



# 2025 ANNUAL REPORT

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RED DEER  
**PUBLIC LIBRARY**  
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# A MESSAGE FROM OUR BOARD CHAIR & CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

We are pleased to report that 2025 was another great, yet challenging year for the Library. As you'll see from the numbers in this report, we were busy with patrons coming and going from all four branches. As ever, our early, youth, and adult literacy programs had record breaking participation. At RDPL, we believe literacy is a strong foundation for future success and are grateful for our many volunteers who pour so much of their time and care into their students. Our most important role in promoting literacy is to make reading enjoyable. When a child enjoys reading but may struggle, they are motivated and encouraged to do the extra work to improve their reading ability. To support this, RDPL stocks books on every subject imaginable, and in multiple formats. Our commitment towards intellectual freedom is that all people are free to read, learn, and explore without limits. Intellectual freedom is everyone's right to seek, receive, and share ideas freely.

On the challenging side, the introduction and passing of Bill 28 and its unnecessary changes to the Library Act is disruptive to public libraries, patrons, and communities. Public libraries, including RDPL, already have policies in place to organize collections in age-appropriate ways and rely on parents and guardians to guide children's use of library spaces and collections.

In addition to the challenges Bill 28 brings to libraries, many social support agencies have lost, and continue to lose, funding necessary to provide support for people facing various challenges, including mental health, drug addiction, and homelessness. RDPL is among the many institutions and agencies that provide support to members of our community who are experiencing homelessness. The Library offers a warm place, public bathrooms, personal safety, and staff who are kind to all. Many of these patrons are daily visitors to the Downtown Branch in particular, and a welcome part of our routine. Some of these patrons are new in town or newly homeless and use the Library as a key community resource to find information about local agencies. All patrons are expected to follow the same rules that apply to everyone. These rules are sometimes difficult for people living with challenges, and we are grateful for the support of local agencies, such as Safe Harbour and Turning Point, whose skilled staff are knowledgeable, kind, and compassionate. We also appreciate the support of local law enforcement who respond promptly when called to remove people who can't follow our rules but have nowhere else to go.





We've never had a person living in poverty ask us to remove other patrons from the Library, but distressingly often patrons who have homes to go to ask us to remove people without homes. Often the person asking us to remove a patron who appears homeless is someone we've never seen before, while the patron they want removed is here, peacefully, every day, using the library for its intended purpose. For a public library, everyone is 'the public.' Public doesn't mean only upper or middle class. Public doesn't mean only neat and tidy. Public doesn't mean only people who are housed. Everyone who can follow the rules is welcome.

We are grateful for our dedicated staff, and the support we receive in our work from all sides. We thank our funders, our donors, and we thank you, our patrons. You are the reason we are so passionate about libraries and building literacy for all our patrons. Hearing that you enjoy your time with us, or your stories about how the library, or a good book, changed your life, is a wonderful gift to any librarian.



**Laura Thevenaz**  
RDPL Board Chair



**Shelley Ross**  
RDPL CEO





Our service is delivered by

**71 & 438**

**dedicated staff\***

\*including full-time, part-time, temporary, seasonal, and casual employees

**amazing volunteers!**



We answered:



**1,281 & 10,891**

reference questions

technology questions



Our Wi-Fi had **77,607** connections!

The library added

**14,069**

new items in 2025



Bringing the total collection to

**187,110!**



We brought in

**5,129 items**

from other libraries!



And lent our items to other libraries

**4,798 times**



Our meeting spaces were booked

**243 times**

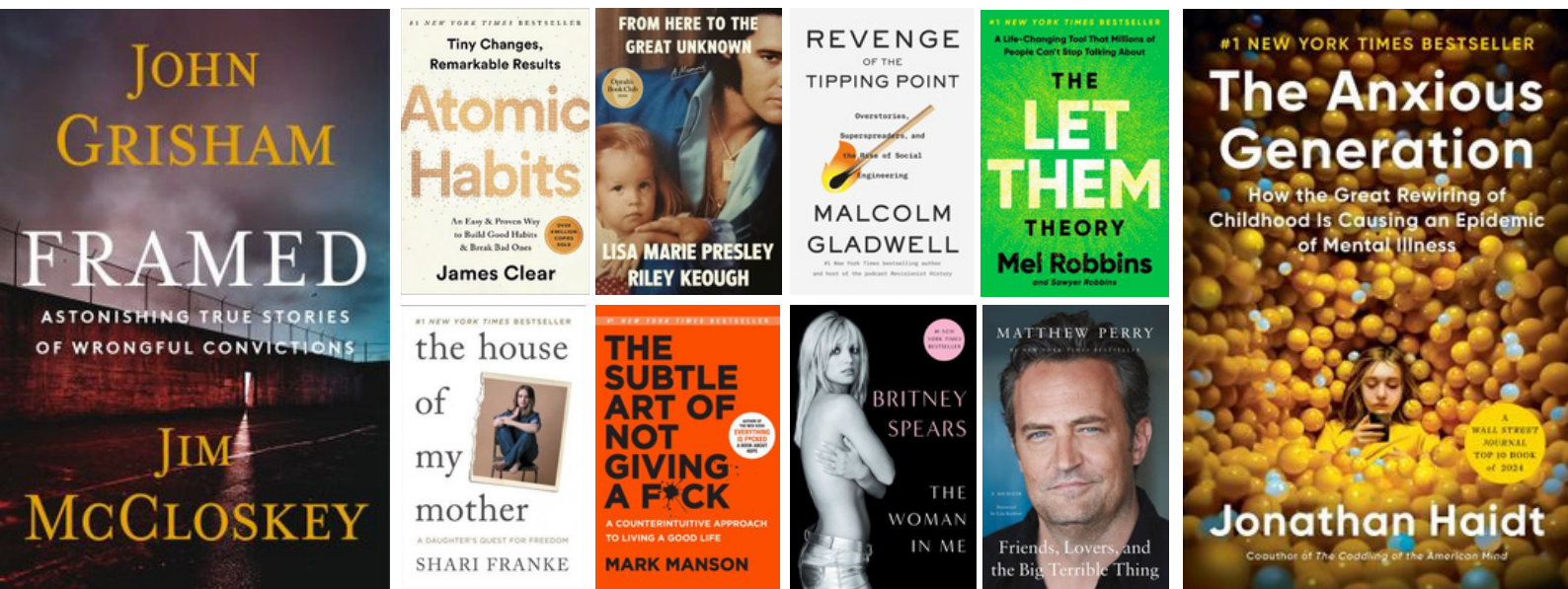
# 2025 TOP TITLES

These were our most borrowed titles in 2025!

## – Adult Fiction –



## – Adult Non-fiction –



– Young Adult Books –



– Children's Books –



133

children signed up for the  
**1000 Books Before Kindergarten**  
 program in 2025!

Learn more at [rdpl.org/1000-books/](http://rdpl.org/1000-books/)



# 2025 BOARD MEMBERS

- Chair:
  - Shelley Odishaw (Jan. - Oct. 2025)
  - Laura Thevenaz (from Nov. 2025)
- Councillor Dianne Wyntjes (Jan. - Oct. 2025)
- Councillor Adam Goodwin (from Nov. 2025)
- Nicole Camara (Jan. - Oct. 2025)
- Natalie Day Lazenby
- Maureen McCall
- Jerry Moore (Jan. - Oct. 2025)
- Lauren Pezzella
- Brian Quigg
- Zachary Woods
- Torben Andersen (from Nov. 2025)
- Joseph Fittes (from Nov. 2025)
- Blair Wilson (from Nov. 2025)



## VISION

Provide a welcoming environment where everyone will discover, share, develop, and value curiosity.

