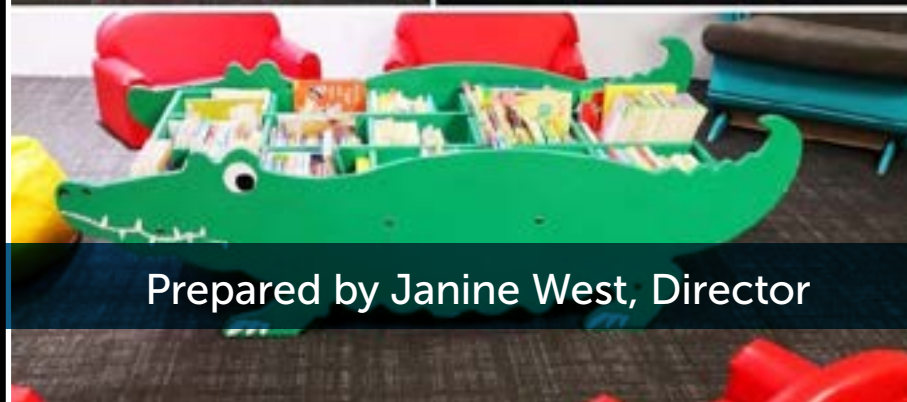
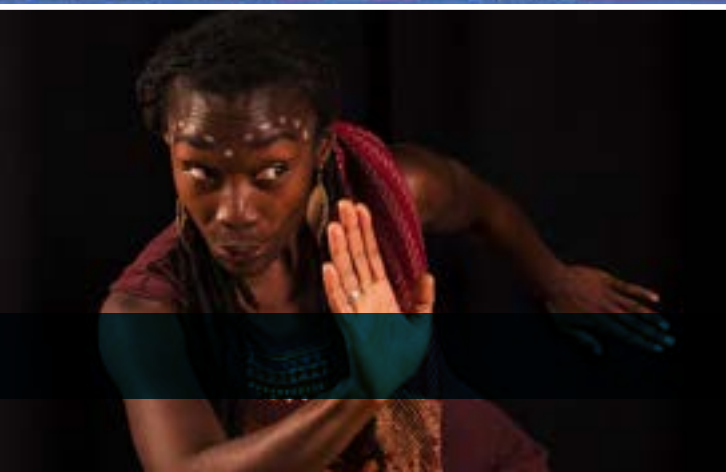


# Eleanor London Côte Saint-Luc Public Library

## ANNUAL REPORT 2021



Prepared by Janine West, Director

## MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR



### CONNECTION AND COMMUNITY

The year 2021 was another challenging one. The residents of our beautiful city have shown incredible resilience. However, we know that the ongoing effects of the pandemic and its restrictions have weighed heavily on each of us—from the smallest child in daycare meeting their educators with masks on, to the eldest senior, wondering when they could gather around the table with their children or see their friends again for a game of bridge. There have also been significant losses. Thank you to each of you for your sacrifices, for doing what was necessary for the safety of all and for maintaining hope for a safe and healthy future.

This year, the Eleanor London Côte Saint Luc Public Library has continued its tireless work in reducing social isolation and providing valued services and programming to our residents. The library's physical space has always been a sanctuary for those seeking a welcoming place. It had to adjust to re-creating a similar welcoming place but in the online realm. For parents, the Children's Library provided playful curated kits to allow families to disconnect from screens and create memories. Teen Thursdays, Reading Buddies and other youth-centric programs in partnership with Ometz allowed teens to express

themselves and make connections during a vulnerable time in their lives. The Home Library Service and newly reincarnated Care Call Service became a lifeline for many seniors, providing a listening ear as well as sought after library materials.

We are grateful to know that most of us are protected and boosted. Still, the virus continues to pose a risk to our most vulnerable and we must be cautious. Our ongoing battle to stop the spread of the virus continues in 2022 as we learn to live with it in our midst. We look to the future as the number of hospitalizations reduce, with hope and the strength of a united community.

The Côte Saint-Luc Public Library belongs to all of us, and I invite each of you to explore its many offerings. As I concluded last year: Please remember to wear your mask and wash your hands as often as possible. Stay safe. I will add a final piece of advice this year: Take care of yourselves and each other.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mitchell Brownstein".

**Mayor Mitchell Brownstein**







## MESSAGE FROM THE LIBRARY DIRECTOR

Last year in my annual message, I began by writing that 2020 has been a year like no other. Who would have thought at the time that COVID-19 would continue to affect the library and create havoc our lives throughout 2021 and into 2022? With the government adding, changing, then lifting restrictions numerous times throughout the year, the library has exuded flexibility and adaptability changing its level of service as need be. Our motto has been *"Gradually Reopening, Keeping Everyone Safe"*, and with the support of not only our esteemed City Council but our library members as well, we were able to uphold this motto.

The pandemic largely eliminated the community gathering function of our library in 2021. However, many new opportunities presented themselves and certain standout services were a testament to how the library has gone above and beyond throughout this crisis. The library committed to providing its *No Contact Pick up Service* when other public libraries dropped the service. We also increased our delivery of materials and made care calls to isolated seniors.

When the provincial government implemented vaccine passports, the library rose to the occasion providing needed assistance to our most vulnerable population who had limited or no access to technology. For our youth, the library created activity kits for pick up enabling our children to keep busy and engaged, and as the precarious mental health of our teens came to light, we provided not only resources but also workshops in order to help our young people cope.

Eventually we, as well as our library, will emerge from all of the COVID-19 closures and restrictions and our lives will, we hope, return to some form of normalcy. However, if the pandemic has shown us anything, it is that there are many ways for the library to stay connected and relevant and I look forward to 2022 when we can continue to come up with new and creative programs and services that will make a difference in peoples lives.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Janine West".

**Janine West**  
Library Director



## OUR MISSION

Responding to our community's social, educational, creative and cultural needs in an inclusive and welcoming way.

## OUR VISION

Empowering everyone to live a happier and healthier life by fostering creativity, discovery and social connection.

# YEAR IN REVIEW

Côte Saint-Luc Public Library  
2021



**20,815\***

VISITORS TO THE LIBRARY

\*Library was closed to in person visits January to May



**16,748**

REFERENCE  
QUESTIONS  
ANSWERED

**85**

TECH  
TRAINING  
SESSIONS



**479**

PROGRAMS  
OFFERED



**7,110**

PROGRAM  
ATTENDANCE



**210,450**

ITEMS WERE  
CHECKED OUT



**27,811**

WEBSITE  
USERS



**1,168**

FACEBOOK  
FOLLOWERS



**89,667**

WEBSITE VISITS



**19,386**

E-BOOKS &  
AUDIOBOOKS  
CHECKED OUT

**9,502**

ACTIVE  
BORROWERS



**833**

NEW CARDHOLDERS

# COVID 19—A YEAR IN REVIEW

## GRADUALLY REOPENING, KEEPING EVERYONE SAFE

The Library began the year under lockdown with the building being closed to the public. However, we continued to offer our No Contact Pick Up service, along with virtual reference and virtual programming for which our library members were very grateful. Throughout the winter and early spring, the management team worked on a re-opening plan. Of top priority was how to accommodate in-person visits keeping in mind all of the mandated safety protocols including reduced seating, wearing masks, washing hands and social distancing. As a team, we all agreed that a gradual reopening plan was the best way to go.

