



BUILDING COMMUNITY

online
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2019 ANNUAL REPORT

VANCOUVER ISLAND REGIONAL LIBRARY

#1



**AWARD
WINNING LIBRARY**



STRONG LIBRARIES...STRONG COMMUNITIES

CHAIR **NOTE**



I am passionate about libraries. Since I was child, libraries captivated my imagination, unlocked new worlds and ideas for me, and opened my eyes to the wonderfully imaginative and inspiring world of literature.

As an adult, I came to see libraries as gathering spaces for everyone, as vital components to healthy, literate and informed communities. When I became an elected official, libraries were top of mind for me — after all, they're the great equalizers, and some of the last truly open, accessible, and welcoming spaces in our society.

2019 marked my first year as Chair of the Vancouver Island Regional Library (VIRL) Board of Trustees. From new builds to innovative programming, it was a year of accomplishments, awards, and accolades for VIRL and its staff.

Some 2019 highlights included welcoming the people of Sidney/North Saanich to their beautifully renovated branch, officially opening VIRL's first ever Prototype branch in Sayward, seeing all the innovative and community building programs in our branches, and, of course, having the pleasure of leading a progressive, future-focused, and supportive Board of Trustees.

As Trustees, we supported the launch of VIRL's video game collection, the elimination of children's material fines, STEAM learning, and so many other projects. These initiatives will attract new users, break down barriers, and build important skills for today, and whatever the future brings.

For as long as I can remember, libraries have been an important part of my life. As 2019 attests, VIRL is instilling that same love of libraries in a whole new generation. As an organization, we've taken the long view — we're ready to grow and evolve with the communities we serve.

BOARD CHAIR

Brenda Leigh

ED LETTER

BUILDING COMMUNITY

2019 was a year of community building at Vancouver Island Regional Library (VIRL). This came in the form of bricks and mortar with the opening of two renovated branches in Parksville and Sidney/North Saanich and our first Prototype branch in Sayward. In every case, we continued in our mission of providing 21st Century library experiences to communities large, small, and remote.

We also built community by bringing people together. Our award winning Indigenous Voices program continued in 2019 by inviting Elders, knowledge keepers, artists, and others to share cultural information. Staff's commitment to this important initiative was recognized by the British Columbia Library Association when we were awarded the 2019 Building Better Communities award.

Building community also means breaking down barriers and we did just that when we removed fines on all children's materials. By eliminating children's material fines, we helped to ensure library services are available to some of our customers who need them most. After all, children should have barriers to access removed so they can grow and learn without limitations.

Within the VIRL community, I would be remiss if I did not thank our Board of Trustees and our amazing, dedicated, and creative staff for all they do. 2019 marked the first year for many of our Trustees — from day one, your commitment to library services was evident in your words, actions, and comradery.

To our staff, you are the foundation of everything we do. You are connected to your communities and you create the spaces that draw people in and keep them coming back.



Thank you all for your dedication. We are all community builders.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Rosemary Bonanno

CONTENTS



4	INNOVATIVE TINKER TOTES	6	PARTNER IN PRIDE	8	WELCOME HERE
10	LIBRARY MONTH	11	MORE THAN JUST WELCOME	12	BCLA AWARD WINNING
14	VIDEO GAMES ARE HERE	16	PROTOTYPE LIBRARIES	18	RENOVATED LIBRARIES
20	ONE BOOK. ONE COMMUNITY.	22	A BIG BOOK RETURN	26	KIDS' MATERIALS ARE FINE FREE
28	GIVE LIBRARY	32	THANK YOU	34	FINANCIALS





Our 2019 Executive Committee (from back standing left to right): Brenda Leigh (Chair), Fred Robertson, Daniel Arbour, Evan Putterill, Gaby Wickstrom (Vice Chair). From front seated left to right: Penny Cote, Mary Marcotte, Rosemary Bonanno (Executive Director),

Erin Hemmens, and Debra Toporowski. The Vancouver Island Regional Library (VIRL) Board of Trustees governs the library system and, in accordance with BC's *Library Act*, is made up of elected representatives from 28 member municipalities and 10 regional districts.

The Board 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 VIRL's Mission, Vision, and Values.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

GENIOUS INSPIRING INNOVATIVE

VIRL's new Tinker Totes foster ingenuity, creativity and the future innovators of our communities...

S for Science, T for Technology, E for Engineering, A for Art, and M for Mathematics. These five letters — STEAM — are the heart and soul behind our new Tinker Totes.

Beginning in February 2019, anyone with a library card can borrow Tinker Totes from their library branch and experience the five aspects of STEAM right in their homes.

STEAM education creates critical thinkers, increases science literacy, and enables the next generation of innovators.

"STEAM learning helps young people build foundational skills to prepare them for the future," says VIRL's Director of Library Services and Planning, Melissa Legacy. "Our new Tinker Totes, as well as being a lot of fun for the whole family, could help to spark new passions and interests in science, technology, engineering, arts, and math in kids from Sooke to Sointula."

We launched five fantastic Tinker Totes, just in time for the Family Day long weekend:

- Sensory Playtime – Helping kids explore and learn through sound
- Code-apillar – Teaching kids about coding and computational thinking (see image)
- KEVA Connect Planks – Setting the foundation for imaginative building
- Handbells – Introduce music and composition
- Magna-Tiles – Perfect for aspiring builders

Tinker Totes can be checked out from any VIRL branch for three weeks, and like all other children's materials, there are no late fees. ■

STEAM LEARNING HELPS YOUNG PEOPLE
BUILD FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS TO PREPARE
THEM FOR THE FUTURE





PRIDE PARTNER IN

STORYTIME DRAG A FIRST FOR PORT HARDY



...AND EVERYONE LIVED HAPPILY EVER AFTER!