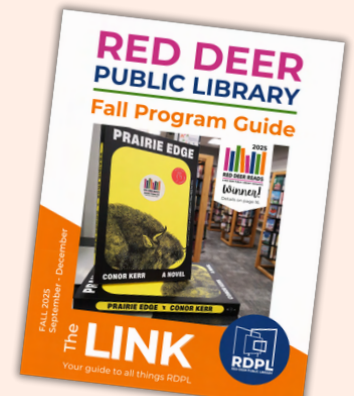
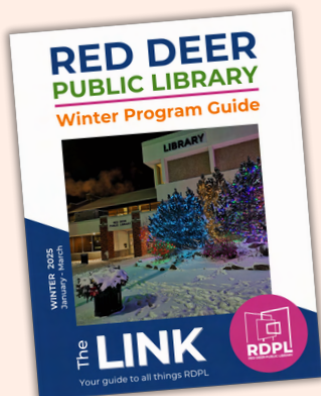
## MISSION

Enrich lives by promoting literacy and providing access to knowledge and culture.

## VALUES

Our core values are:

- Intellectual Freedom
- Connection
- Literacy
- Inclusion



# 2025 HIGHLIGHTS

## Standout Stories from the Past Year

Each month, we share a Monthly Highlights report on the Red Deer Public Library blog. For the 2025 Annual Report, we've chosen one standout story from each month to share with you. To explore the full highlights, visit [rdpl.org/blogs](http://rdpl.org/blogs)!

### January 2025

Our Winter Holidays Around the World series ended on a high note with a joyful Ukrainian Koliadky Party in January! Nearly 90 attendees gathered to celebrate with a beautiful performance by the community choir, uplifting carols (koliadky), and engaging crafts for families. Guests also enjoyed a cozy tea time featuring traditional bread and delicious treats, creating a warm and welcoming atmosphere. It was a wonderful way to conclude this cultural celebration series, bringing the community together through music, tradition, and shared joy.



### February 2025

February 25 is World Bookmark Day! To celebrate, we held our very first bookmark design contest. With nearly 300 submissions, it was VERY hard to choose our winners! In the end we selected 15 winning designs, each of which received 25 copies of their bookmark to share with family and friends, as well as an RDPL swag bag prize. We had the winning bookmarks professionally printed, and they were available at the library for visitors to pick up, free of charge.

### March 2025

On March 15, CBC Radio's Daybreak Alberta Saturday morning show with host Paul Karchut went live from the Downtown Branch. Library staff moved furniture to turn the lobby into a coffee shop, the delightful CBC crew set up their studio, and Library Cafe's Chrissy had coffee and treats ready well before 6 a.m. An enthusiastic crowd of about forty enjoyed the live radio broadcast until 9 a.m. when the library was put back to normal for a busy Saturday.



## April 2025

We held our first RDPL Staff Reunion on Sunday, April 27. It was so great to have so many familiar faces from RDPL's past in one place to reconnect and reminisce!



## May 2025

Our creative library staff hosted an adult craft night, painting bricks (or in our case, cement pavers!) to look like book covers. The program had full registration with a long wait list, and participants really enjoyed expressing their creativity while also talking to each other about the books they had chosen to paint, favourite titles, and favourite authors!

## June 2025

In June, Red Deer Public Library once again proudly participated in the ParticipACTION Community Challenge, delivering inclusive, engaging, and joy-filled physical activity opportunities for our community. We reached 999 participants across seven events designed to remove barriers and promote movement in welcoming, community-centered environments. Events included our SRC Launch Party, our Storytelling Tent at the Children's Festival, StoryWalk and Book Bike programs, Fancy Women Bike Ride: Strong, Fancy and Free, Open Practice: Swing in Rhythm dance program, Woody's Spray Park Opening & Outreach, and the Better Community Walk and Run event.



## July 2025

Library staff (including Katja, of course) had such a blast taking part in the Westerner Days parade! It's always one of our favourite days of the year, and the friendly shouts from the crowd always make us feel extra special!



## August 2025

This summer, RDPL hosted the Little Sprouts Club, a STEAM-centered gardening program for families to learn about plants, pollinators, and permaculture! Families listened to silly and touching stories, participated in fun, hands-on activities, and got their hands dirty while gardening. We grew zucchini squash, carrots, lettuce, and lots of beautiful flowers. Thank you to ReThink Red Deer for collaborating with us and letting us use their gardening space for this program!

## September 2025

In September, we unveiled our pop-up fossil exhibit from the Royal Tyrrell Museum of Palaeontology! Red Deer's specimen includes the skull and paw of a pantodont, a large herbivorous mammal. This specimen was found in 2001 during a road-widening project just east of Red Deer from a Palaeocene-aged site (approx. 60 million years old!). This exhibit, one of ten in Alberta libraries, will remain at the Downtown Branch until September 2026. The pop-up exhibits are part of the Royal Tyrrell Museum's 40th Anniversary celebrations, and we are so grateful to have been selected as one of the host locations!



## October 2025

During the Teachers' Strike in October, library staff were quick to pivot their program plans in order to incorporate additional daytime programming for kids to keep learning and exploring while classroom learning took a pause. This included several Red Hot Science coding and engineering programs presented by Red Deer Polytechnic as well as Robot Races, Art Hangout, and Brain Game events.



## November 2025

On Friday, November 21, we stayed open late to take part in the Downtown Red Deer North Pole Stroll and it was pure winter magic at the library! It was a very busy three hours for our whole team, with nearly 400 people visiting the library during that time. We focused our activities on children and families, including puppet shows, crafts, a scavenger hunt, and lots of library card sign-ups. Team Katja was there as well, and Katja had a wonderful time greeting so many kids, families, and longtime readers, plus plenty of new friends who met her for the first time.



## December 2025

Our Happy Noon Year Party for kids made an exciting return this year! It was our first one since 2019, and while we didn't know what to expect, it exceeded all expectations. Nearly 100 children and their parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and friends joined in the fun – dancing, crafting crowns and paper plate shakers, enjoying the photo booth, and entering a special door prize draw for the kids. The celebration wrapped up with a countdown to noon and a festive ginger ale toast. It was a wonderful way to bid farewell to 2025!



# LIBRARY LOVE!



We love hearing from our community members about how the library has positively impacted their lives. Here are some of the heartfelt messages we received in 2025:

*"I am so impressed by the atmosphere and the welcoming, knowledgeable, and helpful staff. Libraries are the best investment a community can have."*

*"I support our libraries and believe strongly our community is enriched by the variety and quality of programs offered."*

*"I love seeing all the diverse and representative books that you have. Makes my heart happy for myself and my children to be represented."*

*"Love the Downtown Library and all the wonderful staff! Whether taking an in-person course, calling for information, checking out books, or doing a search ... everyone is extremely helpful, knowledgeable and friendly. A+!"*

*"I can see that the role of the library has really grown and am happy to see the variety of services and supports offered. It is a hard task to be all things to all people, but the library is sure where we see this in action. Thank you."*

*"The library is a treasure trove! From children's activities to reading assistance, you can feel their warmth and dedication. Last year, we were quite lost in this unfamiliar city. My child and I weren't good at English, but the library staff were very helpful, recommending English classes and helping us find suitable books. My daughter has been taking reading classes for a year and has made remarkable progress! Both the teachers and staff have been very kind to us. Thank you to everyone at the library!"*

*"The library is such a wonderful space. The people are always kind, friendly, & welcoming."*

*"We always love coming to the library whether it's me and my preschoolers, high school kids or just myself. We all love the library."*