### Gradually Reopening, Keeping Everyone Safe



### Réouverture progressive pour la sécurité de tous

With the COVID situation improving and number of cases decreasing, the library re-opened to in-person visits on May 25th. Our motto was *Gradually Reopening, Keeping Everyone Safe*. Visits were strictly limited in terms of the length, the numbers, available seating. Visits also had to be made by appointment. In addition, a welcome desk was set up in order to process all visits. While many libraries closed their pickup service when they reopened to the public, we made the unprecedented and unique commitment to continue this service; we understood that many of our patrons were still nervous about entering the library and preferred to pick up their materials with minimal contact. Our outdoor pickup tent was safe and reassuring. Time and time again, we heard how appreciative our residents were for this decision.

As things continued to improve, the Library, true to its motto, lifted some restrictions. In August, we eliminated the need for reservations. However, with the provincial government announcing its vaccination passport mandates, it was decided that this requirement be extended to the library. In order to ensure that this requirement would not prohibit the unvaccinated from having access to library material, we allowed all members the ability to have access to the *No Contact Pickup Service*. As a result of

this mandate, the Library quickly rose to the occasion and offered to help residents navigate the process and obtain their necessary QR codes. With the deadline of September 15th looming, the reference desk staff was instrumental in helping almost 800 residents download their QR codes and print their vaccination proofs.

**RÈGLES D'ADMISSION simplifiées**  
**ADMISSION RULES simplified**

- Passeport vaccinal + preuve d'identité requis**  
Vaccine passport + proof of identity required (Ages 13+ Ans)
- Portez votre masque**  
Mask on (Ages 5+ Ans)
- Lavez ou désinfectez les mains**  
Wash or sanitize hands (20 sec)
- Présentez votre carte de bibliothèque**  
Show library card
- Donnez votre nom**  
Provide name

**Bonne visite ! • Enjoy your visit!**

Patrons were deeply appreciative of the assistance that the library provided during this challenging and stressful time. Seniors were especially thankful, as many did not have the necessary technology at home to do it themselves. While most residents wanted a printout of the paper passport, many also wanted the VaxiCode App installed on their smartphones. The reference staff also answered many complex questions related to the Vaccine Passports including how to get their passport if they were vaccinated outside of Canada and how to add their married name to their passport.

While the vaccination passport was never mandated to include public libraries, it did increase the level of



# COVID 19—A YEAR IN REVIEW

**Bienvenue au Service des enfants et des jeunes** / **Welcome to the Children and Teens Department**

**Comment partager cet espace en toute sécurité** / **How to share this space safely**

**Vous disposez d'une heure pour votre visite.** / **Thank you for limiting your visits to 1 hour.**

**60 min**

**Distanciation physique • Physical Distancing**

Restez près de votre groupe. / Please stay close to your group

Gardez 1 à 2 mètres de distance avec les autres membres et le personnel. / Please give other patrons and our staff 1 – 2 metres of space

**Couvre-visages • Face coverings**

**Adultes et enfants de 5 ans et plus :** En tout temps, il faut porter un couvre-visage couvrant le nez et la bouche. / **Adults and children 5 years old and over:** Must wear a face covering to cover nose and mouth at all times

**Enfants de 2 à 4 ans :** couvre-visage fortement recommandé. / **Children ages 2 – 4:** face covering strongly recommended

**Enfants de 2 ans et moins :** couvre-visage pas recommandé. / **Children 2 years and younger:** face coverings not recommended

cslibrary.org

workflow, we moved it to the membership desk instead. During this time, we also created a procedure where library members could book their own pickup appointments, another innovation which greatly improved our efficiency.



comfort in terms of safety in our facility. This extra layer of protection was appreciated by residents and allowed us to reopen further; the library opened on Saturdays in September. In October, we added more seating and allowed groups to come in and study. Finally, in November we increased our opening hours and closed at 10 pm on weekdays. These changes helped accommodate students who needed to use the library to prepare for exams.

With things looking up throughout the fall, we also made changes to our No Contact Pickup Service, moving it from an outdoor service to indoors, initially utilizing the Café space. Then, in order to improve

However, On December 21, due to the rise of COVID 19's Omicron variant infections, the Library moved back to no-contact pickups only and scaled backed our hours to closing at 6 pm daily.

COVID and its management, however, is only part of the library story for 2021. The following represents the highlights of other projects, services and initiatives that we offered throughout the year.

# COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND COLLABORATION

Part of the Library's social mission is to facilitate projects that give back to the community. This took shape through a multitude of projects, such as donations with the Kindness Project, or environmental activism via the Monarch Friendly City initiative. Teen volunteerism for special programs (Code Club, Cartooning) and teen volunteering online (Reading Buddies, Youth Advisory Group) also allowed teens and young adults shared their strengths and passions with younger children or with their peers. We also facilitated the collection of school supplies for children in need as well the collection of cat food for the Cat Committee.

## THE KINDNESS PROJECT

In partnership with resident Michaëlla Etienne, the Library facilitated her Kindness Project to help bring joy to children with Type 1 Diabetes. With nearly a hundred finger puppets made and donated by community members (from children to teens to seniors), the Montreal Children's Hospital's juvenile diabetes patients received a wonderful gift from the residents

of CSL. The library also provided kits to allow residents without craft supplies to make puppets and led an outdoor summer workshop to help children learn how to decorate their very own finger puppets.





# COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND COLLABORATION

## COMMUNITY SERVICES DATABASE

Following the essential services database for food security in 2020, the Community Service Database was an initiative to help at-risk folks find services to support them in more holistic ways. In 2021, the Library prioritised helping vulnerable communities find connection, and making information as accessible as possible. Programming and initiatives surrounding the pandemic were focused on combating social isolation and mental health struggles brought about by COVID-19.

The Referral Service project and Community Service Database, spearheaded by the Library and Communications, was conceived to connect isolated and at-risk patrons with their community, and to strengthen relationships and information-sharing between community organizations and the City. Of particular importance was ensuring that teens and

seniors remained connected with their community and aware of services available to them to promote connection, wellness, volunteerism, and pursuit of new hobbies. The library also contacted partner organizations to verify if they offered transport for essential services, such as vaccinations. Librarians helped to create search tools and information taxonomies to make the City website as accessible and easy-to-use as possible.

**The Directory of Community Services and Activities** was launched on the City website on February 24, 2021. The Database is also used by Reference Librarians and public service staff, to help those without technology access important information about services and programs offered in their own backyards.

## MONARCH BUTTERFLY INITIATIVE



In June, the Library, working with local resident Myra Shuster and Councillor Mike Cohen, presented a list of actions to Council to support the protection of the monarch butterfly and its habitat. A resolution was passed to this effect resulting in Côte Saint-Luc becoming the 75th municipality in Quebec to be certified as a monarch-friendly city. These actions included launching a public awareness campaign,

collaborating with our local community gardens, increasing butterfly-friendly plantings on municipal properties, and encouraging residents to plant milkweed in their home gardens. Most importantly, the demonstration garden behind the library was repurposed to focus on creating a monarch butterfly habitat.



# COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND COLLABORATION



Teen volunteers helped Monarch Ambassador Myra Shuster plant and water the garden, while Ariane Smoley, Children’s and Youth Services Coordinator at the Library, held an outdoor Monarch Storytime. Both of these programs were part of the youth education component of becoming a monarch-friendly City.

## FOCUS ON MENTAL HEALTH

In 2020, the library began focusing on providing resources and programs to help give students better tools to manage their own self-care and cope with difficult feelings. With the mental health of young people declining in record numbers due to isolation and fear brought on by COVID-19, this year, the Library focused on bolstering and prioritizing teen mental health. **The Ministry of Culture and Communications Inclusion Grant** of \$6,000 awarded to the Library’s youth department presented the financial opportunity to continue to make teen wellness and mental health a focal point in 2021 and into 2022 as the pandemic continues.

