on their public library's shelves. All 10 branches had books on display that were available to adopt and borrow right away.

The dollar value of the donations to adopt the books was \$28,840, coming at a critical time for the library.

"Our funding is frozen for the next three years. With rising inflation and related-costs of operation, we have to cut back on

the number of new books and other library material we buy," Comeau said at the start of the campaign.

Community support came from all parts of the Tri-Counties and beyond, says Ian White, public relations manager and campaign organizer.

"People knew about the campaign and its importance because our sponsor Radio CJLS was airing campaign advertisements and doing live updates throughout the two-month period," says White. "Financial institutions, community organizations, schools and library Friends groups provided some very large donations in the hundreds and thousands of dollars."

"Individuals are huge contributors," says White. "For some, just having the ability to see and hold the book they are adopting and being able to borrow it makes the campaign easy to support."

The Adopt-A-Book campaign is carried out every two years with the next one coming in 2024. The 14 campaigns have raised \$399,598, putting 17,748 new books on library shelves.

Celebrating services for people with disabilities

Western Counties Regional Library celebrated its services available to people with disabilities in early December.

The event is tied to International Day of People with Disabilities on Dec. 3

“This is a week where we want to highlight services that we offer and showcase materials by, for, and about people with disabilities,” says Lydia Hunsberger, manager of collections and digital services for the library.

Some of the services and items the library offers include:

- Large print books
- Audiobooks and eBooks
- Portable DAISY talking book players
- Access to Centre for Equitable Library Access (CELA) and National Network for Equitable Library Service (NNELS)
- Autism fidget and sensory tool kits
- Borrow-by-Mail and staff-assisted selection
- Videos and DVDs with descriptive text
- Captioned videos and DVDs

Many of these items will be part of displays at library branches during the celebration. The library also has



Lydia Hunsberger of Western Counties Regional Library holds a portable Daisy talking book player next to some of the items and technology available for people with disabilities.

accessible computer workstations at seven of its branches. These stations each have a 27-inch full HD monitor, Adesso 4-times large print keyboard, and a Kensington trackball mouse.

Library staff members are available to help people find books or audiobooks, Hunsberger says. This can be a one-time service or it can be ongoing for people who prefer to have staff supply them with favourite authors and titles in preferred formats.

Available through the library, CELA and NNELS offer downloadable audio and electronic books (DAISY, MP3, and e-text formats), described video, and braille to people with print disabilities. People can sign up to download books to their own devices or computers, or have items delivered directly to their home or library.

“We are celebrating and highlighting these free library services,” Hunsberger says.

AROUND THE BRANCHES

Headquarters



Office Manager Yvonne LeBlanc, left, receives her 35-year work anniversary certificate from Executive Director Erin Comeau on Nov. 30.

Barrington

The Municipality of the District of Barrington has repaired the driveway around the library building.

Digby

The library has become a weekly learning hub for a group of adults, learning English, improving literacy skills and computer technology skills while Digby Area Learning Association's new facility is being built.

Lockeport

The library is strengthening its connection with Lockeport Elementary School. Primary and Grade 1 and 2 classes are visiting on Friday mornings. This has increased library membership as the students acquire cards and borrow books and other items during their visits.

Shelburne

Friends of the Shelburne Library's silent auction fundraiser returned for the first time in two years in late November and early December. The Friends group is a huge supporter of the library, providing funds for new, needed items, including a \$4,000 donation during the 2022 Adopt-A-book campaign.

Weymouth

Pictured right, Weymouth library clerk Marguerite Thibault and students from Weymouth Consolidated School hold up Smelly Socks bookmarks, created at the library after reading the Robert Munsch's book *Smelly Socks* on Nov. 16.



Westport

Pictured right, Westport library has new upgrades, including a wheelchair ramp and an accessible front door.