*"The library staff are always welcoming and helpful and there's always something to take home and enjoy."*

*"I love this place a lot. I come here to do the work I can't do in school, and I feel that I can work harder. Another thing I love, is that I can comfortably ask the staff where books are, and how to do things in the library that I didn't know before (like how to log into the computers upstairs)."*

*"I love the library in Red Deer. It does so much more than most people think. The staff are amazing, helpful and friendly!"*

*"The staff are always welcoming and the atmosphere is warm and accepting."*

*"Library staff are friendly, welcoming to my grandsons and always helpful! I am so grateful to RDPL for all the services provided!"*

*"This place is amazing. The staff are genuinely excited about helping you locate books, movies, audio material. The staff are amazing at explaining the process to sign up for a card and were able to answer my questions quickly. It's a nice place for our family... a bit of everything to do."*

# 2025 Plan of Service

## ANNUAL ACTION PLAN

### PLAN OF SERVICE: GOALS & OUTCOMES

The Red Deer Public Library Board's 2023-2027 Plan of Service outlines the goals and strategic priorities that will guide RDPL through this service period. Annual Action Plans are defined by RDPL's Management Team each year to follow these strategic priorities.

Read on to find out what our 2025 Annual Action Plans entailed, and how we evaluated and measured the success of these plans.

### GOAL 1: A PLACE FOR ALL

Red Deer Public Library provides a welcoming, inclusive, and safe space where we champion diverse perspectives.

#### Strategic Priorities:

- Use library space creatively and effectively, while planning for future library needs.
- Provide accessible, current, and relevant information on our website and social media.
- Collaborate with community partners to develop and deliver programming reflecting diverse perspectives.

**Measurable Goal:** Achieve a satisfaction rate of 85% among surveyed library users who affirm that Red Deer Public Library is a welcoming, inclusive, and safe place. Users will be provided with the opportunity to provide feedback specifically on the utilization of library space across all branches.

**Outcome: \*Achieved.\*** Red Deer Public Library continues to meet its goal of being a welcoming, inclusive, and safe place for the community. Library users had the opportunity to provide feedback via two different surveys:

1) Library User Perception Survey: RDPL conducted its annual online community survey from November 17 - 30, 2025 and received 119 responses. Results once again exceeded the Plan of Service goal that 85% of surveyed users report the library as a welcoming, safe, and inclusive space.

- 93.2% of respondents reported feeling welcome or very welcome.
- 87.4% reported feeling safe or very safe.
- 84% reported that the library feels inclusive or very inclusive.

Comments highlighted strong appreciation for staff, inclusive programming, and the variety of library resources. Respondents also expressed ongoing concerns related to safety at the Downtown Branch, particularly near washrooms and building entrances. These insights should support operational planning in 2026.

*Continued on next page*

WE WANT YOUR FEEDBACK!

## According to our annual survey:



**93.2%**

of people feel welcome at the library.



**87.4%**

of people feel safe at the library.



**84%**

of people feel that the library is an inclusive space.

2) Space Use Survey: A comprehensive Space Use Survey was used to gather data related to how patrons use the physical space of the library and how that space can be improved. This survey ran from October 27 - November 16, 2025.

The Space Study shows that RDPL's physical spaces support a diverse range of patron needs, with no single dominant usage pattern across the system. Patrons value convenience, comfort, quiet zones, and aesthetically appealing environments. While many aspects of RDPL's spaces work well – particularly welcoming staff, natural light, and flexible seating – there are consistent desires for improved zoning, enhanced quiet spaces, more comfortable and accessible furniture, and solutions to parking and safety concerns, particularly at the Downtown Branch. This study provides a strong foundation for space planning priorities in 2026 and beyond, especially around zoning, furniture renewal, accessibility, and enhancing the library's role as both a place for learning and a community workspace.



Following the survey and prior to year-end, updates were implemented in the Downtown Branch Children's department. Fixed shelving in the picture book area was replaced with mobile units to allow the space to be easily reconfigured for programs. Seating and play elements were also repositioned to improve caregiver supervision and reduce activity near the children's washrooms.

In addition to the aforementioned formal surveys, according to the final evaluation data from the 2024-2025 Youth Literacy Program, 100% of surveyed learners and tutors reported being satisfied or highly satisfied with their experience in the program and with RDPL as a supportive environment. 100% of evaluated Adult Literacy learners also reported that the Library is a welcoming and safe space. These exceptional satisfaction rates not only reflect the quality of one-on-one tutoring and the commitment of volunteer tutors but also affirms that library spaces across all branches are being used effectively to foster learning, build connections, and promote a sense of belonging.

**Measurable Goal:** Increase Level 4 space flexibility by replacing some of the large stationary tables on Level 4 with moveable, nestable white tables, enabling efficient conversion for theatre-style events.

**Outcome:** **\*Achieved\***

This goal was completed thanks to a donation from the Friends of the Library. As an added benefit, the previous tables found a home with Ubuntu.



**Measurable Goal:** Establish an additional semi-private working space at the Dawe Branch to support library members utilizing the facility as a co-working space.



**Outcome:** **\*Achieved.\*** The CD collection was streamlined and consolidated at the Downtown Branch, and the vacated cabinets were donated to a local Ukrainian school library. Additionally, a magazine shelving unit was relocated to the Collicutt Branch, increasing available space at Dawe while expanding shelving capacity at Collicutt. These changes created space for two new single-use tables to support co-working, which have seen strong usage and demonstrate the demand for flexible, semi-private workspaces.

**Measurable Goal:** Refit the old elevator lobby space on Level 4 as a bookable online meeting, interview, agency phone call, or social media creation space.

**Outcome:** **\*In progress.\*** Retrofitting is nearly complete, but is currently on hold pending a review of airflow requirements with HVAC contractors.

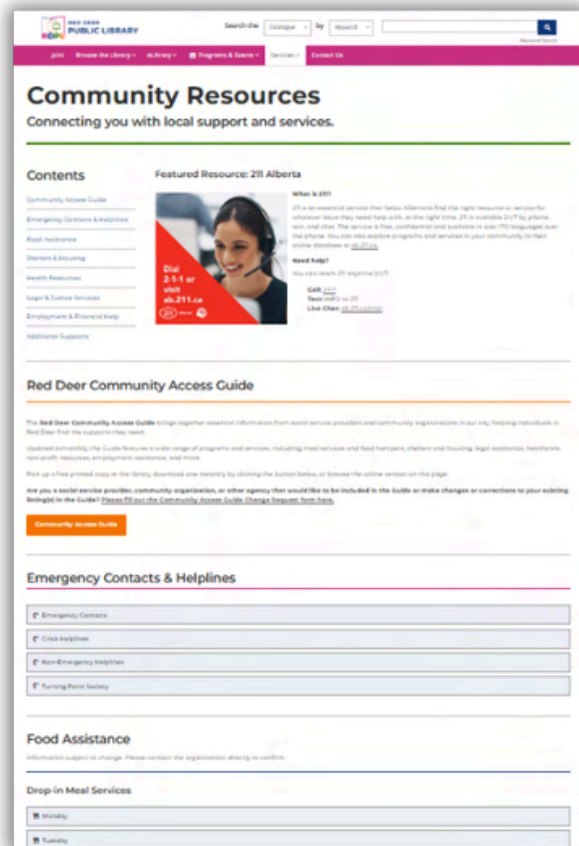
**Measurable Goal:** Explore the addition of privacy booths at the Downtown Branch to support individuals seeking quieter, more focused spaces.