### Wellness Programming with the Youth Advisory Group

Empowering teens to face mental health and wellness obstacles through helping to develop programming for their peers, the Library and Recreation continued the partnership to provide *Real Talk* programs monthly from January to April and again in October and November. The themes, chosen “by teens for teens” with the guidance of psychologists and community partners, served 41 teens. This is not including teens who participated in other weekly *QuaranTeen Thursday* programming, including *Hot Topics*, *Among Us Game Night*, *Paint Night*, Youth Advisory Group meetings, and more.

*Real Talk* workshops were also complemented with an active component, thanks to a close collaboration with the Recreation department. To put skills learned into practice, Recreation’s youth sector offered active and free wellness sessions in Mindfulness, Meditation, and Yoga in 2021, and organized the sessions on Nutrition.



# COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND COLLABORATION

## HOME LIBRARY SERVICE

At the beginning of 2021, Home Library Services was serving 301 patrons. By the end of the year, our enrollment had increased by over 20 percent, to 367 members. The service delivered 9603 items in 2878 individual home deliveries, almost doubling our numbers from 2020. Irrespective of 2020 including 10 weeks without deliveries, our 2021 deliveries still showed a marked increase.

In September 2021, with an easing of restrictions, we welcomed five of our returning volunteer delivery drivers, who had been working with us until mid-December. When Omicron hit at the end of the month,

The service has been described by enrolled patrons to library staff as

**// lifesaving //**

**// as necessary  
as bread //**

it coincided with the last of our deliveries before the service's holiday break. The service is primarily run by library staff member Kathy Aubie, with support from circulation staff member Anthony Grillone and Coordinator of Seniors' Services Katie Bezaire.

Home Library Services has continued throughout the various phases of the pandemic to adapt its hygiene measures to keep both staff and patrons safe, with staff members remaining masked, maintaining physical distancing from patrons, and continuing to sanitize hands before and after deliveries.

## CARE CALLS

In March 2021, the library took on ownership of the City's Care Calls program, a service through which isolated senior residents of Côte Saint-Luc can sign up to receive up to five social calls every week (on weekdays) to both prevent social isolation and to offer a secondary care measure as a regular check in. The service fully transitioned to the library from Recreation at the end of April, with Recreation staff filling in for any absences by Linda Whittaker, the primary caller.

Over the last several months, Care Calls staff have been available to talk with both clients and their families about their health (several falls and heart attacks), social (lack of friends, loneliness), and mental (cognitive decline) needs. Our clients have repeatedly expressed how much they appreciate the service and their feelings of the significant value the city places on its senior residents.





# BROADENING OUR SERVICES

## NON-FICTION BOOK LISTS

Children spent almost half of 2021 not being able to visit the library. Although the collection was accessible through the online catalogue and pick up service, for some, finding books was a challenge. An even greater challenge for parents was keeping children busy. In response, the youth team worked to provide easier access to curated book lists to offer families relief in a time when childcare and available child-friendly activities were scarce. To the right are just some of the ideas developed by the team for at-home activities in science, technology, engineering, arts, and math (STEAM).



## TAKE HOME ACTIVITY KITS

For similar reasons, the library provided 9 different, themed, take-home activity kits for young library members, specifically tailored to children and/or teens. The kits featured a mix of literacy and creative (STEAM) activities with both an instructional and engaging booklet, created by Ariane and designed by Ruth, as well as the needed craft and activity supplies for each curated kit. Over 317 kits were handed to children, teens, and parents through the no-contact pickup service this year. In addition, kits were created to supplement online programming and events for teens such as Paint Night! Not only did the kits go to many households to help uplift families in CSL during a difficult time, they also provided high-quality activities and garnered quite a few new children's library memberships.

Kit	Number of participants
Spring Break Activity Kit	58 children and teens
Spring in Bloom Kit / Program	16 children (FULL)
Summer Gardening Kit	42 children and teens
Summer Reading Club Kit / Program	53 children and teens
Clay Creations Kit (SRC milestone)	16 children and teens
Prize Kit (SRC milestone)	25 children and teens
Make Your Own Comic Kit (SRC milestone)	22 children and teens
Fall Squash Decorating Kit	27 children
Winter Wonderland Kit	57 children and teens

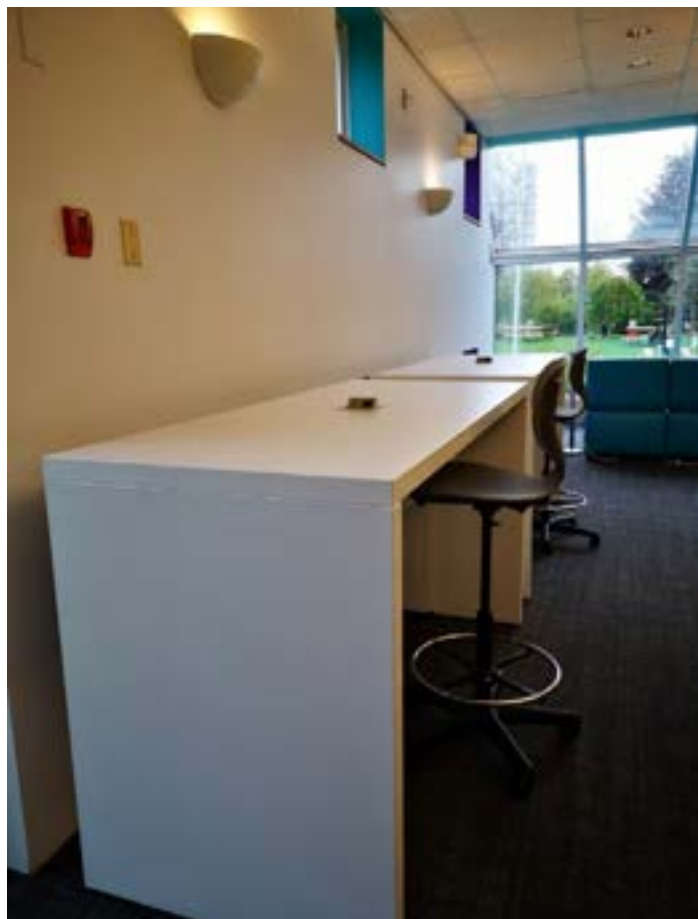
*Parent Caroline Frank called to say both she and her child love the kits. They are always excited to pick them up at the library, and they feel like a gift. She also shared interesting program suggestions, which inspired the Gardening Kit the library offered in May.*

## A PLACE FOR TEENS

From continued virtual volunteering opportunities to *Real Talk* workshops and the *The Ministry of Culture and Communications Inclusion Grant* investment in CSL teens, the library continues to strive to serve its teen population with developmentally sound programs and services, as well as to help prepare and encourage teens to pursue their dreams and goals. This year, some on-site changes made the Library's Youth Space even more teen-friendly with some on-site changes, while the team continued to work behind the scenes to continue virtual teen services and programming.

### NEW YOUNG ADULT NON-FICTION SECTION

Recognizing the developmental gap between children and teens, the youth department has been working to recategorize young adult (YA) nonfiction, and to move it to the young adult section of the youth library. This allows teens to more easily find books about issues which affect them, from peer pressure to puberty. This also allows younger children to browse the formidable nonfiction collection and find materials that are geared towards elementary school readers and learners.



