

BRACEBRIDGE PUBLIC LIBRARY

Annual Report 2020



The Bracebridge Public Library is an essential community hub providing everyone with materials and experiences that open minds, explore our world, inspire discovery, entertain and foster lifelong learning.

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MESSAGE FROM THE LIBRARY BOARD CHAIR

The Bracebridge Public Library Board continued their steadfast support of the library as the global pandemic necessitated many adaptations to the Library and its staff. Several new members joined the Board now with a full complement of 9; from a broad range of backgrounds and age demographics. All meetings of the Board and its committees have been virtual since March 2020 as this shift now commonplace across the country and indeed around the globe. Our world is becoming increasingly digital, and this transition in many aspects continues to be smooth and effective. Supporting the library CEO and its staff through this same pivot as they expanded online services has seen remarkable success.

Several core committees of the Board continued to meet regularly as the governance of the library kept lockstep with operations. The policy committee reviewed and updated many key policies and crafted new ones as required to keep abreast of societal changes and legislation in the industry. The strategic planning committee is another core group that is formed each Board term to evaluate and review the current strategic plan. This dynamic group immediately saw the need to both narrow the focus in the short-term while COVID-19 is having such an impact on the library, as well as formulating a long-term plan that will carry us into the future. Several of the current strategic plan goals were identified as still keenly relevant. The library's Goal #1: The Library as a Community Hub is a good example though certainly requiring some shifts in core competencies. Library staff were included throughout this process, with plans to expand to other stakeholders in future through a variety of means. The Board have ratified a COVID-19 strategic plan for the period January through December 2021... with an eye to extension and further adaptation as conditions warrant. The Board also has representatives who sit on the Ontario Library Service Trustee Committee and the Executive of the Friends of the Bracebridge Public Library. Above all, the Board seeks through its mandate in governance, to fully support the library CEO and staff in its operations.

The Town and wider community were discouraged to learn their grant proposal for ICIP funding for a new Multi-Use Community Centre (MUCC) was not successful in the Fall of 2020. Nevertheless, development planning of the facility continued and is expected to proceed in phased development in 2021. The Library CEO is a member of the core staff committee and the CEO, Board Chair and the Board Council Representative are all members of the MUCC Steering Committee that continues to meet regularly in support of the ongoing full facility design, with the library the major focus of phase 2 of this development. A Board member has also joined the newly formed Community Fundraising Committee for this project. On behalf of the Bracebridge Public Library Board, I would like to thank Council for your support of this project that is of great importance to library service for our community and for your financial support each year.

It is with pride and pleasure, on behalf of the Bracebridge Public Library Board, that we submit this summary of our activities in conjunction with the Library annual report for 2020.

Barbara Hutchinson
Board Chair



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

It is the intent of the Library Board that the reader of the Bracebridge Public Library's Annual Reports will obtain a broad understanding of the value of the Town's library through the figures and narratives used. The figures and narratives provided for the extraordinary year of 2020 will not accurately reflect the true effort that is made every year but do show that regardless of a health pandemic, our Library continued to make that effort and be a valuable resource to our community. This summary has been prepared to provide an overview of some of the key efforts reported.

Education, positive experiences and community at core of Library programs. Ensuring that the public had access to our materials was accompanied by experiences that pivoted from in-person events to online events. In spite of cancelling annual favourites such as the Edible Book Contest, and Library booths at the Pride Picnic and Fall Fair, staff rallied to present virtual versions of many others such as the Adult Book Club, Crochet Circle and always popular author presentations. For more great programs see Highlights of 2020. (Pages 11 & 12)