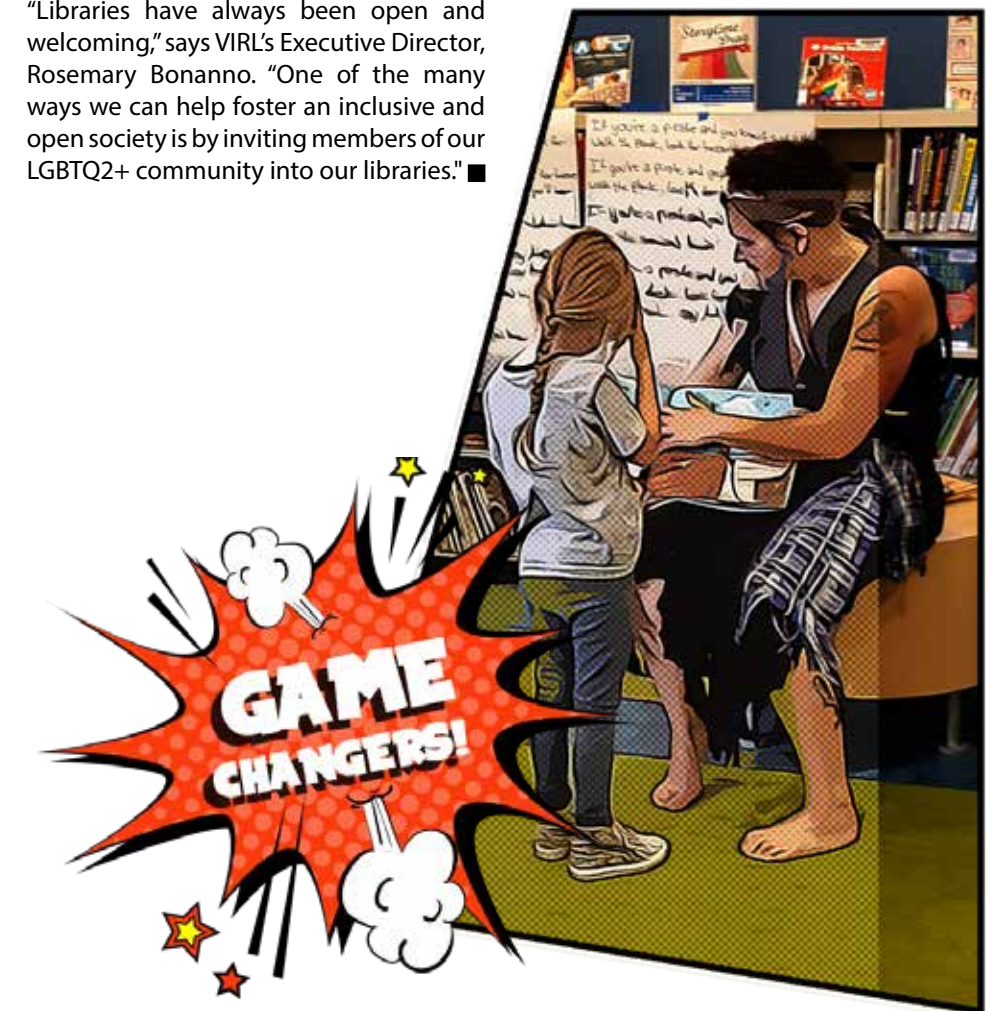
Rainbow flags were flying high during Port Hardy's first Pride Parade on July 20. We joined in their celebrations by inviting the community to the library to take part in Storytime Drag: Featuring Kings, Queens, and In-betweens.

"Hosting the North Island's first Drag Storytime was an amazing event for all," said VIRL's North Island Library Manager, Laura Kaminker. "Not only was it fun, but an opportunity to promote equality, diversity, and welcoming spaces."

The pirate themed event was presented in partnership with the Port Hardy Pride Society, and featured entertaining stories, hands-on crafting, and fabulous face painting creations.

Drag Storytimes are becoming more common in libraries across Canada, and have been extremely popular in VIRL branches for the past couple of years. One of the main goals of these storytimes is to help foster an inclusive and open society by inviting members of the LGBTQ2+ community into the library to help destigmatize perceptions about what it means to be LGBTQ2+ in Canada today.

"Libraries have always been open and welcoming," says VIRL's Executive Director, Rosemary Bonanno. "One of the many ways we can help foster an inclusive and open society is by inviting members of our LGBTQ2+ community into our libraries." ■