One of the library's goals is to ensure that teens have a space within the library that they can call their own. Chosen with the help of the library's teen volunteers, these modern tables and stools were installed in September 2021. The tables give teens another study space where they can plug in their computers or USB devices.



## VOLUNTEERS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

# Reading BUDDIES

5 PM ON ZOOM  
for library members  
ages 6 – 11. Registration required.

MON, Jul 19, 26, Aug 2, 9  
or TUE, Jul 20, 27, Aug 3, 10

Registration: [csllibrary.org/childrensprogram-2](https://csllibrary.org/childrensprogram-2)



## TEACHER MENTORS

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*Reading Buddies* took on a new dimension this year as teacher-volunteers took on their new role of mentoring teens. Online meetings have allowed teachers and librarians to observe *Reading Buddies* pairs unobtrusively, and to give focused feedback to teens to allow them to grow their skills in communication, group work, and tutoring. Teachers have expressed that they have gained quite a bit of satisfaction and purpose from the program as well, and Anne Naimark expressed her gratitude for the opportunity to help different teens develop important competencies, saying that she often learns as much from the teens as they do from her.

## THE DIGITAL EXPERIENCE

Throughout the year, the library continued to offer an extensive collection of digital resources that met a wide variety of needs. These included, audiobooks and eBooks, online periodicals and newspapers, movies and music, and arts and crafts. As all the resources are available remotely on the library's website, or via an app on a device, residents can partake of this wonderful digital collection wherever they are located.

A crucial part of the digital experience is the assistance that the reference desk staff continues to provide to patrons as they navigate the ins and outs of these resources. Patrons routinely "drop by" or call the reference department seeking guidance.

In a voice message left by a patron asking for help with audiobooks:

*Kudos to all of you and thank you from the bottom of my heart for looking after Cote Saint-Luc residents in the manner that you do. You are an awesome team. Every single person is amazing and your services exquisite. No other way to describe it. I thank you for helping us out in these difficult times. I myself don't go anywhere so your help is invaluable. You really are wonderful! Thanks again.*

## DIGITAL RESOURCES

### The New York Times

*The New York Times* is a popular print newspaper with Côte Saint Luc residents, but with the library closed for some of 2021, and others still wary of entering the building, the New York Times digital version was added to our collection. *The New York Times Online* provides full access to the latest news articles from the newspaper. Patrons are now able to enjoy unlimited articles covering topics that range from critical issues to sports to opinions; all from the comfort of their homes.

Library patrons have also been traditionally dependent on the library for health information. In order to continue to meet this need, the library has partnered with the ABPQ to provide a new digital resource entitled *Biblio-Santé*. *Biblio-Santé* consists of a series of 15 thematic booklets that provide information about various illnesses, as well as a list of resources on where to get help and support. Each booklet provides a list of organizations, a selection of relevant websites, as well as reading and film suggestions. The platform is available in English and in French and is now accessible via through the library website, under **eBooks and more**.





# DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Diversity and inclusion have long been values important to librarians and Côte Saint-Luc is proud to support its many residents of diverse backgrounds and abilities, providing services to all. Maintaining a diverse collection and giving voice to marginalized communities also helps to foster empathy, self-acceptance, and pride in heritage.

The youth sector continued to provide Virtual Readers' Advisory Services through 2021, spotlighting diversity and inclusive representation in literature. The library's collections strive to reflect the diverse CSL community, as well as to help guide parents, teachers, and young readers to subjects which encourage self-reflection and focus on current events.

## HIGHLIGHTING DIVERSE VOICES

Representation is essential for diverse communities like CSL as it is for every community; curbing bullying, dispelling stereotypes, and reflecting unique experiences through literature is key to building empathy and self-esteem in young people. This year, the team has continued to invest in diverse collections and improve access to those collections through curated book lists on the website and more descriptive genre headings in the library catalogue:

Parent Michaella Etienne was impressed by the inclusivity and representation within the picture books selected for her family through the Reader's Advisory service. Her family loves the picture books (such as *Mixed* by Arree Chung and *I Am Enough* by Grace Byers). She told the Librarians that these selections had a positive and noticeable impact on her child's self-esteem.



## PROGRAMMING

On October 25, the library collaborated with the Intercultural Storytelling Festival of Montreal and invited Shayna Jones to perform her *Hambone and Redfish Don't Lie*, a celebration of Afro-diasporic folklore, folk history, rhythm, and song.

## A NEW FARSI BOOK COLLECTION

With the involvement of a passionate and committed library patron, the library added a collection of 60 Persian language books to our multi-lingual collection. This collection was chosen with the patron's assistance and he was instrumental in marketing it to our Iranian residents.

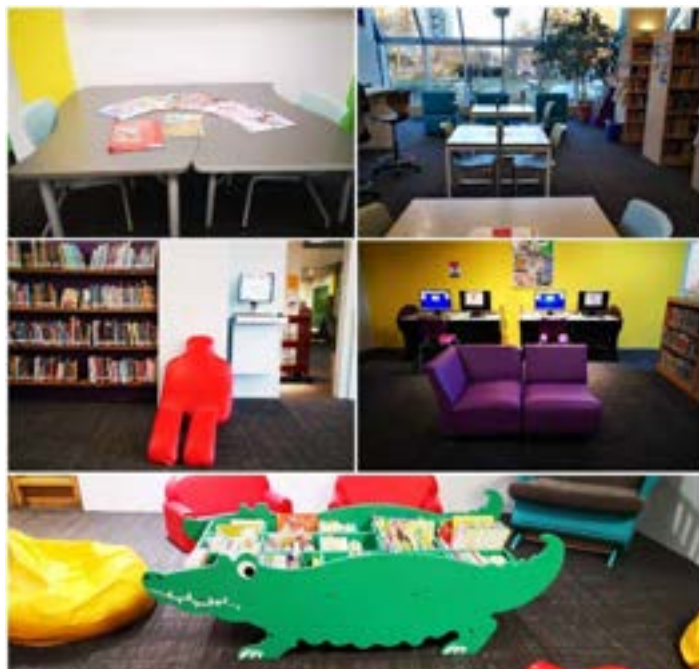


# LIBRARY SPACES

## REOPENING THE YOUTH LIBRARY

With the No-Contact Pickup Service operating out of the Youth Department, juggling times for the public to enter was initially challenging. After moving the pickups service to the front of the library, families were able to come back to the department any time during the library’s opening hours.

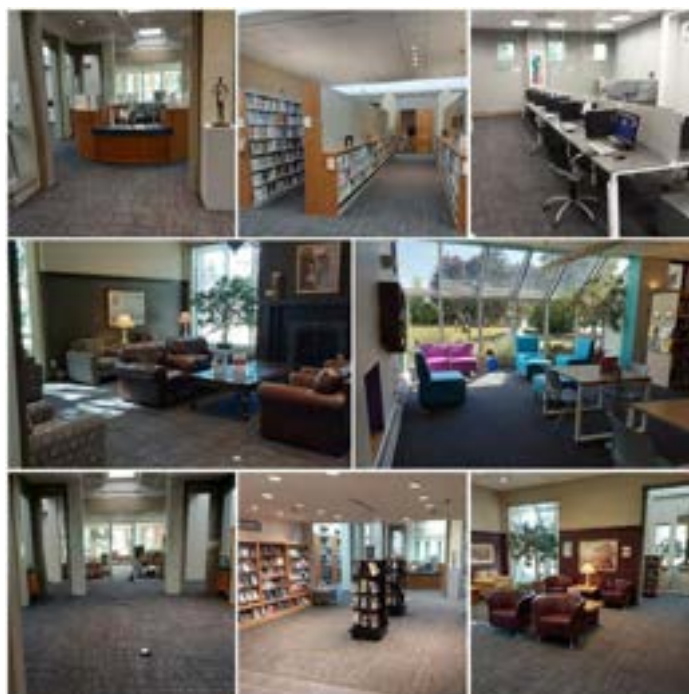
The youth team was as responsive as possible to parent and child requests within the health and safety guidelines; this included bringing back computer and printing services and providing colouring for younger children. Though the primary activity in the youth department was browsing for and getting help finding books, there were children and teens who continued to use the library as a safe, quiet space to read, study, or relax. Though the 5th wave necessitated closure of the department in late December, the team will be ready for children and teens to return when it is safe to do so.