**Outcome:** **\*In progress.\*** While the CFEP (Community Facility Enhancement Program) grant application was unsuccessful, these cubicles are still a possibility in future. In the meantime, The Friends of the Library have put their support behind retrofitting the new Library van, which will be out in the community early 2026.



**Measurable Goal:** Add a web page that duplicates and expands on the popular Community Resource Guide which RDPL maintains in paper as a handout in support of the Systems Navigators group.

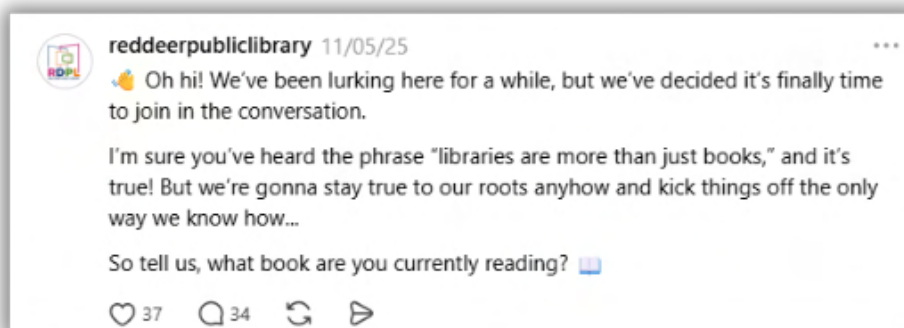
**Outcome: \*Achieved.\*** The new online version of the Community Resource Guide is fully functional, and can be found at [rdpl.org/community-resources](http://rdpl.org/community-resources). In addition to replicating the content of the existing print handout, the webpage offers expanded information and interactive features. Notably, it includes a user-friendly submission form that allows agencies and community organizations to propose updates or new entries, ensuring that both the print and digital versions of the guide remain accurate and up to date in support of the Systems Navigators group.



From the time the webpage became publicly available in early October through the end of the year, it received 1,634 page views, making it the 12th most visited page on the website, and the printable Community Access Guide was downloaded from the page 219 times.

**Measurable Goal:** Explore emerging social media platforms such as Bluesky and Threads to increase visibility.

**Outcome: \*Achieved.\*** After exploring Bluesky as an online community engagement option, we have decided not to move forward with this particular social media tool at this time. In contrast, Threads continues to gain popularity and is on track to officially surpass X (formerly Twitter) in daily users. Many people, including members of our local community, are turning to Threads as a key source of communication and information, and we're excited to take part in the conversation. Find us at [@reddeerpubliclibrary!](https://www.threads.net/@reddeerpubliclibrary)



**Measurable Goal:** Complete a full website audit in 2025

**Outcome: \*Achieved.\*** The website audit itself is complete, and many of the planned layout and formatting enhancements have been successfully implemented. Several key sections, including the format pages (Books, Movies & Music, and Magazines & Newspapers, etc.) and audience-specific browsing pages have been fully revamped to feature a more cohesive design, improved navigation, and a modernized visual format. These changes aim to enhance user experience and ensure consistency across the site.

**Measurable Goal:** Collaborate with the Red Deer & District Chinese Community Society and/or the Philippine Canadian Association of Red Deer and District to plan, design, and deliver engaging library programming for Asian Heritage Month; collaborate with community members to deliver programming for Hindu Heritage Month. Collaborate with Ubuntu and community members to deliver programming for Black History Month.

**Outcome: \*Achieved.\*** Storytimes were held in partnership with Ubuntu in February for Black History Month (two were held at the Downtown Branch of RDPL and two were held at Ubuntu’s location). They were extremely grateful for our support and for providing all of the stories and activities.

Although we were not able to partner with the Asian-Canadian or Filipino communities for Asian Heritage Month, we participated in the Filipino Music and Street Food Festival Bayanihan Family Day in August. November’s Hindu Heritage Month programs included a classical bansuri concert, song and folk dance coordinated by the Hindu Heritage Society, and a storytime. Additionally, we partnered with CAILA as part of a Downtown Dia de los Muertos walking tour of ‘ofrendas’ (altars) which started at the Library’s ofrenda, sharing the tradition and cultural significance with the community.

The Library also worked with the Executive Director Network to host a municipal election forum in the Snell Auditorium which was well attended and encouraged candidates to reflect on the work of the many agencies who serve our community.



**Measurable Goal:** Develop and implement library programming that reflects the perspectives and needs of the Ukrainian-Canadian community.

**Outcome: \*Achieved\*** This goal has been achieved through a range of programs and services, as detailed below:

Since January 2025, the Adult Literacy Program has offered ten (10) English classes through the Ukrainian Evacuee Supports Program (UESP), helping 239 learners. To support those applying for permanent residency, a CELPIP (Canadian English Language Proficiency Index Program) preparation course was added, along with other specialized classes like Pronunciation, IELTS (International English Language Testing System), Grammar and Vocabulary, and Conversation Café.

Between July 1, 2024 and June 30, 2025, 367 Ukrainian learners have taken part in one-on-one tutoring. Between July and October of 2025, 190 Ukrainian learners have taken part in the tutoring program in addition to classes.

The Youth Literacy Program continues to provide individualized support to Ukrainian youth, helping them build English and literacy skills.

In April, the library launched ‘Cozy Evenings,’ a monthly gathering for Ukrainian seniors, and expanded its Ukrainian and Russian collections with support from AAME and the Multiculturalism and Anti-Racism Grant.

Funding from the Alberta Culture Days Grant enabled ‘Soul of the Steppe: A Ukrainian Arts Celebration,’ featuring bilingual puppet shows, take-home kits, a heritage fair, storytimes, displays, and booklists to celebrate Ukrainian Heritage Month.



One of the two ‘Empower Me’ energy conservation programs was delivered bilingually in Ukrainian and English.

To mark Ukrainian Famine and Genocide Memorial Day on November 22, Valentina Kuryliw, Director of Education Holodomor Research and Education, shared her expertise in a virtual lecture. Valentine has a personal tie to the Holodomor as both her parents were survivors. She shared historical information about the Holodomor and its genocidal nature, how it occurred, and how it connects to Russia's current war on Ukraine.

**Measurable Goal:** Share 180 Welcome Baby packages with the community by the end of 2025. This will be achieved by collaborating with current community partners and at least one new community partnership within the year.

**Outcome: \*Achieved.\*** We are excited to add the Family Resource Network as our newest Welcome Baby partner. With a total of 183 bags delivered to our partners by the end of October 2025, we successfully met our 2025 goal.

**Measurable Goal:** Capture quantitative and qualitative library patron feedback from those using service agencies to meet their most basic needs and from the agencies themselves.

**Outcome: \*Achieved\*** Community Liaisons and library staff continue to provide compassionate, responsive support to vulnerable individuals through active listening, crisis intervention, and resource referrals. Interactions show strong trust, particularly among youth, those experiencing homelessness, and individuals facing mental health or legal challenges. Patron feedback highlights appreciation for emotional support, practical help, and consistent staff presence. By offering timely information, safe spaces, charging stations and use of a phone, library staff reinforce the library's essential role as a trusted community hub.

**Measurable Goal:** Collaborate with Red Deer Queer Community Association to offer programming that deliberately creates a safe and welcoming space for the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.

**Outcome: \*Achieved\*** We continue to partner with the Queer Neighbours Society of Red Deer (QNSRD, formerly Red Deer Queer Community Association) to host a monthly 'Art Night,' 'Rainbow DnD' (a monthly gaming program), and weekly youth group meetings. In March, we co-hosted a Rainbow Storytime to mark Trans Day of Visibility. We provided a welcoming space for QNSRD to hold Pride Week events that included a Townhall and Queer Prom. Space and staff support was also provided for their Trans Day of Visibility event on November 20.



