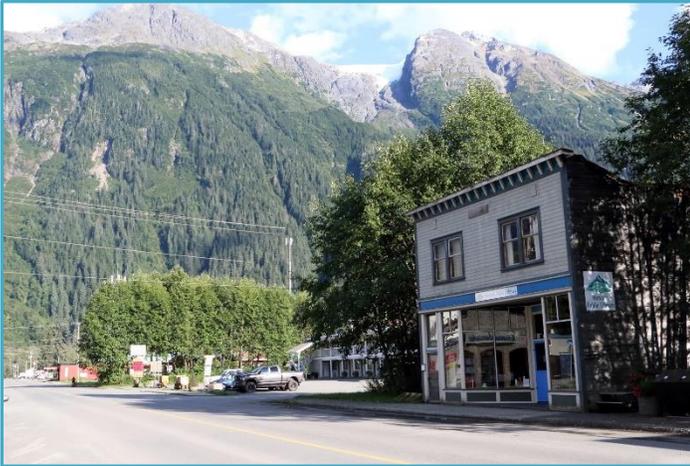




Stewart Public Library: Provincial Libraries Grant Report 2020



Stewart Public Library serves approximately 450 people in the immediate community of Stewart BC and Hyder, Alaska. Stewart is home to BC’s most northerly ice-free port and is in the heart of the Golden Triangle. It is typically supported by several different industries that include mining, mining exploration, logging, transportation, and tourism. This year, the BC pipeline has had a great impact on employment within the community. Stewart has been used as a gateway for pipe import which has increased the job market as well as investor interest. Due to Covid-19 restrictions, the

community has seen a reduction of tourism which has directly impacted the businesses that heavily rely on this seasonal influx of visitors to the community. Stewart has been long known as the “community that never dies,” since the gold rush days of the early 1900’s. The community prides itself on bouncing back from the tough times and growing in the good times.

British Columbia Government’s Priorities and Goals for Libraries and its Citizens:

Province of British Columbia’s Key Priorities

- Making Life More Affordable
- Delivering Service People Can Count On
- Building a Strong, Sustainable Economy

BC Strategic Plan for Libraries: Goals

- Improving Access to British Columbians
- Building Capacity
- Advancing Citizen Engagement
- Enhancing Governance

This year marks the first year of our new, **3-year Strategic Plan for the Stewart Public Library**. Through community surveys, board consultation, and consideration of government initiatives, we chose 4 goals that would help us to meet our community’s needs over the next 3 years:

Goal #1 Collaborate with businesses, organizations, and people within our community to enhance our programming.

Goal #2 Connect with all age groups within our community to provide equal opportunity for services and programming for all.

Goal #3 Expand, improve, and enhance access to connectivity and technology for staff and the public.

Goal #4 Building capacity for the community, staff, and the board of trustees.

Summary of Stewart Public Library's Strategic Plan 2020-2023



Stewart Public Library

Strategic Plan Summary

~2020-2023~

Our Mission:

The Mission of the Stewart Public Library is to enrich the life of every person in our community by providing access to the world's ideas and information

Guiding Principles:

Service
Equality
Inspiration
Connections
Collaboration



Community Collaboration

- Utilize services and skills in our community that can benefit our population as a whole through our programs
- Support community initiatives through outreach and collaboration.
- Continue to partner and provide outreach within our local schools.
- Utilize available spaces within the community and explore options for increasing space for programming.



Community Connection

- Connect with all age groups within our community through programming and outreach
- Strengthen relationship with the teen/young adult community by offering programs and services that are specifically geared towards their interests.
- Expand programming aimed towards the adult population



Community Technology

- Utilize technology to the best of our ability to offer barrier free services, collection and programs
- Use technology for operational efficiency within the library



Community Capacity Building

- Increase online educational opportunities through the library that will enhance skills in the community
- Build and improve skills of staff and board through workshops, online classes and yearly conferences

Measuring Our Success

Library use and membership ~ Items borrowed ~ Attendance at programs, webinars and workshops ~ Stat count use of technology & services ~ Partnerships and Collaboration ~ Staff and board training~ Output of initiatives, Outcome of initiatives,

How our services & programs support B.C. Commitments and the B.C. Strategic Plan for Public Libraries; Government funding supports these services:

Improving Access for British Columbians

Our strategic goals that support this initiative:

- Collaborate with businesses, organizations, and people within our community to enhance our programming.
- Expand, improve, and enhance access to connectivity and technology for staff and the public.