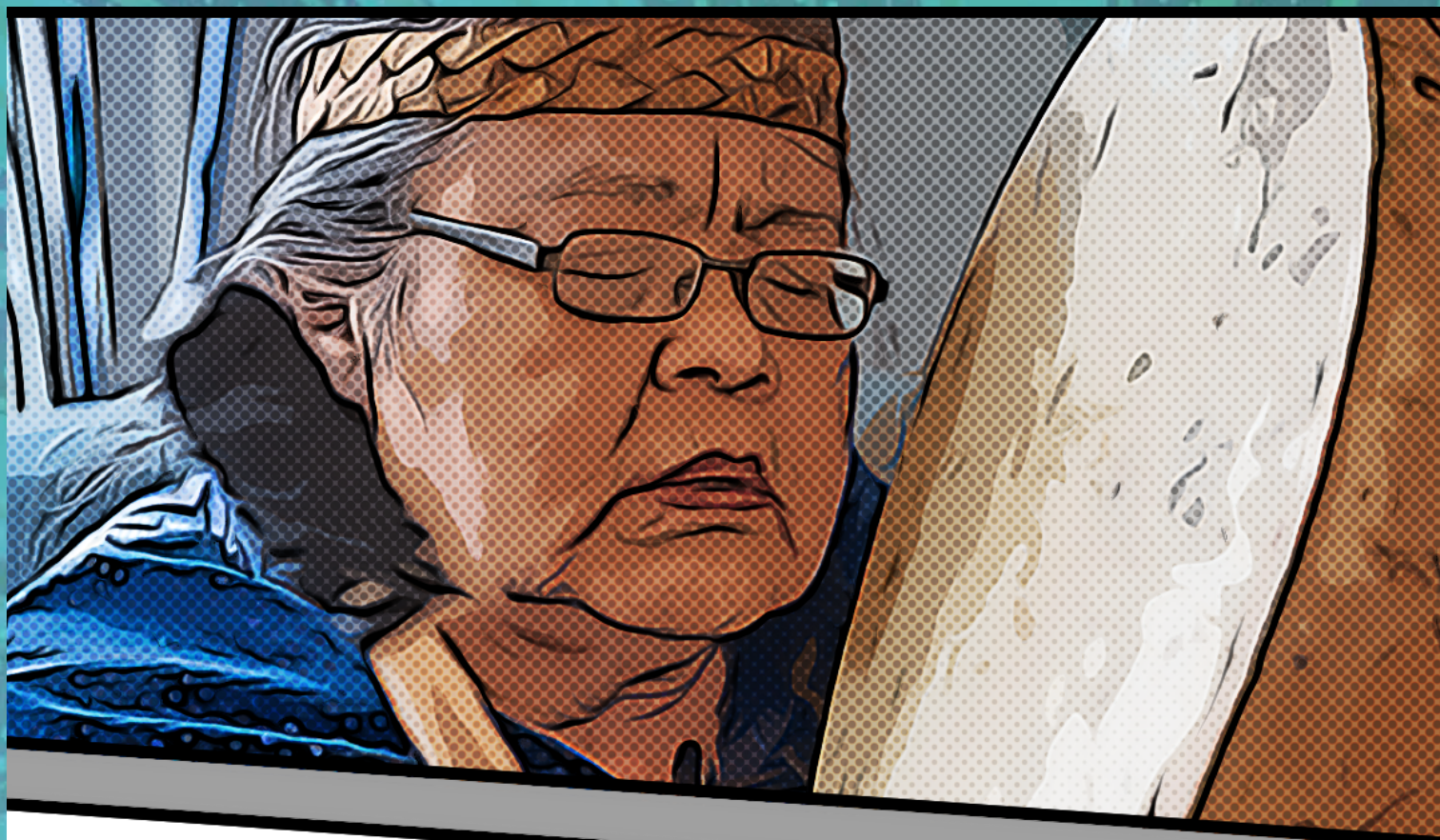


WELCOME TO YOUR LIBRARY...



WELCOME

**THIS
LIBRARY IS
YOUR SPACE.**



LIBRARY MONTH

We celebrated Indigenous culture and customs as the highlight of October Library Month (I Love My Library)...

From film screenings to author talks, storytimes to medicine walks, we spent the month of October celebrating Indigenous people, cultures, customs, and creations during Library Month at VIRL.

Each year we join libraries and library partners across Canada for the month of October to raise awareness of the valuable role libraries play in Canadians' lives. In past themes for our Library Month celebrations, we have shared our love for

LGBTQ2+ and seniors in our communities. All month long, our branches were full of exciting, thought provoking, insightful and informative Indigenous themed programs and displays for all ages.

Events included a Medicine Gathering with Cowichan Tribes Elder Della (Rice) Sylvester, an author talk with Keith D. Smith, the launch of the Indigenous Book Club: Why Indigenous Literatures Matter, and much more.

Staff also curated reading lists of Indigenous authors and put together a reading path to help guide customers on their reading journey.

"Our library system is committed to fostering conversations and opportunities for people to learn together about Indigenous experiences and cultures, past, present, and future," said Rosemary Bonanno, VIRL's Executive Director. ■



MORE THAN JUST WELCOME

During Library Month, an initiative to develop welcome signs in the local Indigenous language for all of our 39 branches was guided by VIRL's Indigenous Committee. This initiative aimed to help recognize the many people, customs, and histories comprising our service area. Whenever possible, we checked with Elders and local language speakers to ensure our greetings reflected the preferred words and spellings of each location. As such, they will be changing as the languages change.

Some VIRL staff also had the opportunity to take courses in their local Indigenous languages in 2019. Greeting people in the language of the area and using the original place names helps send a message of respect.

Sticking with the theme of language, 2019 was also the year we took significant strides to amend the tags and descriptors in our library catalogue by replacing decades-old terminology and descriptions with language that reflects the diversity and autonomy of Indigenous Peoples and communities. We replaced tags such as "Indians" with "Indigenous," and/or with People-specific, proper names. This is an ongoing effort to ensure that all titles in our collection are catalogued and tagged appropriately.

2019 also saw the continuation of our well-loved Indigenous Voices Resources List — a carefully curated collection of books, DVDs, and other materials that explore themes of indigeneity and experiences, past, present, and future. The titles in this list are chosen from VIRL's growing Indigenous Collection, which saw 169 new titles added in 2019.

On the topic of language revitalization, Musqueam Elder, Victor Guerin said in a conversation with a VIRL staff member: "We can maintain a certain amount of culture without language, but it is an impoverished culture. Language and culture are inseparable. Language development in a geographical area is encoded with information specific to that soil. Because of the environmental knowledge encoded within language, it is as important as biodiversity." ■

BCLA AWARD

VIRL is an award winning library, thanks to the super hero creativity and collaboration by staff and partnerships with our Elders and community.

VIRL's Indigenous Voices initiative forged new relationships and understandings in library branches from Sidney to Masset this year. It also took home a prestigious Building Better Communities award at the 2019 BC Library Association (BCLA) conference.

The award recognizes an individual or organization for increasing the relevancy and impact of library service through partnership, collaboration, and building trust where little had previously existed.

Indigenous Voices is educational, entertaining, thought provoking, emotional, and inspiring. It brings people closer and opens up new channels of communication and understanding in many VIRL communities.

The program launched in January 2018 at VIRL's Sidney/North Saanich branch. Attendees learned about reconciliation and residential schools, listened to creation stories, embarked on medicine walks to discover medicinal uses of local plants, participated in drum making sessions and smudging ceremonies. ■



It brings people
closer and opens
up new channels of
communication and
understanding in many
VIRL communities.



BR EW N N W





VIDEO GAMES AT THE LIBRARY!

Many people didn't think of the library as the go-to place to borrow the hottest video games on the market — until now.

T

This year, we began lending our new extensive video game collection for Playstation 4, Nintendo Switch, and Xbox One to customers and gamers alike.

"We know that our customers are avid media consumers," said Emily Mathews, VIRL's Divisional Manager of Collections and Support Services. "Video games are wildly popular in our communities,

particularly with Millennials and Generation Xers, and it is vital that we provide library content to complement their interests and passions. We are so excited to be offering this service."

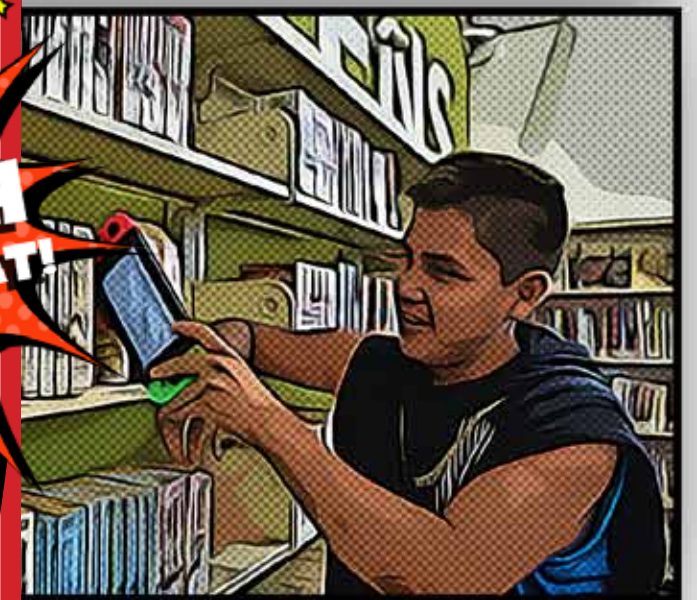
Whether it's our much loved DVD collection or films accessed online through resources such as Kanopy or AcornTV, VIRL has a proven track record

for offering its customers the media it craves. As our customer demographics shift from Baby Boomers to Generation X and Millennials, we are seeing the rise in video gaming as a pastime in our customers' households. We aim to ensure our collections, programs, and services reflect the ongoing and changing interests of all customers.