## LIBRARY CARPET

The Library received approval for Council in 2020 to replace the entire carpet. Research began immediately and, finally, in April 2021, the contract was awarded. Although we hoped to have the carpet installed before the scheduled reopening date of May 25, this was not possible, although work was able to

start and certain areas were in fact completed. The contractor was exceptionally accommodating by keeping disruption at a minimum, and the installation was completed on June 11th.



# LIBRARY SPACES

## OTHER LIBRARY IMPROVEMENTS

New chairs were added to the Fireplace Lounge. Particular attention was placed on purchasing chairs that were “senior-friendly”.



The collaborative space has received a new coat of paint, brightening, and opening the space, making it appear larger and more inviting.



## VIRTUAL COMMUNITY SPACES

Spaces come in many different forms, including both physical and virtual. This year, with the COVID pandemic and periodic closures and re-openings, the library website as well as our social media platforms played a critical role in keeping residents not only informed but entertained.

### Library Website

The library website has continued to play a crucial role in disseminating information to the community throughout the pandemic. Not only did we communicate information about library services and programs, but we also included detailed steps on joining the library online, signing up for library visits, using the pickup service, accessing library programming on the Telephone Broadcast Service Line, and accessing digital services. Furthermore, the website included invaluable links to COVID-related information, making it easy for residents to find useful information all in one place. Finally, the library used positive messaging such as *Gradually Reopening*, *Keeping Everyone Safe*, to instill a sense of security and dependability during these challenging times. Keeping the website up-to-date has been a priority as we know that increasingly, our patrons depend

on it for accurate information. Online registration for events, book selection, appointments and holds have been greatly appreciated by our patrons.

### Facebook

The library’s Facebook account became an important virtual library space during the pandemic: We went from posting 10-16 times a month to 10-20 posts a week as a way of both keeping residents informed of developments at the library and maintaining some of the social culture the library has always provided. Not only did this combination of information about virtual library programming and personalized staff content increase our number of posts, but it also grew the amount of interaction posts received from the library’s page followers, going from an average of 2 reactions per post pre-pandemic to posts regularly garnering 10 reactions/post, and some receiving upwards of 30 likes, comments, and shares.

### YouTube Channel

To stay connected to the Côte Saint-Luc community and provide information and entertainment in a new and innovative way, the Library created a YouTube





## COMMITTED TO LIFELONG LEARNING

The library has always had a long tradition of providing programming that develops lifelong learning skills. These range from language groups like *Spanish Conversation* and *Discu-thé* (French conversation) to general interest such as Joe Schwarcz and Hershey Dvoskin. Despite restrictions, the library and its patrons managed to find ways to connect.

### EXPRESSIVE WRITING

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Throughout the fall, the Library offered a writing workshop with animator Joyce Cohen. The writing course was held on Zoom and participants were

treated to a fun and empowering process that uses the art of writing for self-discovery, self-reflection, and personal growth.

### DISCU-THÉ

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A total of 27 *Discu-thé* sessions were held this year over Zoom and were led by librarian Taleen Aktorosian. Although the group continues to have a small number of participants, the members are extremely devoted to this program and their spoken French continues to improve. Every week a different topic was up for discussion including If a book were written about you, what would the title be and why? What are your biggest kitchen blunders? What rule or law would you like to break and why? Topics were meant to be fun and engaging rather than serious and intellectual.



### SPANISH CONVERSATION

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Spanish was held over the course of 7 months in 2021 also on Zoom. Maria Morales taught her students greetings, introductions, professions, the days of the week, the months, the time, the city, at the office, at school, at home, the weather, means of transportation, etc. in present tense using mostly regular verbs and a few irregular verbs. She used model sentenc-

es for listening, repetition, and reading practice, and varied exercises for the immediate classroom application of newly presented material. During the classes, she reinforced the use of the learned vocabulary and structures by practicing dialogue and speech during the class.

### MOVIE TIME

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*Movie Time* was a new discussion group added in 2021 attempting give residents more opportunities to connect with other people during this time of isolation. Participants gathered each week through Zoom to discuss a new movie or classic film chosen by librarian Steven Tomlinson. At the beginning of

each session, Steven spoke about that week's movie, and then he open things up for comments and questions. This was a lively but easy-going program that aimed for thoughtful and engaging discussion and attracted a very loyal group of participants.

## COMMITTED TO LIFELONG LEARNING

### LET'S TALK MOVIES

*Let's Talk Movies* is a series offered by Film Librarian Steven Tomlinson analyzing various fascinating topics and reviews relates to film, both new and old. Some of this year's highlights, which were broadcast on the TBS system, as well as through Podcasts and YouTube, included *The Life & Career of John Garfield*, *Beam Me Up, Scotty!—The Cultural Importance of Star Trek* and *The Story of Olivia de Havilland & Joan Fontaine*.



### JANE'S WALK



In 2021, Library Director Janine West along with City Councillor Dida Berku, hosted another virtual Jane's Walk! This year, they explored the area on and around Randall avenue. Narrated by Councillor

Berku and Library Director Janine West, they uncovered the history, the unique architecture, as well as the numerous personalities that lived in the area. Taleen Aktorosian, the Research Coordinator, working in collaboration with Janine West, were able to retrace the history of the area using the city and library archives.

The virtual tour was posted on the Jane's Walk 2021 event page on Facebook and went live on the city's Facebook page on Sunday, May 9th, at 7:30pm. The event received 1000 views, 11 likes, 60 comments and one share. We received many great and interesting comments from residents who live, or used to live, on Randall and Borden avenues.

### AN INTERVIEW WITH SHABTAI SHAVIT

One of the highlights of 2021 was an interview organized by Councillor Mike Cohen with Mr. Shabtai Shavit, former director of the Mossad from 1989 to 1996. In his exciting and engaging book, *Head of The Mossad: In Pursuit of a Safe and Secure Israel*, Shavit provided an inside account of his intelligence and geostrategic philosophy, the operations he directed, and anecdotes about his family, colleagues, and time spent in, among other places, the United States as a graduate student and at the CIA.

Councillor David Tordjman collaborated with Mike Cohen and obtained a pre-recorded message from David Levy, the Consul General of Israel in Montreal, that would serve as introduction to this special event. It was decided that radio host and local celebrity Aaron Rand would be best suited to conduct the interview. Janine West said a few words of thanks at



the end of the event and for collaborating with the library on such an interesting event. Mayor Mitchell Brownstein closed the event and thanked all who made the interview possible.