Serving the community of Stewart through connectivity and supporting technological needs, is one of our main priorities. Some of the programs and services we offered in 2020 to support this commitment were:

Online databases and resource sharing: We continue to subscribe to online databases as well as digital resource sharing. E-materials including audiobooks, e-books and e-magazines are available to our patrons 24/7. The BC Libraries Cooperative plays an essential role in purchasing affordable databases and giving support to enable us to fulfill our mandate and serve the community.

1:1 Technology support: We offer our patrons free 1:1 support to help them navigate their personal technology and library resources. Throughout 2020, we offered in-person technology support 36 times. 100% of our patrons that used this service in 2020, were over the age of 65.

Access to wi-fi and public computers: We began 2020 with a complete connectivity overhaul. The District of Stewart generously donated their technology resources and expertise free of charge to the library. Partnering with them enabled us to update all our desktop computers, upgrade to high-speed internet and have access to technical support whenever needed. One challenge in 2019 was our slow internet speeds despite paying high prices; This is no longer a problem. Despite Stewart being a remote community, we now offer excellent internet access, which has benefited both staff and the public. We continue to have 1 desktop computer and 11 laptops available for patrons to use in-house. Our public computers were booked 56 times.



Outcome: The Stewart Public Library has built the reputation of being the main place to go for reliable information, acquiring resources, technology support and connectivity. By offering barrier free services, we are able to improve access to information and technology for everyone.

Measuring Our Success: Frequency of in-house tech support, computer use, access to online databases and access to wi-fi.

Building Capacity:

Our Strategic goals that support this initiative are:

- Collaborate with businesses, organizations, and people within our community to enhance our programming.
- Connect with all age groups within our community to provide equal opportunity for services and programming for all.
- Building capacity for the community, staff, and the board of trustees.

Stewart Public Library plays a major role in our community for providing skills, education and knowledge through our programs, services, and resources. With help from provincial funding, we were able to maintain and improve our options for the staff, board, and patrons to acquire new skills and knowledge. We place a large emphasis on collaborating with different organizations and stakeholders to bring quality, dependable programs and services that enrich the lives of the people in our community.

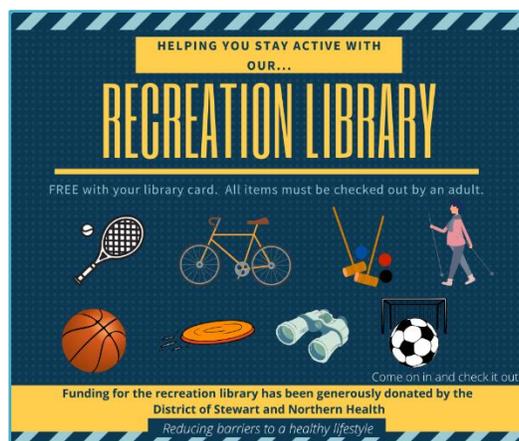
Some of the programs and services that we have offered free of charge, throughout 2020 are:

Invigilation: We offered our patrons free invigilation for exams and tests that require supervision. This service allows our community to take tests and exams that will update their professional skills.

Summer Reading Club: Our patrons have come to rely on and expect this yearly summer program that is fully funded by the BC government. This is typically an interactive weekly offering during the summer months, however; this summer we saw a 42% decrease in registration. This does not represent a typical year and numbers are suspected to be down due the cancellation of in-person programming because of Covid-19. Our patrons that did register, enjoyed the virtual activities made available through the BC Summer Reading Club.

Coding Class: We offered a coding class to our local homeschool children through the program Vidcode. We had a total attendance of 80 youth within 3 months. Due to Covid-19, this program was terminated in March.