## GOAL 2: DISCOVER YOUR WORLD

Red Deer Public Library fosters curiosity and lifelong learning and is committed to improving literacy in Red Deer.

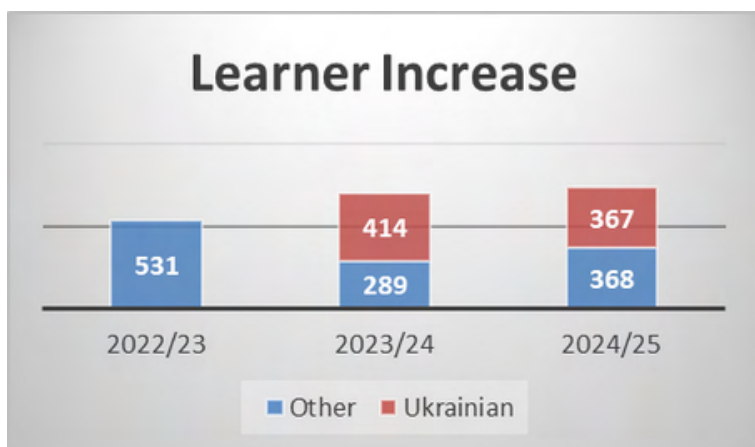
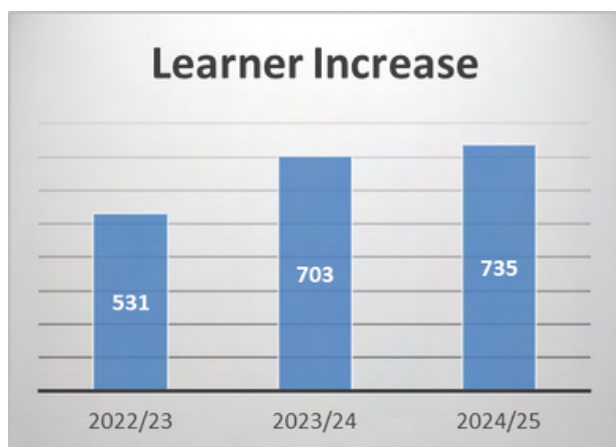
### Strategic Priorities:

- Deliver learning-focused programming for all ages that is responsive to community needs.
- Build a strong team that encourages open communication, cooperation, innovation, and creativity.
- Develop opportunities to champion literacy and learning.

**Measurable Goal:** The Adult Literacy Program will continue to offer tutor and learner centered programming relevant to the participants' needs and goals as measured by the annual report.

**Outcome: \*Achieved\*** The Adult Literacy Program served 735 learners during the 2024-2025 grant year. The Program was able to accommodate 19 Canadian-born learners who needed support with basic literacy skills. Five learners in total received help with improving their basic numeracy skills. Thirty learners received one-on-one tutoring in the Basic Digital Skills category. The Program assisted 690 learners with their English language skills. Another big success has been attracting 7 Indigenous learners to the Program during the 2024-2025 grant term (the highest number of Indigenous learners in years).

93% of evaluated learners confirmed that the learning opportunities that the Program offered throughout the year were relevant to their needs.



**Measurable Goal:** The Youth Literacy Program will continue to offer tutor and learner centered programming relevant to the participants' needs.

**Outcome: \*Achieved\*** The 2024-2025 Youth Literacy Program successfully delivered responsive, learner-centered literacy support to 56 matched learners with the help of 56 dedicated volunteer tutors, including 31 secondary and post-secondary students. Programming expanded to serve 21 schools, with 998 volunteer hours recorded – up from 727 the previous year. 100% of surveyed learners and tutors reported being satisfied or highly satisfied with their experience. The program's reach, impact, and engagement were further strengthened through community partnerships, targeted support for Ukrainian youth, and the integration of Katja's 'Sit, Stay, Read' sessions. The program continues to evolve through thoughtful feedback, increased retention, and continuous improvement initiatives.

**Measurable Goal:** Increase the number of library tours and outreach visits by 10% in comparison to 2024.

**Outcome: \*In progress\*** As of December, we have had a total of 85 library tours and/or outreach visits, putting us at 85% of our goal. While still falling short of our goal of 100 due to school closures in October, which is typically a busy month, we are pleased with the impact we made on schools and students this year and will continue to promote these services in 2026.

**Measurable Goal:** Expand the Sit, Stay, Read with Katja program at the Downtown Branch in July 2025 to accommodate increased demand

**Outcome: \*Achieved\*** In response to growing demand, 'Sit, Stay, Read' was successfully expanded in July 2025 to include sessions at all three of RDPL's main branches. Throughout the 2024-2025 programming year, Katja delivered a total of 162 reading sessions, during which children read 701 books to her.

Katja's calm, non-judgmental presence continues to be a motivating and joyful support for young readers, especially learners in the Youth Literacy Program who often supplement their tutoring sessions by reading to her. Feedback from families and volunteers confirms that her involvement significantly boosts reading engagement, confidence, and motivation. Additionally, Katja participates in monthly outreach visits to schools and daycares, further expanding the program's reach into the broader community.



**Measurable Goal:** Trial Sensory Storytimes for neurodivergent children and passive sensory programming for neurodivergent Youth and Adults during Autism and Neurodiversity Awareness Month in April.

**Outcome: \*Achieved.\*** An adult sensory room with lighting, textures, sounds, and scents to promote relaxation, emotional regulation, and a sense of well-being was created. This room, particularly beneficial for adults with autism, PTSD, anxiety, dementia, sensory processing challenges, or anyone seeking a soothing room was used by a number of adults in two sessions. Sensory-focused, inclusive storytimes were created and ran for five sessions. Though participation in these programs was lower than anticipated, the materials and program will be of continued use for all pre-schoolers.

**Measurable Goal:** Partner with Royal Tyrrell Museum of Palaeontology on an outreach program and display of fossils specific to the Red Deer area.

**Outcome: \*Achieved.\*** Royal Tyrrell Museum of Palaeontology partnered with Red Deer Public Library as one of ten libraries in Alberta to display curated exhibits from their collection. The exhibit of a Pantodont skull cast and Pantodont hand cast was installed by the Museum in the Downtown Branch in September and will remain in situ to September 2026. This exciting partnership has sparked the creation of a number of Palaeontology themed programs and events.

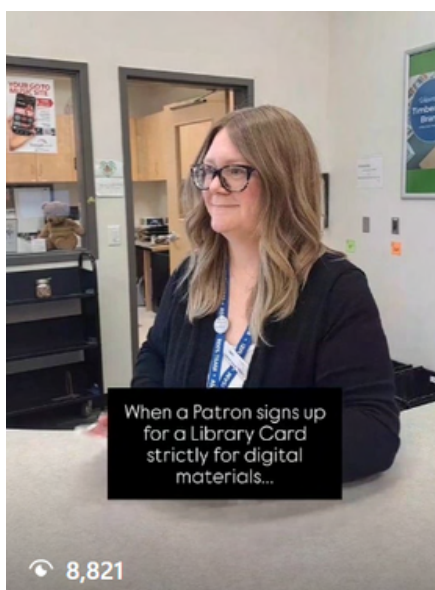


**Measurable Goal:** RDPL will see an increase in active cardholders 5%. A motivated and collaborative team can innovate in membership campaigns, customer service and outreach strategies, partnership opportunities, and targeted marketing initiatives, directly impacting growth in memberships.