# COMMITTED TO LIFELONG LEARNING

## TELEPHONE BROADCASTING SERVICE

The *Telephone Broadcasting Service* (TBS) continued to be offered throughout the year gradually reducing the schedule from every day of the week to just Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday at 2PM. With the option to either call in or join us over Zoom, this accessible approach to virtual programming allowed the library to create an ongoing offering of informative, entertaining and inspirational content with the voices of *Science Demystified* with Dr. Joe Schwarcz, *In the Headlines* with Mr. Hershey Dvoskin, Book Reviews with beloved reviewer Kathy Diamond, as well as encore presentations of *Musical Moments* with former librarian Farah Mohammed and Film Librarian and expert Steven Tomlinson. The service continuously attracted between 10 and 75 residents daily depending on the program. Author inter-

views “In Conversation” hosted by librarian Danielle Bélanger were also held on Zoom with the option of calling in, allowing the library to continue in its mission to connect readers to credible information, authors and compelling speakers.

Furthermore, it enabled the library to create a playlist of offerings on Soundcloud for the *CSL Podcast*, as well as to consistently provide content for the library’s YouTube channel. In this way, our participants could revisit recordings as well as to catch up on their favourites through these media. The recurring programming allowed attendees to combat feeling alone in the midst of an ever-changing programming landscape.

## RARE BOOKS WORKSHOP

Just before restrictions were tightened for in-person gatherings, on Thursday, December 16th, the CSL Library hosted the Dr. Michael D. Paul Rare Book Initiative, a traveling workshop conducted by the Jewish Public Library which explores the histories of Rare and Antiquarian books from the JPL’s over 3,000 volume collection. Six books were presented, including a 1481 incunabulum copy of “The Antiquities of the Jews” by Flavius Josephus, in Latin; an Ethiopian liturgical prayer book in Ge’ez; a manuscript of a Yiddish translation of the bible and a medical textbook from 1707. Participants were able to handle the books (carefully) to connect with the tangible histories which reside in these objects and the many lives they have lived.



## REFERENCE AND RESEARCH

The Reference Department plays an important role within the Côte Saint-Luc community. Whether in person, or via phone or email, librarians have always been on hand to field questions from patrons of all ages. Questions covered a wide range of topics from educational to information and research as well as reader's advisory and technology or digital resource help. The reference staff answered a total of **16,748** questions from patrons this year. However, library patrons are not the library's only client. The Reference Department continues to compile valuable research for departments in the city as well.

The library's Tech Help Service has continued to assist our patrons with using their personal devices, as well as helping them access our digital resources. This has been an extremely important service ever since the start of the pandemic, where we saw a major shift towards the online environment. Most of these questions were resolved over the phone whilst the library was closed. Following the reopening of the library, the Tech Help Service did resume in person in the months of November and December, when one-on-one appointments were held in the library's study rooms.

**The library's research team worked hard to answer many questions throughout the year, both coming from within the city or from our residents. Here are some notable research requests that we received:**

1. A request was received from Urban Development to assist in producing a list of all the homes in CSL that were constructed prior to 1945. Taleen Aktorosian and Jennifer Srouji worked together to identify these old homes, comparing their current addresses to the ones on the census sheets from 1935 and 1938 to determine who use to live there and then fill in any other details from the Jane's Walks.
2. Two patrons were looking for information and photos of the Cavendish mall. The Reference team gathered information about the inauguration of the mall, which was announced in March 1973 and finally inaugurated in September 1973. Newspaper snippets from the scrapbooks and the suburban were photographed and sent to them.
3. Louise Legault, the director of Les Amis du Parc Meadowbrook reached out to find out if we have any information regarding the Saint-Pierre River in Côte Saint-Luc. We provided her with information about the river from past Jane's Walks, including pictures and aerial photographs of where the river crossed in Côte Saint-Luc.
4. Taleen Aktorosian assisted in providing Associate City Manager Tanya Abramovitch with census data which focused on a specific sector of District 4. Consulting the Statistics Canada website, she gathered and compiled data in order provide a better socio-economic picture of the neighbourhood.
5. Associate City Manager Tanya Abramovitch was looking for information on Heat Waves data pertaining to Montreal, as well as other cities. Antonella Lalli compiled data for temperature, from 2016 – 2020, general info on heat waves in Montreal and future predictions, information/heat wave plans from other cities.
6. Antonella Lalli and Taleen Aktorosian compiled a list of organizations that offer grants for municipal governments to plant trees on their public spaces.

The Research team also took on a volunteer who helped with various research projects in the Fall of 2021. Volunteer Molly Lohner is a second-year Honours History student doing her Bachelor of Arts at McGill University. She is a resident of Côte Saint-Luc and is very interested in Jewish Studies. Molly assisted with researching searching the history of CSL.



# A CENTRE FOR ART AND CULTURE

## VIRTUAL ART PRESENTATIONS

Museology and librarianship go hand in hand. To help our members continue to access art exhibitions throughout lockdowns, the Library partnered with the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts (MMFA), as well as the McCord Museum to bring interactive presentations with museum curators to bring art to our member's living rooms, virtually.



## CONSEIL DES ARTS GRANT SUPPORTING LOCAL ARTISTS

Professional artist groups and collectives in Côte Saint-Luc were invited to submit an artistic project that would help bring the community together and shine a light on Côte Saint-Luc talent. Three art collective or artist group project proposals were submitted. The award for the winning project submission is a \$25 000 grant from the Conseil des arts de Montréal that will help cover the costs of the creation and production of the proposed project. The winning project will be produced and shown in Côte

Saint-Luc in the 2022 calendar year. As the host city for the project Côte Saint-Luc will be responsible to provide support for the chosen project as well as the Conseil des arts de Montréal, either in the form of space, equipment or other reasonable expenses or help that we could provide. The award will be going to Eli Batalion and Jamie Elman (YidLife Crisis) for a multimedia project highlighting the history of Côte Saint-Luc entitled *A Closer Luc*.

## BONSAI EXHIBIT



On October 24 the library hosted its first in-person exhibit since March 2020. The Progressive Bonsai Collective hosted this 1-day exhibit to highlight their progressive style of Bonsai. The exhibit consisted of 30+ bonsai trees created by 4 of the collective's members; CSL resident Rafael Najmanovich, Wilson Livingstone, Etienne St. Pierre and Patrick Blandeau.

The exhibit took place in the Art Gallery and received great reviews from the public. This will become an annual tradition to showcase these trees each fall before they are winterized and prepared for hibernation.

The exhibit was presented in a safe manner with ample space for people to distance. All attendees and presenters also needed to show their vaccine passports.



# FOSTERING A LOVE OF READING FOR ALL

## LITERACY PROGRAMMING FOR CHILDREN

From a regular **Creative Writing Club** to the **Summer Reading Club**, children and teens had plenty of literacy activities to keep them busy in 2021.

The **2021 TD Summer Reading Club (SRC)** was virtual this year, drawing over 50 children, teens, and families with regular “milestone” challenges for which they were awarded creative STEAM kits. The incorporation of activity kits into the Summer Reading Club this year encouraged continued engagement throughout the summer drew in several types of literacy and added value for children who do not consider themselves ‘readers.’ The culminating SRC Closing Party was enjoyed by children, parents, and teens, who called it “well organized,” fun, and “une belle initiative.”

The Summer Reading Club Closing Party was a highlight this year with special guest and local author Joanne Cutler, a kosher pizza party, and families finally able to gather safely outdoors to celebrate the achievements of CSL’s young readers.