Not only does our video game collection appeal to a broad range of demographics, it also supports the creation of more regular gaming programs for customers, which have proven to be very popular in our branches. These programs help promote our branches as social hubs and community gathering spaces throughout our service areas.

In addition to lending games to customers, we are also exploring opportunities to provide more game based programming in our branches.

" Video games are wildly popular in our communities, particularly with Millennials and Generation Xers, and it is vital that we provide library content to complement their interests and passions. **"**





PROTOTYPE LIBRARY

VIRL celebrated the opening of a 2,100 square foot, state-of-the-art library branch in Sayward on December 18. The new branch features expanded hours of operation, a larger opening day collection with many new materials, and an expanded program schedule.

This cost effective, scalable design is the first branch to be built under VIRL's Prototype model. VIRL is excited to replicate the success of Sayward in other rural communities in need of new libraries.

This approach will help VIRL deliver on the commitments to our rural communities set out in the Consolidated Facilities Master Plan to fund the rejuvenation and the long-term sustainability of our facilities.

"We are excited to finally welcome the community to their 21st Century library," said VIRL Executive Director, Rosemary Bonanno. "Whether you're an avid reader, a socializer, or a consumer of digital content, the Sayward branch now has something for every age, interest, and passion at the library."

In April, 2 Hills Renovations, a Campbell River based construction firm, was awarded the contract to build the new branch for the Village. For the duration of the closure of the old branch, the Sayward Council also generously gave up their chambers to ensure library services were always available.

On Saturday, December 21, the community came out in droves to welcome their newest amenity. The branch was packed floor to ceiling with community members, politicians, and VIRL staff, who all came to celebrate this milestone day for Sayward. Festivities included speeches, a ribbon cutting, local entertainment, and more. ■



A FRESH PARKSVILLE BRANCH...



...AND SIDNEY/NORTH SAANICH

RENOVATIONS REJUVINATE OUR COMMUNITY HUBS

Customers were welcomed back to our Sidney/North Saanich and Parksville branches after some exciting state-of-the-art improvements

Enhancements made to each of the branches have made for much more comfortable, user friendly, and dynamic spaces. Improved features and amenities for the Parksville branch included: new flooring, a new lounge area complete with fireplace, replaced furniture, upgraded computers and a new circulation desk.

Sidney/North Saanich renovations included updated electrical, lighting, HVAC, windows, and updates to the space to make it more accessible and modern.

"We are so excited to welcome everyone back to our facilities," says Vancouver Island Regional Library (VIRL) Executive Director Rosemary Bonanno. "The renovated spaces have many exciting features and amenities, from the new fireplace lounge to the cozy nooks, the open spaces to new computers — these libraries offer something for everyone and every interest."

Celebrations were held for each reopening, and attendees had an opportunity to tour the new facilities and see the exciting new features for themselves. ■

ONE BOOK ONE COMMUNITY!

OUR LARGEST
BOOK CLUB

Imagine if we all read one book? It was the question that launched VIRL's first ever system-wide, online book club, focused on building community and bringing customers together through a shared reading experience.

Customers read author Dawn Dumont's *Glass Beads*, a collection of short stories that interconnect the friendships of four Indigenous people over the span of two decades against the cultural, political, and historical backdrop of the 90s and early 2000s.

Librarians managed the book club from start to finish, hosted discussions, facilitated conversation through online polls and questions, and held a live interview with the author.

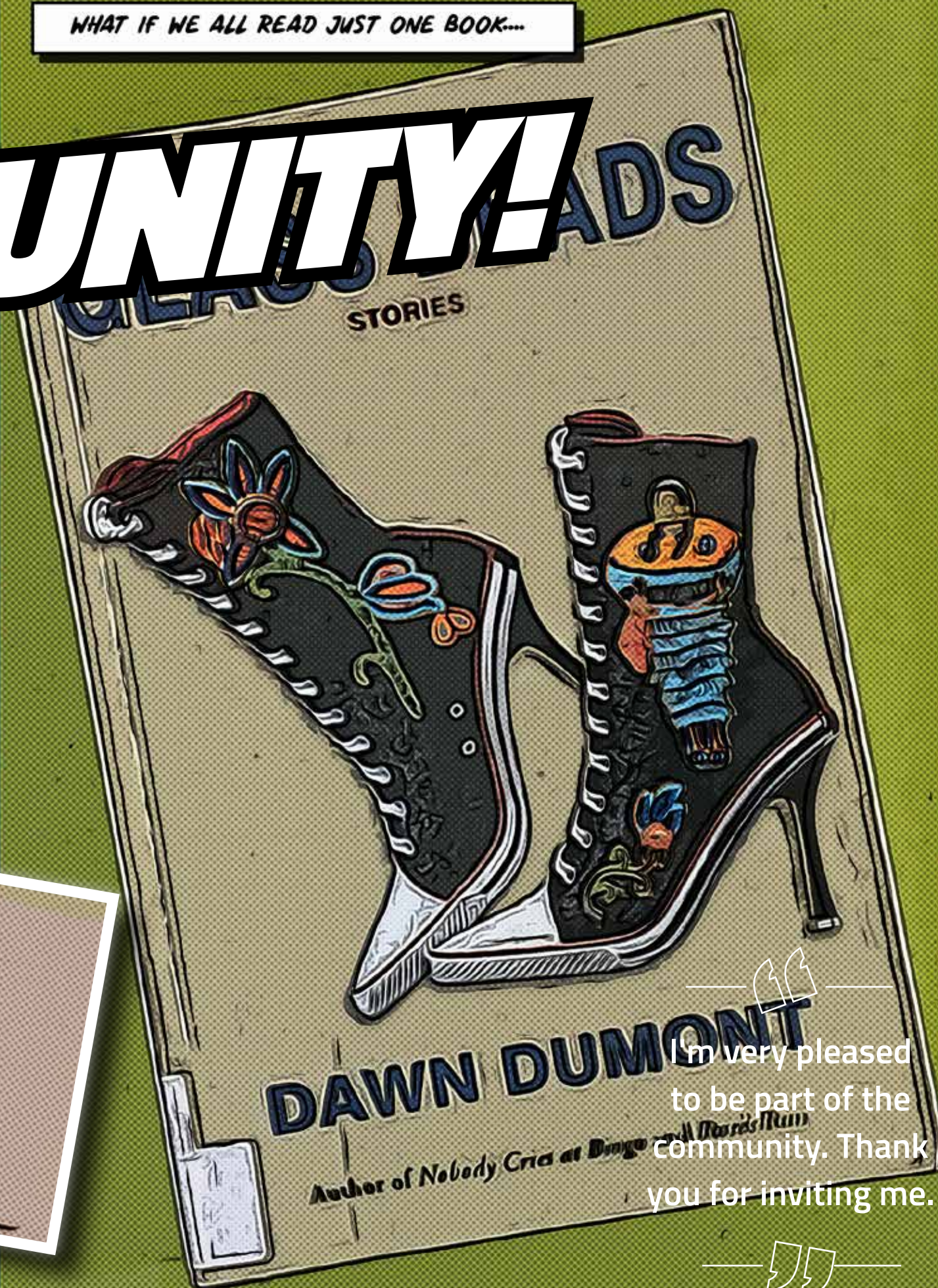
"What a great interview! It was so nice to hear Dawn's remarks on her novel," one reader commented. "I loved the insight into the characters and the formatting of the title. I am looking forward to reading some more of her work."