**Outcome: \*In progress.\*** Throughout the year, library membership levels remained stable, reflecting consistent community engagement and sustained interest in library services. While overall membership did not reach the targeted 5% growth increase, maintaining steady enrollment demonstrates the continued relevance and value of the library to its users. This stability provides a strong foundation for future growth initiatives, allowing the library to build on existing relationships, refine outreach strategies, and pursue new opportunities to expand membership in the coming year.

**Measurable Goal:** Establish and empower the new Brand Champions team to foster a collaborative environment that encourages innovation and creativity while actively promoting library services and programs to the community.

**Outcome: \*Achieved.\*** The Brand Champions team has successfully established a vibrant and collaborative culture that promotes the library as a fun, engaging, and resource-rich destination. Staff across departments are now actively contributing to the promotion of library services and programs and are helping to define and strengthen the library's brand identity. The collective efforts of this team have increased social media visibility, enhanced community engagement, and boosted staff morale, positioning the Brand Champions initiative as a positive contributor to creativity, collaboration, and community engagement.



**Measurable Goal:** Provide select mental health training opportunities to support staff development.

**Outcome: \*Achieved.\*** Members of the Health and Safety Committee attended a Mental Health First Aid session in September, adding to the number of staff who have completed this valuable course.

During the annual Staff Development Day, The Canadian Mental Health Association presented a workshop on focusing on compassion fatigue and self care for library staff. The session was thorough and provided staff an opportunity to learn how to take care of their well-being while providing and receiving support from their coworkers and the organization. The PEP Society (Parents Empowering Parents) also led a session, focusing on how to provide support to those experiencing addictions of all kinds in our personal and professional relationships.

**Measurable Goal:** The Heart Squad, an internal team dedicated to fostering a positive work environment, will hold one quarterly team-building activity for staff.

**Outcome: \*Achieved.\*** Several team-building events were held, including Christmas in July, bunny and ghost hunts, potlucks, and more, with an emphasis on enhancing communication in the latter part of 2025.

**Measurable Goal:** The Youth Literacy Program will host a Celebration of Learning event in June, bringing together learners, their families, and tutors. These events will emphasize championing literacy and learning while showcasing and promoting the library's resources.

**Outcome: \*Achieved.\*** The Youth Literacy Program hosted its annual Celebration of Learning in June at the Dawe Branch. This fun and heartfelt event celebrated the success of our young readers and the dedicated volunteers who support them throughout the year. This year's event was particularly meaningful as it also marked the 25th anniversary of the Youth Literacy Program (formerly Reading Pals).



**Measurable Goal:** Offer the 2025 Interstellar Mission: Reading! Summer Reading Club for kids, teens, and adults to support literacy and learning. The program will provide engaging reading challenges, activities, and incentives designed to encourage kids and teens to maintain their reading habits over the summer break.

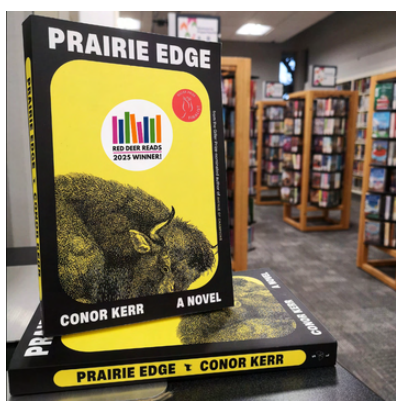
**Outcome: \*Achieved.\*** Summer Reading Club was a tremendous success, engaging over 2,100 children and families across Red Deer through 77 in-library programs and 21 outreach events. From the high-energy Astronaut Onboarding Kick-Off Party, which drew over 400 participants, to well-loved weekly storytimes, Book Bike adventures, and family fun in local parks, the program inspired children to read, explore, and connect with the library all summer long.

With more than 1,200 mission logs distributed and enthusiastic participation in themed programs such as 'Red Hot Robotics' and 'Sit, Stay, Read' with Katja, this year's club built excitement around reading while strengthening community connections. The creativity and dedication of the Summer Reading Club Coordinators, library staff, and community partners made this one of RDPL's most vibrant and impactful summer seasons to date.



**Measurable Goal:** Continue to connect with and support Red Deer schools in a variety of formats. This could include presenting a minimum of 15 information packets to schools (including information about library cards, school tours/outreach visits, collections, etc.) at all Red Deer elementary, junior, and high schools.

**Outcome: \*Achieved.\*** In total, we connected with and supported over 15 different schools through library tours and outreach visits, as well as hosting or visiting daycares and other unique outreach opportunities by the end of December. In addition to sending information packages to Red Deer schools, a few examples of how we supported schools include working with schools to include membership application information in school newsletters, promoting the Youth Literacy program, sending Team Katja to local schools, and attending special events such as career fairs and open houses.

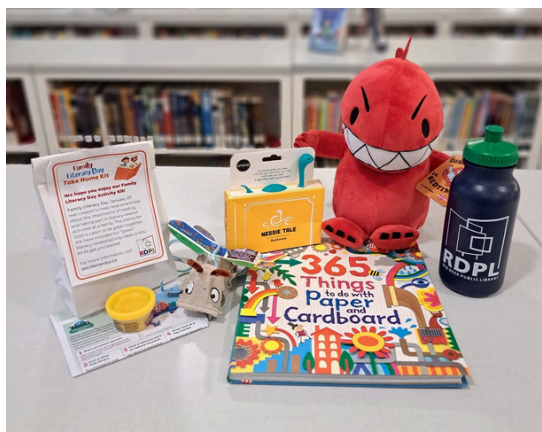


**Measurable Goal:** Organize and promote Red Deer Reads 2025.

**Outcome: \*In progress.\*** Red Deerians voted, and Conor Kerr's Giller Prize shortlisted novel, *Prairie Edge*, was selected as this year's 2025 Red Deer Reads title. Unfortunately, due to unforeseen circumstances, the Red Deer Reads main event with Conor Kerr, originally scheduled for October 25, 2025, had to be postponed. The event was rescheduled to take place on February 7, 2026.

**Measurable Goal:** Promote Family Literacy Day through social media, displays, special drop-in early literacy programs, and take home kits. We will partner with the City of Red Deer's G.H. Dawe Community Centre for their Winter Wonderland event on January 25. As part of this collaboration, the Library will host a Dawe Community Playdate program, featuring engaging literacy activities to celebrate the day.

**Outcome: \*Achieved.\*** Social media posts, displays and a storytime were held to mark Family Literacy Day. As part of our collaboration with the City of Red Deer's G.H. Dawe Community Centre 'Winter Wonderland' event in January, the Library hosted a Dawe Community Playdate featuring engaging literacy activities. The program was well received, with 35 attendees participating in the festivities at the Dawe Branch.