## READERS' ADVISORY

Reading was an integral part of people’s lives during the pandemic lockdown and the Reference Desk staff continued to provide excellent reader’s advisory services to patrons throughout the year. Serving a community of avid readers, the library staff continued to provide book recommendations both virtually and in person. The mission of staff has always been that no one leaves empty handed!

A patron called and left a message thanking staff for the wonderful service we are providing for the community. She thanked us for making such good book selections for her. Thanks to us, she has lots of great books to read!

**“ I was very touched today that the library purchased the book *Lost in Newfoundland* as per my recommendation. I was moved to tears when I picked it up. At these difficult times, it was the best gift anyone can give me. You are the best library anywhere in the world. I hope other library goes will pick it up and enjoy it as much as I am. Thank you sooo much. ”**

# FOSTERING A LOVE OF READING FOR ALL

## LITERARY PROGRAMMING FOR ADULTS

### BOOK CLUBS



#### Afternoon Book Club

Antonella and various members of the Afternoon book club met 9 months out of 12 in 2021. Members of the group were incredibly grateful to meet once a month and especially enjoyed books set in diverse cultures such as *The Henna Artist*, *The Tea Girl of Hummingbird Lane*, and *American Dirt*.

#### Evening Book Club

The Evening Book Club met virtually each month throughout 2021. Led by Library Director Janine West, participants discussed a variety of noteworthy books including *The Midnight Library* by Matt Haig, *The Vanishing Half* by Brit Bennett, and *We Begin at the End*, by Chris Whitaker.

#### Café Con medialunas

Maria Morales and various members of her book club met by zoom 9 months out of 12 in 2021. The group consistently has lively, enlightening, and enjoyable conversations where everyone expresses their opinion. This year, titles included books written by seasoned authors they had seen in previous years (Isabelle Allende and Jose Saramago) as well as newcomers to the literary scene that sparked controversy (*American Dirt* by Jeanine Cummins).

#### Between the Covers Romance Book club

The BTC Romance Book Club has continued to grow during 2021, there are now 7 regular members which attend every month. The discussions are always very enjoyable, and the members have said that it is

**// always a fun evening //**



#### YOU'VE GOTTA READ THIS!

The library presented a virtual version this crowd-favourite program on July 7th via Zoom. 47 participants tuned in to hear book recommendations from Jennifer Eisman, Mearaid Stevenson and Danielle Bélanger. Each panelist presented between 3 and 4 books to the audience, outlining the plot and appeal factors. This year they added another element to increase engagement and spark interest; each included a selection of 10 additional "Coming Soon Most Anticipated Titles" for the summer. The event was once again a huge success with patrons quickly accessing the library catalogue to put their names on reserve for books. As one patron said,

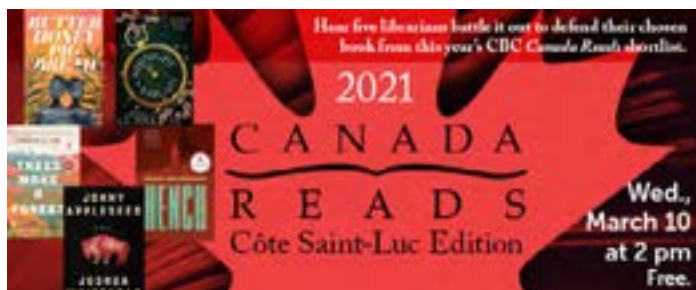
**// A lovely hour! //**

# FOSTERING A LOVE OF READING FOR ALL

## CANADA READS CSL EDITION 2021

Although this year we could not meet our patrons in person, the library still held its annual Canada Reads debate on March 10. A panel of 5 librarians met their audience, virtually, for a lively discussion about the top 5 books as chosen by the CBC. Organized by Jennifer Eisman, this has always been a popular event. This year was no exception with 61 people tuning in to hear the debate! This number far exceeded any previous year and is a testament to the community's continued interest in this event.

The debate was won by Maria Morales for her defense of *Hench* by Natalie Zina. Rounding out the short-list of books was: *Butter Honey Pig Bread* (defended by Mearaid Stevenson), *Johnny Appleseed* (defended by Taleen Aktorosian), *Two Trees Make a Forest* (defended by Antonella Lalli) and *The Midnight Bargain* (defended by Jennifer Eisman).



Given the challenges of 2020, the theme of CBC Canada Reads 2021, *One Book To Transport Us*, was both appropriate and timely. One loyal participant proclaimed:

*Ladies, a really delightful hour that "zoomed" by. Certainly different from any Canada Reads we've had in the past.... Tons of reviews on CBC which kind of "pushed" me in a certain direction.... And the fact that I couldn't make the decision based on having read the book which for me is a prerequisite to attend any book review.... But break the rules I did.... And still thoroughly enjoyed the debate. Congratulations to all of you and Taleen, don't know if you saw my message in Chat, but you were wonderful... be proud! Thank you again ladies.... And Jen, your "presentation" deserved a first place.... All the bells and whistles... definitely my kind of "behaviour"!*

## AUTHOR INTERVIEWS

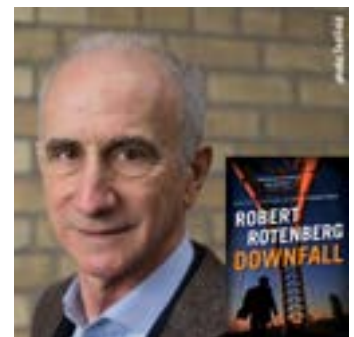
Throughout the pandemic, Danielle Belanger, through her relationship with Random House books and more recently Harper Collins, has virtually interviewed a bestselling author monthly. Authors who we would have never been able to feature live are happy to share their works with an interested audience on the Zoom platform at no cost to the library. Danielle has received numerous accolades from these authors not only for her interviewing style as well as her professionalism and welcoming manner.



In January, Danielle interviewed Australian and bestselling author Alexandra Joel. They discussed how her professional experience as a therapist and magazine editor as well as her extensive fashion knowledge all contributed into shaping her writing. They discussed her latest novel, *The Paris Model*, and explored the central themes in-

cluding identity, biology, morality, espionage, risk and the roles and expectations of women in the 1940s.

In February, Danielle interviewed top criminal lawyer and bestselling author Robert Rotenberg. They discussed his career path and the ways in which he weaves elements from his law practice into his writing. They discussed how he goes





## FOSTERING A LOVE OF READING FOR ALL

about researching his books to represent marginalized communities most realistically. They discussed timely social issues that are central to the book's themes including homelessness, mental illness, gentrification, and the widening wealth gap in Canada.



In March, Danielle interviewed the multitasking historical fiction author Jane Johnson to discuss her latest novel, *The Sea Gate*. They discussed Jane's varied career path, her incredible real-life falling in love at first-sight story as well as her writing

career and the larger-than life opportunities it awarded her.

In April, Danielle interviewed the international bestselling author of historical fiction Jennifer Robson to discuss her latest novel, *Our Darkest Night*. Jennifer shared the fact that the extensive preparatory work and research skills required to submit her doctoral thesis would become quite handy in the instances where she outlines the numerous drafts and edits of her historical fiction novels.



In May, Danielle interviewed the international bestselling author of women's fiction Marissa Stapley to discuss her latest novel, *Lucky*, who shared how writing runs in her family. She credits both her parents with being supportive and

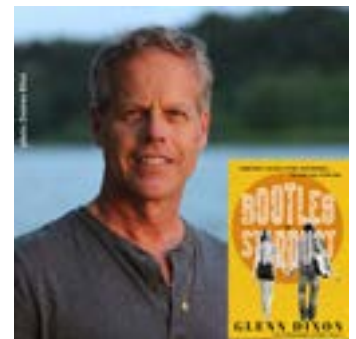
encouraging of what they could see was a talent for writing. They also discussed Marissa's "support group" that has been nicknamed The Coven.