"I'm very pleased to be part of the community. Thank you for inviting me," wrote another participant.

The success of VIRL's first ever system-wide book club has paved the way for future book clubs, an online community that has grown to more than 430 members who eagerly await a new shared reading experience. ■



WHAT IF WE ALL READ JUST ONE BOOK....



I'm very pleased
to be part of the
community. Thank
you for inviting me.

BOOK RETURNED AFTER 42 YEARS

Staff at times come across peculiar items in their branch's drop box. A book placed in our Courtenay drop box in March seemed ordinary enough, but upon closer inspection it was anything but!

Wilderness Living by Berndt Berglund, a Complete Handbook and Guide to Pioneering in North America had been returned 42 years after it was originally checked out from the Union Bay branch in early 1977.

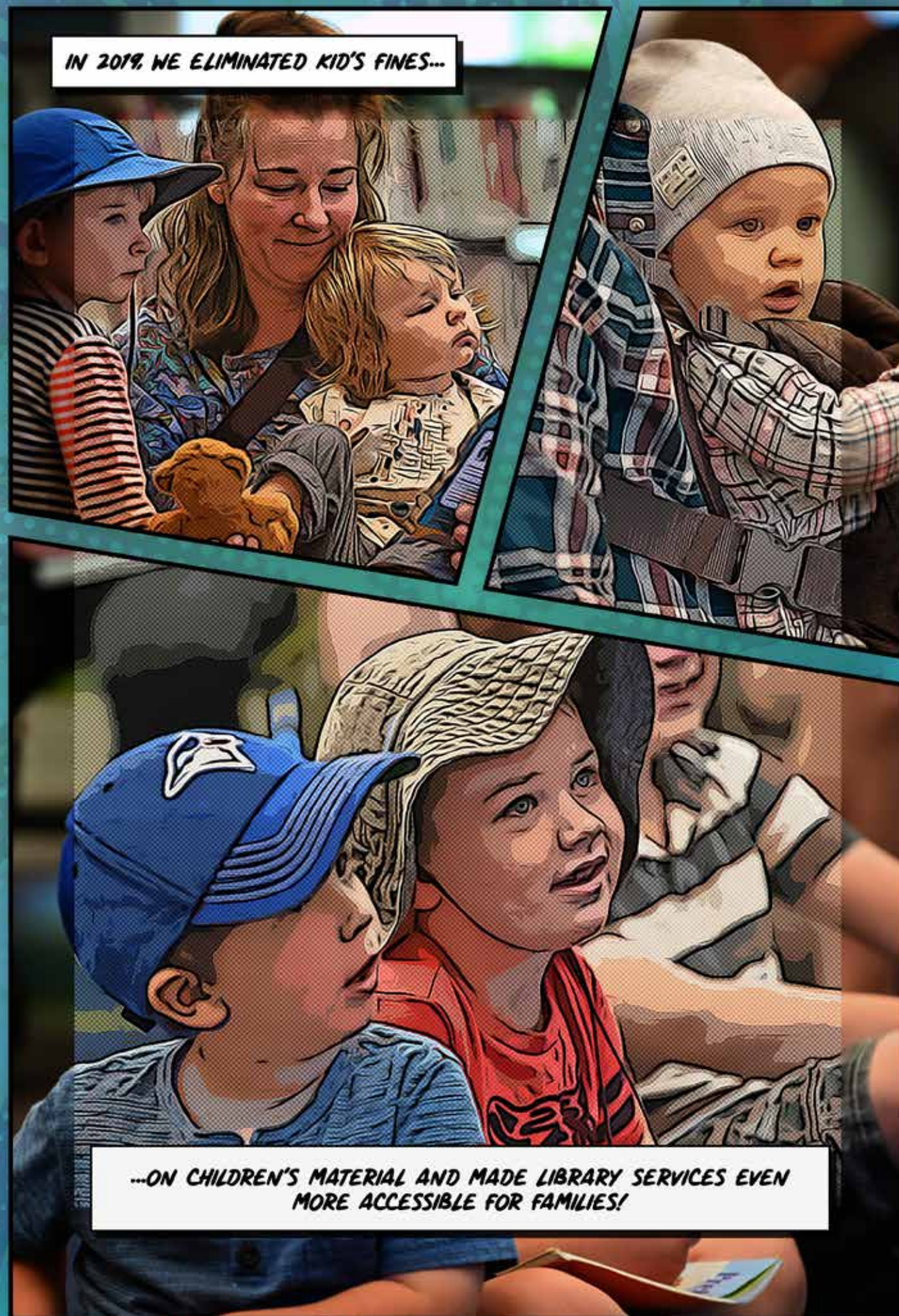
The book was returned anonymously, leaving our staff bewildered and fascinated with the mystery of how this late return came to be.

If we didn't have a cap on overdue book fines, this mysterious book borrower would have been on the hook for a hefty \$4,599 fine.