Recreation Library: Stemming from a round table community discussion, it was thought that having lendable recreation equipment would be beneficial to the health of the community. The Stewart Public Library volunteered to spear head this initiative and provide free, loanable recreational equipment. Through grants and fundraising with the District of Stewart, we were able to purchase approximately \$3500 worth of recreation equipment. We held a launch party in March 2020 where we invited the community and the District Council to learn about the program. Covid-19 regulations went into effect almost immediately after the launch party and the recreation lending was put on hold. We started lending again in September and anticipate the program to grow in 2021 as awareness increases.



Homeschool Programming: Our homeschool program started the year with a 57% decrease in attendees from 2019. This is directly related to a family moving out of town and is a prime example of the effect one

family can have on a small community such as Stewart. This weekly program had an attendance of 16 between January and March. We did not have the staff capacity or enough interest to offer this program virtually and was put on hold for the rest of the year.

Book Club: Between January and November, we held 5 book club meetings with a total attendance of 31. After Covid-19 restrictions went into place, we did not have enough space in the library to host an in-person book club while maintaining physical distancing measures. We were able to use a district owned facility to host our books clubs safely and continue with this program. In December, we decided to move to a virtual platform as restrictions got tighter in the province. Interest in the program dropped and we did not have enough interest to justify continuing this program. We decided to put a hold on this program until 2021.

Passive/Distance Programming: Many of our passive and distance programs that we offered were in collaboration with the District of Stewart. Some of these programs included Scavenger Hunts, Bingo, Trivia and Colouring Contests. The library also offered Take and Make kits for all ages during the Summer and Winter months. 6 different themes were offered throughout the year with a total of 80 participants.



Our library staff consists of 1 full time staff (35 hrs/week) and 1 part time staff (.35). We participated in many learning opportunities that helped us better our knowledge and serve our community. Some of the professional development opportunities were: ABCPLD Professional Development Series, BCLA Summer Conference, ABCPLD Library Director meetings, Customer Service Courses offered through interLINK and funded through the training subsidy. These opportunities have been funded by the Provincial Government in collaboration with its affiliated partners.



Outcomes: Provide trusted programs and professional development that enhance the skills and training for both our staff and our patrons

Measuring Our Success: Attendance at in-person programs, Number of participants for Passive/Distance Programs.

Advancing Citizen Engagement

Our Strategic goals that support this initiative are:

- **Collaborate with businesses, organizations, and people within our community to enhance our programming.**

By promoting citizen engagement, we can deepen the trust of our patrons with reliable information. We have advertised important information through our social media, website, and quarterly newsletter. We strive to communicate with our patrons on a regular basis and keep them informed on all levels of government and community initiatives. Some of our services and programs that helped us advance citizen engagement were:

Webinars: We offered a total of 7 different webinars in partnership with the Canadian Government and NIDUS. These webinars mostly consisted of information on finances, government credits and benefits as well as personal planning. Participation from our community in these webinars could not be calculated as they were through a 3rd party website.

Physical Literature: Physical books were added to the library to educate the community on current Indigenous affairs and reconciliation. We read 2 books throughout 2020 in our book club written by Indigenous authors. We had a total of 18 participants in these 2 meetings. Important conversation was had and participants left with a deeper understanding of first nations relations, issues and reconciliation.



Outcomes: We are a trusted and reliable source for people seeking information, social interaction and collaboration.

Measuring Our Success: Feedback from the community through surveys

Enhancing Governance

Our Strategic goals that support this initiative are:

- **Building capacity for the community, staff, and the board of trustees.**

We gained two new board members in 2020 who are a valuable addition to the governance team. We currently have 5 board members who govern the Stewart Public Library. It is a challenge for us to find volunteers who are interested in joining the board. This is a struggle that is echoed in small towns as volunteers often feel burnout. The Stewart Public Library is extremely grateful for the ongoing dedication and expertise that we currently have on our board of directors and recognize that they are vital to our operations. Helping us to enhance our governance, we introduced our new 2020-2023 Strategic Plan. We are looking forward to using this guiding document to serve our community over the next 3 years.