In late May, Danielle interviewed New York Times bestselling author Cynthia D'Aprix Sweeney to discuss her latest novel, *Good Company*, focusing on her skillset learned as a freelance and marketing writer

helped shape her hugely successful career in fiction writing.

In June, Danielle interviewed bestselling author and musician Glenn Dixon to discuss his first fiction novel, *Bootleg Stardust* which focused on his career path and how he balanced simultaneously being a musician and a writer. Fun fact:



each song is a chapter in the book. Glenn shared the fascinating story of having the opportunity to record the songs for the book and the fictional band featured in the book right in his hometown of Calgary.



In mid-August, Danielle interviewed writer Claire Nelson touching upon her work and life experience and how they led to her trek in Joshua Tree National Park. She revealed how her impressive trip to Canada resulted in her need to leave

London and reconnect with nature. They touched upon her struggles with depression and how she began to heal once she became more balanced.

## FOSTERING A LOVE OF READING FOR ALL

In late August, Danielle interviewed debut novelist Zakiya Dalila Harris beginning with questions about how the author was able to get her foot in the door in the publishing industry. Zakiya then shared how a personal experience led her to write a story in which two black females were the central characters, one who had a somewhat of an alien quality to her. Zakiya spoke about her fondness of science fiction and horror, including classic *The Twilight Zone*.



In early November, Danielle interviewed bestselling authors Karma Brown & Marissa Stapley to discuss their collaborative holiday rom-com, *The Holiday Swap*. Danielle asked about the writing collaboration and how it came about and how they approached the two storylines as well as the two romances within the novel.



In October, Danielle and librarian Jennifer Eisman interviewed the international bestselling authors of historical fiction Kristin Harmel and Natasha Lester

to discuss their latest novels, *The Forest of Vanishing Stars* & *The Riviera House*. Jen and Danielle asked both authors about how each of their novels came about and the in-depth research each required.



Kristin spoke to Aron Bielski (who survived in the forest himself during WW2) and

Vadim Sidorovich, Ph.D., a wildlife expert who specializes in the Naliboki Forest. Both men's accounts helped inform her novel and give it an authentic feel. Natasha shared that she had been overwhelmed by the amount of research required for her novel and was not sure she would have taken on such a project had she been aware of the scope and breadth of research and interviews that were required.

In mid-November, Danielle interviewed bestselling Australian author Tea Cooper to discuss her latest

novel, *The Cartographer's Secret* focusing on the setting as well as the dual timelines for which her writing is well known. Tea also shared the importance of accuracy and authenticity and alluded to her interest in maps and the work of cartographers.



In early December, Danielle interviewed international bestselling author of historical fiction Julia Kelly to discuss her latest novel, *The Last Dance of the Debutante* who shared that it was after her mother had suggested she read Fiona MacCarthy's *Last Curtsey: The End of the Debutantes* and that there might be a story for her to tell.



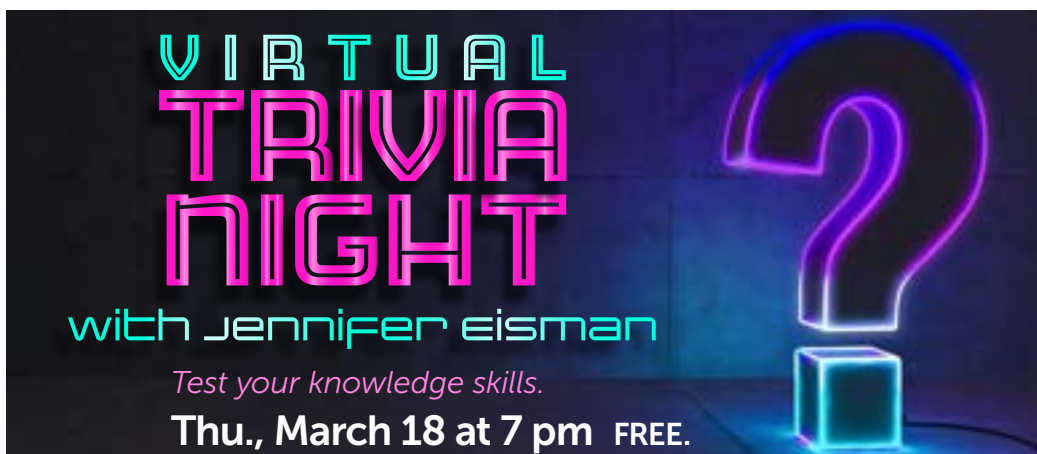
# LEARNING IS FUN AT THE LIBRARY

## KNITTING



In December, the library held a new virtual meeting in the hopes to assess whether a Virtual CSL knitting group would be of interest to our community. After the program, a monthly Knitting circle was created for 2022.

## VIRTUAL TRIVIA NIGHT



A Virtual Trivia night was held on March 18 and an enjoyable time was had by all, with one patron exclaiming

**/// Please do this again,  
I had a great time! ///**

The event consisted of two rounds, two bonus picture questions and one final trivia question. The categories were Toys, Containers, Supporting Actresses, Foreign Food, The 80's, South America, Around the World, Literature, Artists, Sports, The 90's. The category of the final trivia question was Children's Books.



## REACHING OUT

### CÔTE SAINT LUC WOMEN'S CLUB

The Côte Saint-Luc Women's Club's first program since the pandemic hit took place in December 2020 and has continued monthly throughout 2021 on the first Tuesday of every month. The Book Discussion group operates in a rotating schedule centering around 3 different themes: a Read-What-You-Want Book Club, where members share the

names and themes of books they have read recently; a Traditional Book Club, where members vote on a title and read the same book to discuss in more detail; and a Book Review where Seniors' Coordinator Katie Bezaire discusses several titles that may be of interest to members.

### SAINT PATRICK SQUARE

Saint Patrick Square took the initiative to update their residential library this year, spear headed by SPS resident (and retired medical librarian) Liz Breier. The library helped them update their space and collection through consultations with Katie and donations of withdrawn Large Type books.

Senior's Services Coordinator Katie Bezaire was also asked to help Saint Patrick Square residents with their vaccination passports. Residents signed up for time slots on one of two dates in November and came for assistance in their new library space where a computer and printer were set up for Katie to print physical copies of the passports, as well as help residents put passports onto their electronic devices.

### POETRY WORKSHOPS

Seniors' Services Coordinator Katie Bezaire's Poetry Workshop with the Cummings Centre's Senior Drop-In Centre continued virtually using the Zoom platform until the end of October 2021, when Cummings Centre programming began its transition back to in-person meetings.

There were discussions to resume Katie's involvement in-person at the end of the year when Omicron

hit. Katie and Cummings Centre staff member Ainslie Quilliams have remained in contact throughout and will continue working together in some capacity as the Cummings Centre assesses its needs and the needs of its members. These workshops operate as a form of mental stimulation for older adults with cognitive impairments by incorporating elements of shared reading, discussion, and analysis into weekly meetings.

## FINANCIAL

### GRANTS AND DONATIONS

Quebec Government Grant—Ministère de Culture et Communications

**\$210,500**

Bequest

**\$25,000** from the estate of Cesia Rothbart

Inclusion Grant—Ministère de Culture et Communications

**\$6,000**