

## News Release

### **Samosas and smartphones - B.C. libraries and Decoda Literacy Solutions celebrate informal learning**

**NANAIMO January 21, 2013** – There's a trick or two to configuring your smartphone for downloading library eBooks. It's great to attend a program at your local public library that gives you tips on learning how to use an eReader. And samosas are best with just the right amount of spice - not too little and not too much.

How do we know? We may have discovered it for ourselves, maybe attended a workshop, or consulted a cookbook or two. We learned it – but outside of formal school. This kind of loose, often unrecognized learning – called informal and non-formal learning – is something public libraries and literacy organizations in the province are highlighting as part of the week leading up to ABC Life Literacy Canada's Family Literacy Day, Jan. 27.

"This is the kind of learning that literacy programs and public libraries support every day," says Brenda Le Clair, chief executive officer of Decoda Literacy Solutions, which leads a literacy network that reaches 400 communities in B.C. There are thousands of workshops, discussion groups, readings and training sessions that happen each day in public libraries and literacy programs around the province.

"All of this is learning is available for free and it makes a real difference to our communities and their quality of life," says Fiona Anderson, Director of Library Services for Vancouver Island Regional Library (VIRL). "Each day, VIRL's 38 libraries offer programs ranging from early literacy storytimes for toddlers, to author readings, workshops on how to download eBooks, how to research your family tree, or learn a new language."

Informal learning and literacy are closely connected: reading, singing, playing games and talking with a child help build language skills well before the youngster starts in school. Research shows that reading to children more than once a day has a positive impact on their future academic skills, says ABC Life Literacy Canada, citing Statistics Canada data.

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**Strong Libraries ■ Strong Communities**

Bella Coola Bowser Campbell River Chemainus Comox Cortes Island Courtenay Cowichan Cowichan Lake Cumberland  
Gabriola Island Gold River Hornby Island Ladysmith Masset Nanaimo Harbourfront Nanaimo Wellington Parksville  
Port Alberni Port Alice Port Clements Port Hardy Port McNeill Port Renfrew Quadra Island Qualicum Beach Queen Charlotte  
Sandspit Sayward Sidney/North Saanich Sointula Sooke South Cowichan Tahsis Tofino Ucluelet Union Bay Woss



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It's easy to celebrate Family Literacy Day with some informal learning and cooking your favourite recipe with your friend or child is a perfect activity. Explore a new recipe with a cookbook from your local library: the informal learning starts the moment you start to uncover the range of cuisines to explore.

Vancouver Island Regional Library (VIRL) is the fourth largest library system in British Columbia. We serve over 430,000 people on Vancouver Island, Haida Gwaii, and Bella Coola on the Central Coast through 38 branch libraries, an eLibrary at [virl.bc.ca](http://virl.bc.ca) and a Books by Mail service.

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