With assistance from the Provincial Government and facilitated by the BCLTA, our board of directors participated in 3 different webinars on best practices and how to be an effective board member.



Technology Grant:

The technology grant given by the BC Provincial Government was met with a lot of excitement from the Stewart Public Library. We were able to purchase items that would have a big impact on our community and help accomplish our goals. We utilized the technology grant in the following ways:

Resource/Activity	Output	Immediate Outcomes	Intermediate Outcomes	Ultimate Outcomes/Impact
Funding for items necessary to set up a self-serve check out station for our patrons (iPad, scanner, accessories).	A self-serve check-out station that patrons can use to privately check-out materials.	Patrons have an increase in privacy when checking out their materials.	Patrons will feel more comfortable checking out materials that they may have been reluctant to check out due to stigma.	Helping to deliver the provincial strategic goal for public libraries to improve access to British Columbians.
Funding for the purchase of a loanable hotspot and a monthly plan.	A hotspot will be available for people to borrow and use at home.	Patrons can access the internet without needing to be at the library.	Increases access and reduces barriers to connectivity for the community.	Helping to deliver the provincial strategic goal for public libraries to improve access for British Columbians.
Funding to purchase technology items for loanable technology kits (Osmo, Ozbots)	Technology kits can be borrowed and used at home.	Patrons can borrow technology kits that will inspire and educate.	Patrons who do not have the means to purchase tech items will be given the opportunity to explore new technology.	Helping to deliver the provincial strategic goal for public libraries to improve access for British Columbians and build capacity.
Funding to purchase items for the Multi-Media Center (camera, microphone, streaming device, colour printer, video conferencing service and accessories)	Media devices that patrons can borrow for use in the library. Staff can use items for library programming.	Patrons can use items for personal educational or professional gain. Staff can expand the capacity of our programming.	People with limited access to media and technology, can use our equipment to meet their needs. Staff will be able to increase the scope and reach of programming by offering virtual programs.	Helping to deliver the provincial strategic goal for public libraries to improve access to British Columbians, build capacity and enhance engagement.

Covid 19:

We started the year off with many activities, initiatives and partnerships planned for 2020. On March 18th, we closed the library in reaction to the new information given about Covid-19. This put a halt to our original 2020 plans, and we needed to rearrange the structure of our services in a way that has never been done before. Although not mandated to close, the decision was made to prohibit physical entry into the library until a proper Covid-19 protocol had been created and approved.

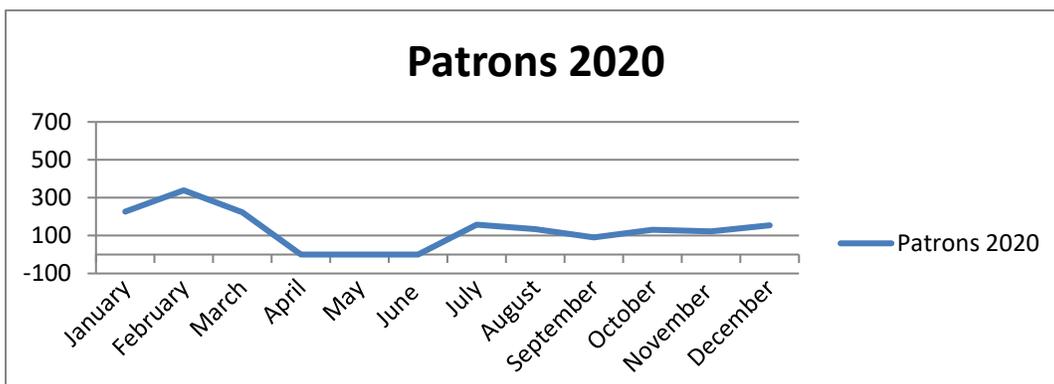
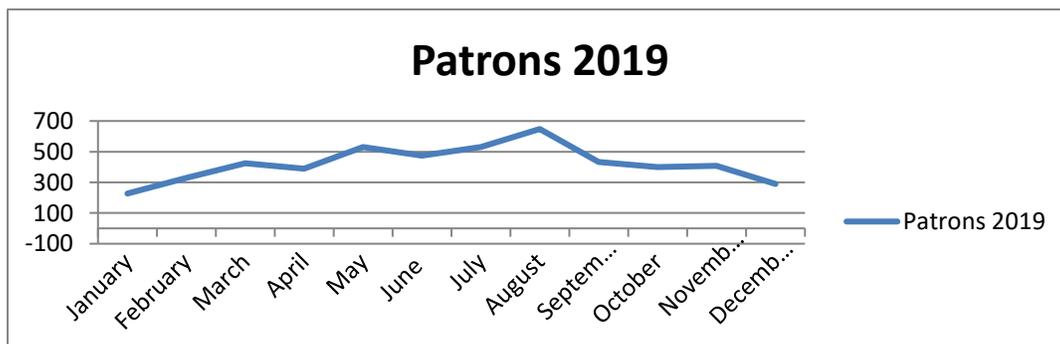
We immediately began a “book to door program”, where local holds continued to be filled and were delivered to our patron’s doorsteps.