## GOAL 3: ENGAGED AND CONNECTED

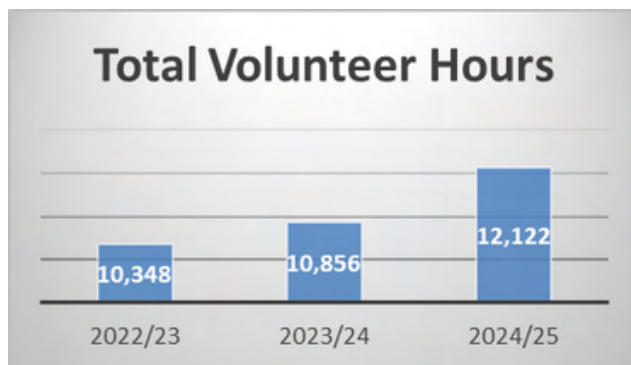
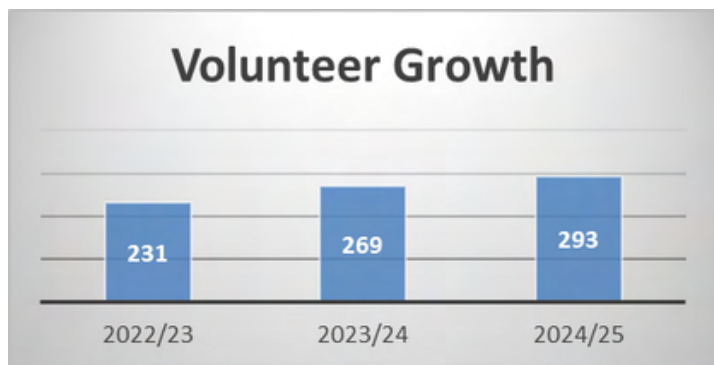
Red Deer Public Library strives to recognize, value, and empower all members of our community by celebrating all identities and incorporating principles of diversity, access, and inclusion in all aspects of our operation.

### Strategic Priorities:

- Strengthen relationships and develop meaningful partnerships with local agencies, multicultural communities, schools and volunteers.
- Commit to listening to, learning from, and building relationships with local Indigenous communities in recognition of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action.

**Measurable Goal:** The Adult Literacy Program will continue to match learners from various backgrounds with volunteer tutors. The program will support the number of volunteer tutors as estimated in the Community Adult Learning Program (CALP) grant application.

**Outcome: \*Achieved.\*** 77 new volunteers joined the Adult Literacy Program during the 2024/25 grant term. Some were willing to work with small groups; others took on multiple learners. Overall, the Adult Literacy Program supported 293 volunteer tutors who donated 12,122 volunteer hours and helped many individuals come closer to achieving their learning goals.



**Measurable Goal:** a) The Youth Literacy program will continue to match learners from various backgrounds with volunteer tutors in the 2024-2025 academic year; b) The Youth Literacy program will offer at least two training sessions to the volunteers in 2025; c) The Youth Literacy Program will build on the current relationships with the Red Deer Polytechnic and Red Deer high schools to recruit volunteers.

**Outcome: \*Achieved.\*** The Youth Literacy Program met all three goals for the 2024-2025 academic year. Fifty-six learners from diverse backgrounds were matched with 56 volunteer tutors across English beginner reading (Grades 1-5), French, and English as an Additional Language (Grades 6-12). The program delivered two formal volunteer training sessions, supplemented by ongoing one-on-one staff support. Recruitment efforts engaged 31 secondary and post-secondary students, strengthening partnerships with local schools. Over two years, the program connected with 118 volunteers and tutor candidates, with 35 tutors projected to return next year (up from 19), demonstrating growing reach, strong retention, and meaningful community impact in literacy development.



**Measurable Goal:** RDPL will recognize the contribution of their volunteers in a meaningful way during National Volunteer Week April 27 - May 4, 2025.

**Outcome: \*Achieved.\*** A \$1,200 grant was received from Volunteer Alberta and was used to reward and recognize our volunteers.

The Youth Literacy Program team recognized volunteer contributions by offering personalized appreciation to both tutors and learners across all three branches. Volunteers were celebrated with virtual Tim Hortons gift cards and cookies, delivered directly to them at their tutoring sessions – a meaningful way to meet them where they do their important work. Additionally, part of the grant supported a lunch and refreshments for the volunteers who generously gave their time to participate as ‘living books’ in the Human Library during the ‘Grow Kids’ event in May.



**Measurable Goal:** During each year of the plan of service, RDPL will complete diversity and/or language audits in one or more areas of the library's collection, in consultation with local community groups, where applicable. In 2025, the library will focus on the Children's Picture Book collection

**Outcome: \*Achieved.\*** The Children's Picture Book (Juvenile Easy) collection was reviewed using collection information from CollectionHQ's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) module along with local and other census data to better understand how the picture book collection reflects our community and users. As of August 2025, 4,223 titles (17.5% of the JE collection) were identified as DEI items. More generally, 19.5% of RDPL's entire collection fell under DEI classification. In comparison, on average, peer libraries contained 20.4% DEI titles; RDPL is considered on par with other libraries of a similar size (100K-250K). While our staff and vendors continue to add quality titles to the collection that aim to reflect all demographics that access the library, we will continue to work on filling gaps when book availability permits.



**Measurable Goal:** RDPL will explore community interest and needs for language learning opportunities hosted by the Library.

**Outcome: \*Achieved.\*** 'Let's Speak Cree' classes have grown in popularity and will remain a key focus, with additional courses added for the fall and a potential advanced class in development for those who completed last year's offerings. The Community Foundation of Central Alberta grant that kick-started this has been spent and a final report submitted. Other language class offerings will continue to be explored.

**Measurable Goal:** Statistics for interlibrary loans through CELA, Centre for Equitable Library Access, will be noted and by the end of 2025, an increase of 5% in loans will be expected to demonstrate that the Library is meeting the needs of members requiring accessible formats

**Outcome: \*Achieved.\*** Though CELA, Centre for Equitable Library Access, discontinued their physical loans at the end of July, moving to a digital service, an increase of 5% was achieved.

**Measurable Goal:** Circulation of DAISY discs through the CELA deposit collection will increase by 5% as this accessible format becomes simpler for members to browse and borrow.

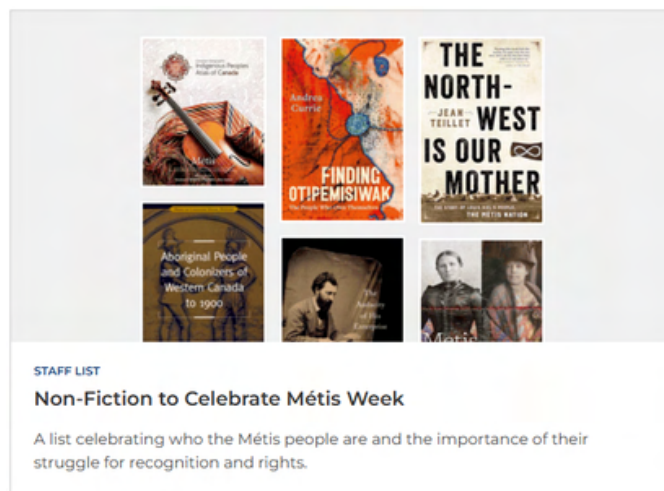
**Outcome: \*Achieved.\*** A five percent increase in circulation of DAISY discs was achieved.

**Measurable Goal:** The DAISY deposit collection will be promoted in a new way in 2025 to increase awareness of these accessible formats.

**Outcome: \*Achieved.\*** Despite CELA's (Centre for Equitable Library Access) cessation of physical loans, we were able to expand the DAISY collection.

**Measurable Goal:** RDPL will work with the Metis community to host Celebration of Métis Week to the library's programming roster in 2025, offering events and activities that honor Métis culture, heritage, and contributions.

**Outcome: \*Achieved.\*** Métis Week was celebrated with a workshop sharing the technique, patterns, and cultural significance of the timeless and traditional art of fingerweaving. Resource lists of library materials and links to Métis community resources were shared.



**Measurable Goal:** Create multiple Indigenous language learning kits to add to the collection.

**Outcome: \*In progress.\*** Cree learning kits were easy to assemble but collecting appropriate materials for other Indigenous languages will continue into 2026.

**Measurable Goal:** Offer Cree language classes for adults.

**Outcome: \*Achieved.\*** Elder Linda Ophus ran more Cree language and culture classes in the fall and will continue to spring 2026.