This unusual tale of a library book gone astray sparked local and global attention, with many writing in as part of a VIRL Facebook contest to share their own creative conclusions of where this book has been for the last 42 years. ■

“The book
was returned
anonymously,
leaving our staff
bewildered.”





KIDS' MATERIALS ARE FINE FREE!

We kicked off this year by removing a significant barrier to give more children access to our important literacy resources.

On January 1, 2019, we eliminated all fines on children's materials and waived all outstanding fines.

By eliminating fines on children's materials, we are helping to ensure library services are available to some of our customers who need them the most. After all, children should not be faulted or punished for overdue library items — instead, they should have barriers to access removed so they can grow and learn without limitations.

The VIRL Board of Trustees unanimously passed the motion to eliminate children's material fines at their final meeting of 2018.

"For some families, library fines can mean the difference between being able to access library materials or not," says Director of Library Services and Planning, Melissa Legacy. "With this initiative, we're committing to giving all kids an equal opportunity to access and benefit from the

wonderful literacy resources we offer. The elimination of children's fines will open new doors of discovery for kids and families across our service area."

We celebrated this important milestone during Family Literacy Week, an annual celebration at VIRL that highlights families and children reading together at branches across our library system. ■

GIVE LIBRARY

Spreading holiday cheer by giving the gift of a lifetime of learning opportunities!

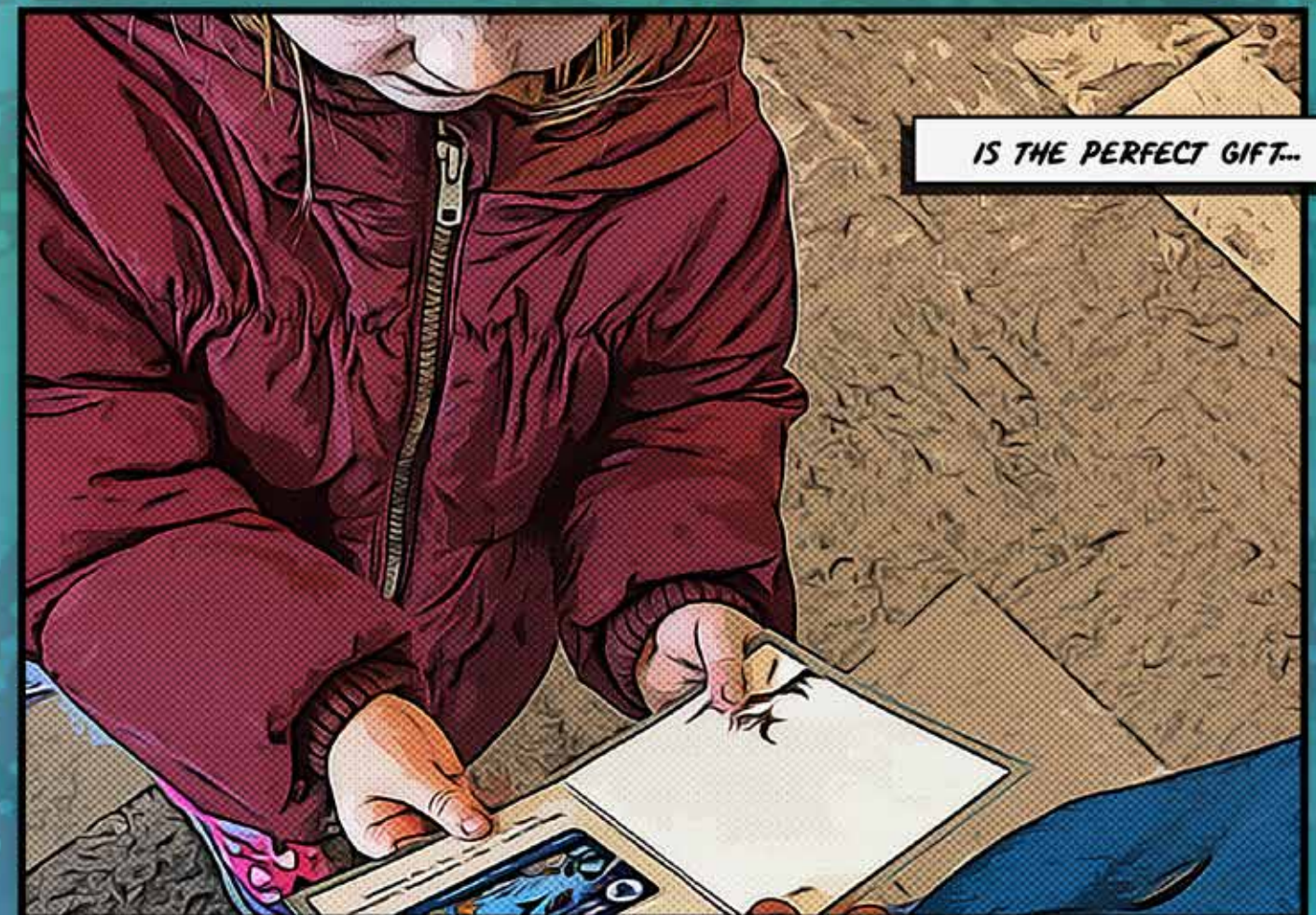
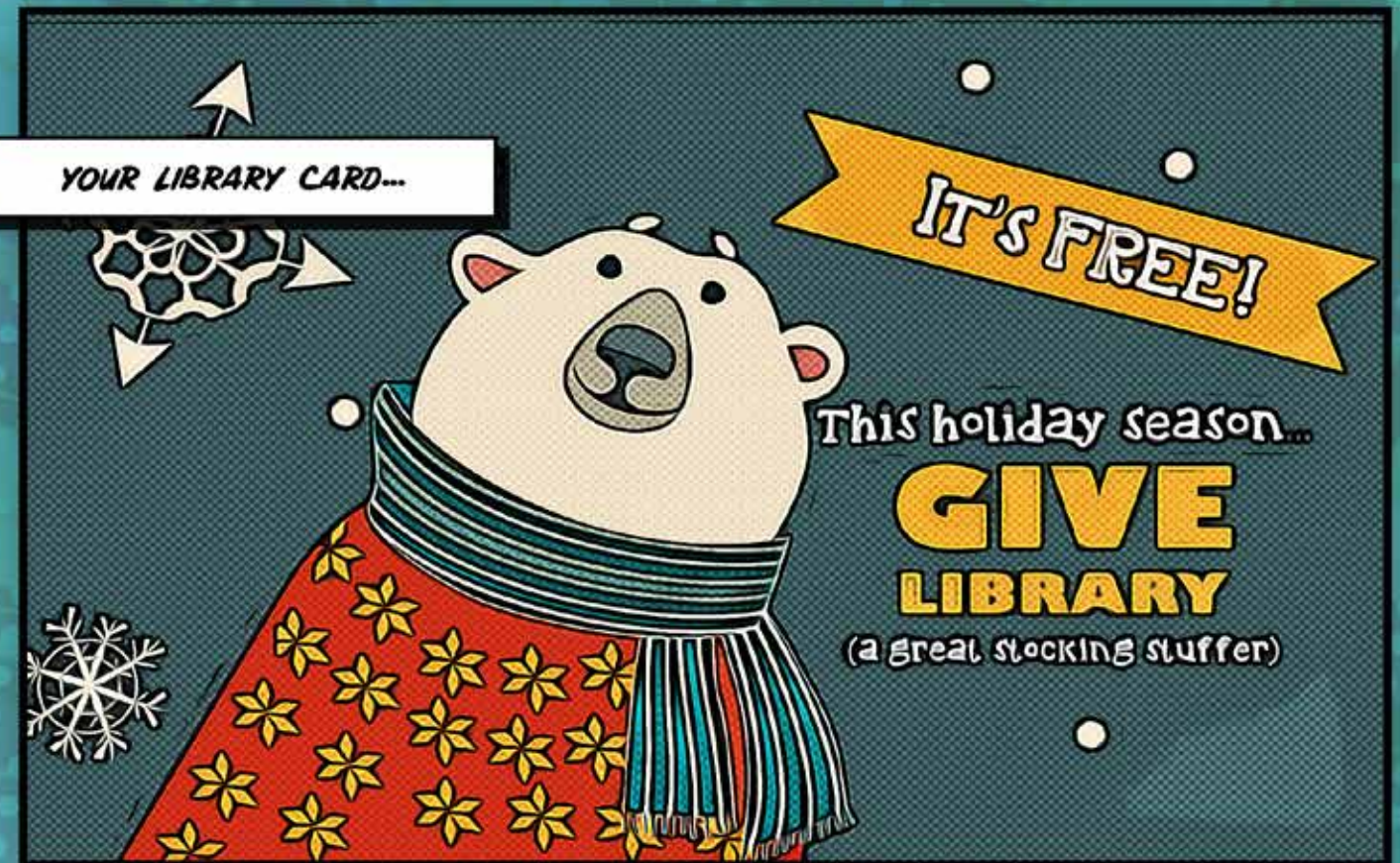
We teamed up with a few local businesses this past holiday season to spread cheer and give our communities the gift of learning and literacy.