Staff and the board of directors began collaborating on the best way to continue in-library services. One challenge we faced when creating a plan to reopen, was our ability to keep our patrons physically distanced from each other due to our small library space. We would not be able to have more than 1 household at a time or have patrons use the computer while others used the library. For these reasons, we decided to enforce the following:

- Open for 3 days a week to 1 person/household at a time for browsing/check-out only.
- Open for 2 days a week for 1:1 services and computer use. This was by appointment only.

We opened our doors once again on June 29th. This procedure worked well as we were able to control the flow of the library with minimal risks. We continued this for the remainder of 2020.

We saw a significant drop in our in-person visits, which was to be expected. This reduction was directly related to our new Covid-19 policy.



We circulated 165 books within the first 3 months of our closure. This included home delivery as well as curbside pick-up. This is significantly less than the same period in 2019 where we had 813 circulations.

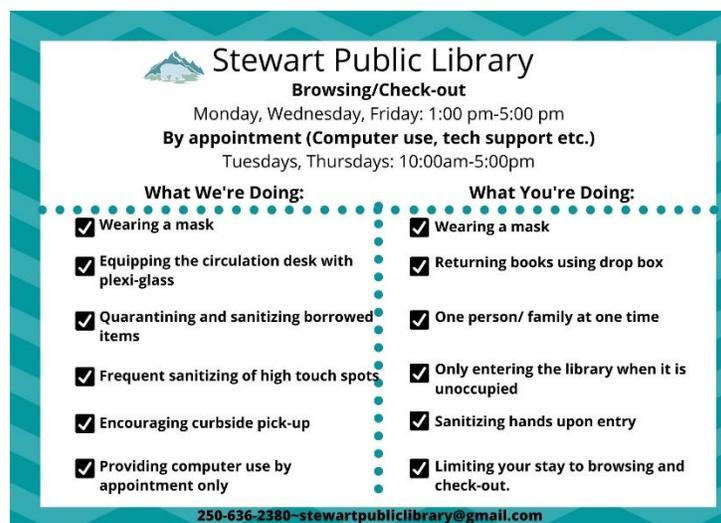
We circulated 1573 books in all of 2020. This is 32% lower than our circulations in all of 2019. This drop in circulation can be directly attributed to new library Covid-19 protocols.

We began distance and virtual programming at the end of March 2020. Many of these were in partnership with the District of Stewart. This would continue to be the format of our program delivery throughout the rest of the year. The community was responsive to the distance programming (passive programs and take-aways), however very little interest was shown when we offered virtual programs.



In the beginning of the pandemic, all returns were quarantined for 72 hours before being checked in. We reduced this to 24 hours in October to help with the backlog that we were experiencing.

Overall, 2020 has been one with many challenges. We changed almost every aspect of how we serve our community but despite these changes, we remained resilient and committed to our mandate.



Stewart Public Library is essential to our small community that often feels the effects of isolation. The funding that we receive through the Province of British Columbia is crucial in helping us serve our community through programs, services, resources and information.