**Measurable Goal:** Explore local opportunities to participate in the PLSB sponsored, EPL hosted Voices of the Land project.

**Outcome: \*In progress.\*** RDPL has now been set up with our own 'Community' page on the 'Voices of the Land' website. Our page can be found at: [voicesoftheland.org/community/red-deer-public-library](https://voicesoftheland.org/community/red-deer-public-library)

In 2026, we will work on collecting local stories in a variety of formats to add to the website.

**Measurable Goal:** Host annual Indigenous Winter Solstice Storytime at the library that is facilitated by a local Métis elder.

**Outcome: \*Achieved.\*** The annual Indigenous Winter Solstice Storytime, facilitated by a local Métis elder was held on Saturday, December 20 and brought in 65 people, double the number from the previous year. This program provides the community with a meaningful way to engage with Indigenous stories and traditions, remaining a valued part of our seasonal programming and commitment to reconciliation and cultural inclusion.



**Measurable Goal:** Continue to meet with the Public Library Services Branch Indigenous Library Services Committee to brainstorm best practices for engaging with and meeting the needs of Indigenous community members.

**Outcome: \*Achieved.\*** The Committee met in the spring, with another meeting planned in the fall. There were excellent suggestions for how to (and how not to) engage and partner with local Indigenous communities as well as an excellent overview of the 'Voices of the Land' project (they also encouraged us to set up our RDPL portal within that site). The committee also reviewed and updated their goals and objectives at this meeting.

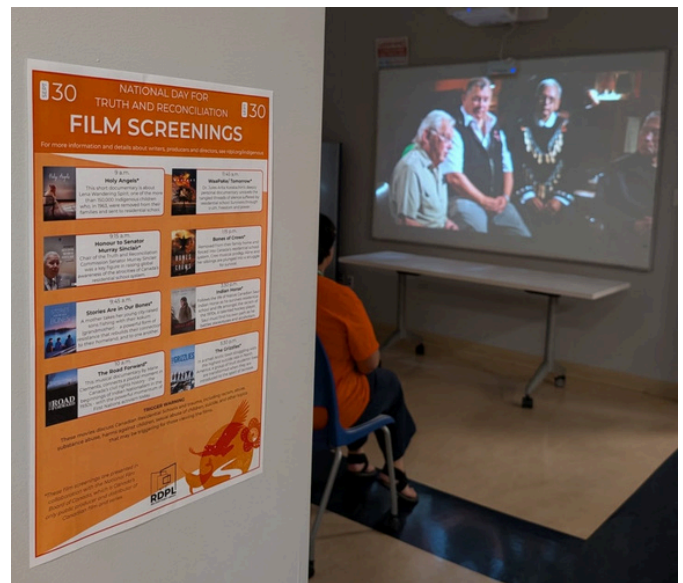
**Measurable Goal:** Work with the Red Deer Native Friendship Society on programs that target the perspectives and needs of local Indigenous communities.

**Outcome: \*Achieved.\*** Our partnership with RDNFS included hosting a monthly book club (Books & Bannock), along with highly-anticipated and well-attended virtual author visit Q&A with award-winning Indigenous author Waubgeshig Rice and Indigenous author Cree Nomad. RDNFS held one of their family camps, Celebrating Families, at the Downtown branch (the program supports families who have one or more members healing from addictions, treating the entire family as a whole). If they are able to secure more funding, they will host this event at our location again in 2026. We also continue to work with RDNFS to update and expand the Backpack kits (Seven Teachings series and more).



**Measurable Goal:** Provide meaningful learning opportunities on National Day for Truth and Reconciliation for community members of all ages.

**Outcome: \*Achieved.\*** Take-home kits were created for children to display handmade faux-stained glass t-shirts in their windows, with a resource list for further learning. Kits were also developed for teens and adults to create their own orange shirt pins. We had a variety of shorts and films screening for the general public throughout the day in the Downtown Branch.



## GOAL 4: SUSTAINABLE AND HEALTHY WORKPLACE

Red Deer Public Library is guided by modern best practices.

### Strategic Priorities:

- Use and promote our resources responsibly.
- Engage the board and staff in annual action planning.
- Ensure that library staff have the skills, support and training required to contribute to the success of the Plan of Service.

**Measurable Goal:** Create more resiliency in our online ebook and e-audiobook offerings by joining the Palace Project so that we are not solely reliant on Overdrive/Libby for these resources.

**Outcome: \*Achieved.\*** RDPL successfully launched the Palace Project app in the summer. Details about this e-reading and e-listening service can be found at [rdpl.org/palace-project](http://rdpl.org/palace-project).

**Measurable Goal:** Research and develop a framework for utilizing Service Replacement Value, Community Benefit Value, and Wage Replacement Value metrics to measure and report the real impact of library programs delivered by staff and volunteers, highlighting their contributions to community well-being and economic value.

**Outcome: \*In progress.\*** With program data for the 2025 general programming year almost available, analysis is underway to inform the development of a framework utilizing Service Replacement Value, Community Benefit Value, and Wage Replacement Value metrics. This framework will help measure and communicate the real impact of library programs delivered by staff and volunteers, highlighting their contributions to community well-being and economic value. The results are being tabulated with final reporting in January 2026.



**Measurable Goal:** RDPL will continue to review and weed outdated medical books in the nonfiction section of all branches, using CollectionHQ and other resources

**Outcome:** **\*Achieved.\*** This project is complete.

**Measurable Goal:** Participate in the CULC (Canadian Urban Libraries Council) Social Impact research project to include Red Deer data in the quantitative and qualitative library service data across the country.

**Outcome:** **\*Achieved.\*** Data collection began in June and the vendors notified us that sufficient library user survey responses were collected by June 15th. Results will be released at the Ontario Library Association conference at the end of January 2026.

**Measurable Goal:** The 2025 Annual Action Plan is scheduled for completion in January, shaped by the collaborative input of the library staff, the management team, and the Library Board. This collective effort will steer the RDPL's activities in the year ahead.

**Outcome:** **\*Achieved.\*** The Action Plan was completed as planned in January and served as the framework for the year's work.



**Measurable Goal:** Explore the Board's interest to purchase more respondents in the CULC social impact research surveying.

**Outcome:** **\*Achieved.\*** Met the response targets set by CULC and the survey provider but did not purchase additional response capacity.

**Measurable Goal:** Promote Board development opportunities to ensure Board members are aware of their ongoing Plan of Service responsibilities.

**Outcome:** **\*Achieved.\*** Many Board development opportunities have been shared with Board members by the Board Chair, CEO, and other board members, and will continue to be a focus.

**Measurable Goal:** Explore online psychological health and training opportunities through the Mental Health Commission of Canada.

**Outcome:** **\*In progress.\*** Although we continually look for training opportunities that fit our needs, we chose to focus on training from The Canadian Mental Health Association during our annual Staff Development Day

**Measurable Goal:** Develop a framework for individually-based professional development.

**Outcome:** *\*In progress.\** To be added to a newly created set of administrative policies, currently underway.



**Measurable Goal:** Staff Development Day 2025 will offer the staff meaningful training and learning opportunities.

**Outcome:** *\*Achieved.\** Staff Development Day 2025 offered comprehensive training through The Canadian Mental Health Association and an informative workshop with PEP (Parents Empowering Parents).



**Measurable Goal:** Cybersecurity training for staff will continue in 2025.

**Outcome:** *\*Achieved.\** Licenses have been assigned, and staff are actively engaging in training courses. Phishing simulations continue to be conducted periodically to assess responses, with additional training assigned based on performance.



# Thank you

for being a part of our story!



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