The beautifully packaged library cards invited people to “Give Library” throughout the holiday season. The cards were the perfect gift for anyone who loves to read books, watch movies, listen to music, learn languages, play games, and so much more.

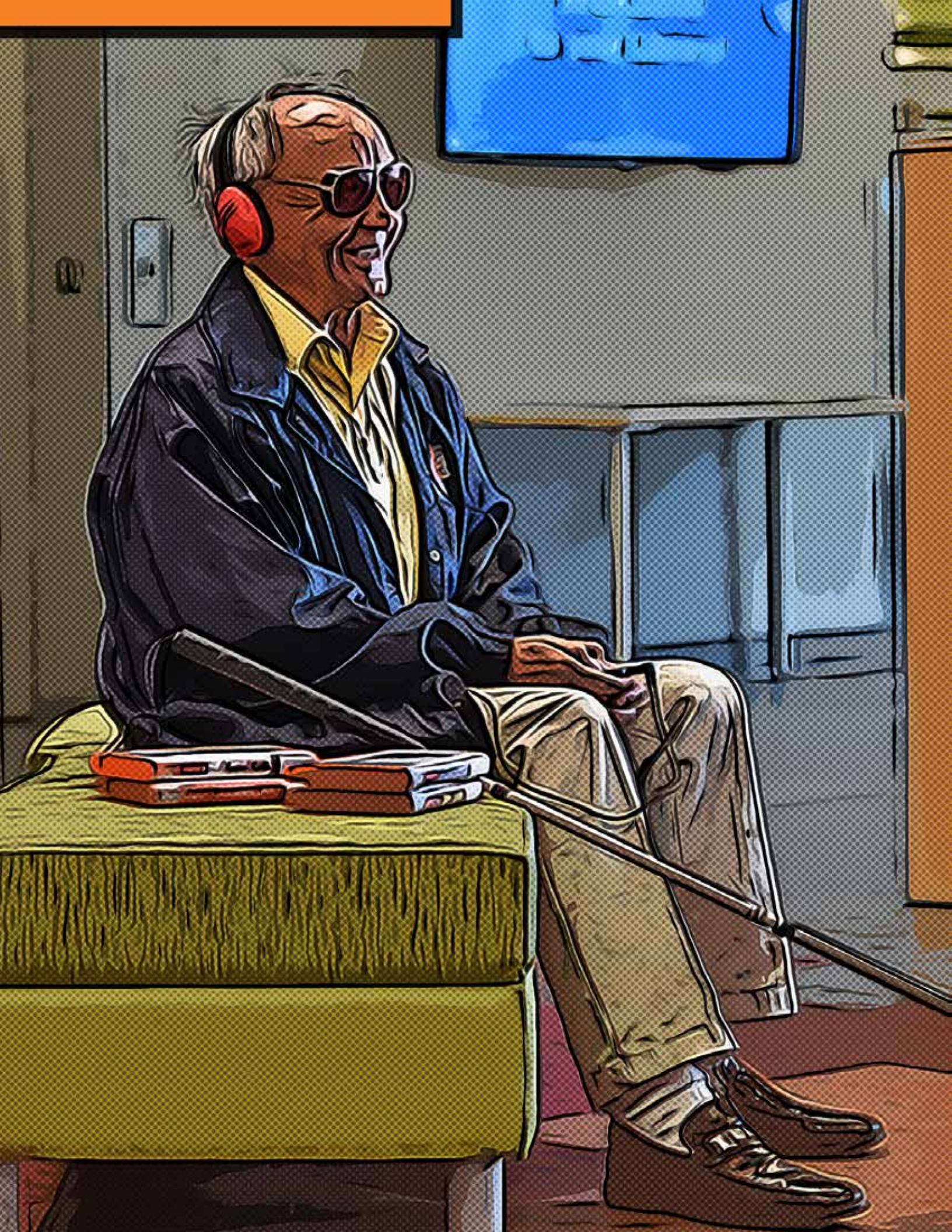
This was the second year for our “Give Library” campaign. We surpassed our goal of giving away 2,000 cards after teaming up with London Drugs and Canadian Tire, who graciously displayed our cards at checkout stands in their stores. We gave out more than 2,500 cards!

The cards gave receivers access to a number of resources including:

- Access to millions of books, ebooks, and audiobooks
- Video games, comics, graphic novels
- Critically acclaimed streaming movies
- Free downloadable mp3 music
- A global selection of magazines and newspapers
- Lifelong learning opportunities ■







THANK YOU

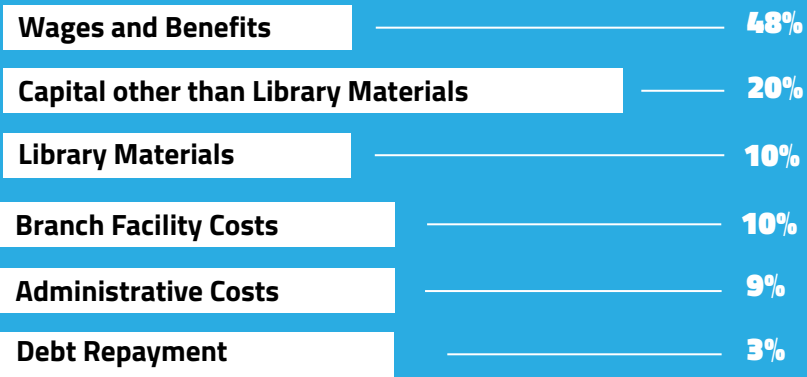
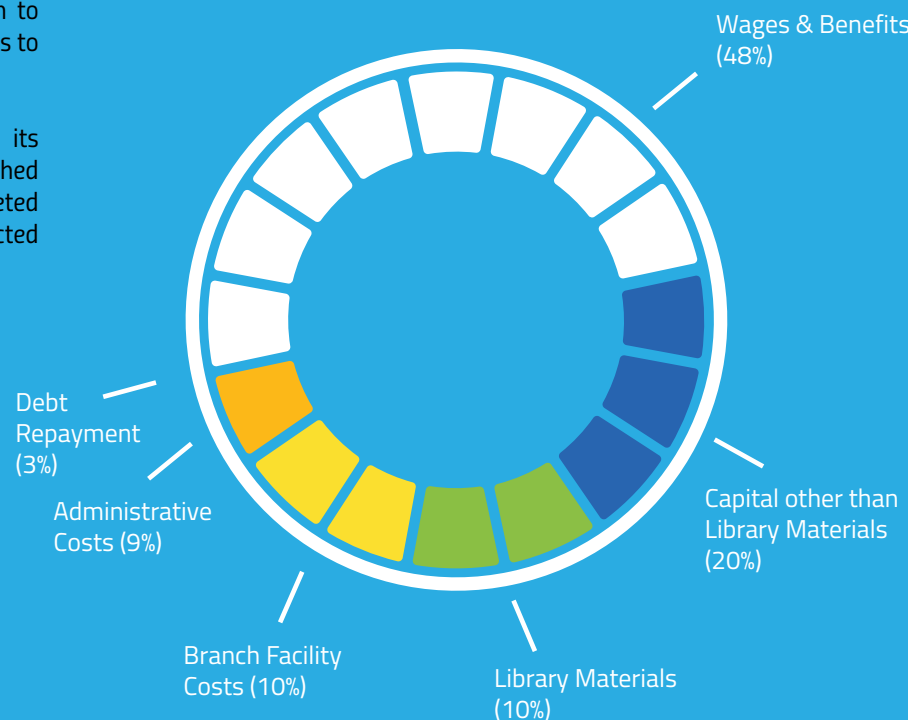
FOR DONATING TO YOUR LIBRARY!

**Altrusa Club of Nanaimo ■ Andy Isaksen
■ Canada Helps ■ Corinne & Edward
Perry ■ Dave & Maureen Kirk ■ Deborah
Cawston ■ Eileen O'Reilly ■ Erica Wallace
■ Fraternal Order of Eagles ■ Friends of
the Library Gabriola Island ■ Friends of
the Library Nanaimo ■ Friends of the
Library - Sidney/North Saanich ■ Harold
Austin ■ Michael Donovan ■ Mike Mills
■ Rina Tekutis-Collins ■ Rotary Club of
Chemainus ■ Tonee Delle Sabine**

2019 Expenditures

The 2019 budget represents VIRL's ongoing transition from a traditional library to a library of the 21st Century, while continuing to maintain high levels of customer service. We strive to uphold our standards for buildings and spaces to meet the needs of communities and attract new users. The 2019 budget ensures service standards continue to excel, facilities are well taken care of, and programming is developed to entice and satisfy customers. The 2019 budget furthers VIRL's Strategic Plan and gives consideration to its current operations, while ensuring it reaches to the future as an organization.

In 2019, VIRL celebrated the opening of its new branch in Sayward, reopened refreshed branches in Parksville and Sidney, and completed construction of its fourth newly constructed branch in Chemainus.



This chart is representative of financial operations for VIRL. Complete Audited 2019 financial statements can be found at www.virl.bc.ca.

Statement of Operations

Consolidated Statement of Operations (for the year ended December 31, 2019)	BUDGET (Unaudited) ▼	2019 (see Audited Statements) ▼	2018 ▼
Revenues			
Municipal levies	16,043,654	16,043,678	15,270,198
Rural levies	7,096,437	7,096,440	6,821,887
Government grants	1,307,232	1,286,491	1,308,218
Fines and other income	387,000	507,071	493,833
Interest earned	80,000	115,236	131,621
Total Revenues	24,914,323	25,048,916	24,025,757
Expenditures			
Wages and benefits	14,105,152	14,605,642	13,143,542
Branch costs	2,734,937	3,557,861	3,418,108
Miscellaneous library materials	109,000	81,321	83,511
Administrative costs	2,081,365	2,843,408	2,977,338
Retirement benefit accrual	20,000	88,007	44,595
Amortization expense	4,065,711	4,013,570	3,773,340
Total Expenditures	23,116,165	25,189,809	23,440,434
Annual surplus (deficit)	1,798,158	-140,893	585,323
Accumulated surplus, beginning of year	17,646,032	17,646,032	17,060,709
Accumulated surplus, end of year	\$19,444,190	\$17,505,139	\$17,646,032

The above chart is representative of financial operations for VIRL. Complete audited 2019 financial statements can be found at www.virl.bc.ca.



WANT MORE?
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