The Library as knowledge & technology centre. Our Information & Digital Services Librarians all have post-graduate qualifications in Library Science and are able to assist with a wide variety of queries. With patrons unable to enter the Library to do their own research or make their own selections, these Librarians continued to provide assistance via telephone and used their reference skills to provide personalized selection service (not as easy as it sounds!) for curbside pickup. With many people suddenly on work leaves or assigned to work from home, our Librarians created online tech tutorials describing how to access government financial assistance programs and how to use Zoom®, along with many other online resources. Recognizing the increased need for Internet access in our community during the pandemic, we purchased an additional wireless “hotspot” to facilitate access for people parked in the Library parking lot. In 2020, it was not surprising that e-resources represented a significant 48% of total collection use (not including materials used in-house). Ebooks made up the majority of that 48%. (Pages 7 & 8)

Library circulation, membership and visit statistics see upheaval in 2020. In 2020, the Library was “open” for less than half our usual hours, under very unusual and restrictive operations. Many members of the public followed government health directives to stay home as much as possible or followed restrictions for limited access to physical library materials. In spite of the pandemic and associated lockdowns, 304 people registered for membership to make use of our materials, whether physical pickups or online resources. At the end of 2020, we had over 7,000 library members who had used their card within the last 2 years. (Pages 4 & 5)

Our Children's Department is about education and fun! A YouTube account called “The Miss Ashleigh Story Time Channel” was established. Some of the videos created and posted included regular story times, balloon science videos, fun facts about animals, biographies about famous people, craft videos, and cooking videos. “Craft-in-a-bag” programs provided a nice incentive to check out children's material which was required in order for a child to receive a free bag. While it was an unusual year with very irregular statistics, we still had 4,052 parents and children engaged in Children's programs; not significantly far off the 2019 figure of 4,936, considering the circumstances. Online engagements accounted for 2,855 of that total. (Pages 8 & 9)

Donations reflect community support. Each year we are fortunate to receive donations from many patrons and organizations such as the Pittsburgh-Muskoka Foundation and of course, the Friends of the Bracebridge Public Library. A generous patron donation this year will support our new Seed Library. Other patron donations supported general operating costs and collections. (Page 10)

Library expansion plans delayed. Despite the disappointing news in the summer of 2020 that the Town's application for funding of the Multi-Use Community Centre (MUCC) from the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program was unsuccessful, work continues on the MUCC. It has been determined that the project will be completed in phases with the Arena in Phase 1, Library in Phase 2 and Fieldhouse in Phase 3. Any future infrastructure grants which will expedite the phases will be pursued. (Page 12)



OVERVIEW

While we had some challenges in 2019, in particular a technical glitch affecting the time clock of our automated system and subsequent skewing of statistics, problems with the Library's Wi-Fi, and provincial government cuts to the Ontario Library Services agencies resulting in a 2 ½ months suspension of the Inter-Library Loan service, this was insignificant compared to what 2020 brought us.

The COVID-19 pandemic brought an unprecedented situation for individuals, businesses and services around the world. Certainly, its effect on the services offered by the Bracebridge Public Library means this annual report will be very much unlike those of previous years.

The usual operations of the Library ran for only 2 ½ months before we closed our doors and found ourselves pivoting to what would evolve to our "new normal". It was hoped that the closure would be brief, so we took advantage of the lack of patron activity to conduct an inventory of our collection and do a thorough cleaning of the Library. Within 2 months, we were still not able to offer a return to regular Library services or in-house programs and unfortunately, most of the staff went on Declared Emergency Leaves and applied for government benefit programs.

A core group of 5 full-time staff, including the CEO, worked to maintain a steady level of activity which included curbside pickup of materials which patrons were able to request via our website catalogue, online programming for adults and children, collection development, facility management and administrative functions. Office Manager, Carolyn Dawkins is to be commended for her initiative and resourcefulness in helping to prepare an efficient procedure for circulating materials to our Library members and ensuring a safe work environment and compliance with COVID-19 protocols. Adult Librarians Cindy Buhne, Sarah MacNeal and Children's Librarian Ashleigh Whipp kept Library operations alive through promotions of programs and services. Some tasks did require working in the Library but working from home was encouraged when possible. The remaining staff were gradually returned to work commencing in September.

From mid-March to the end of the year, staff kept abreast of a plethora of documentation provided by government health officials in order to comply with the directives. The CEO attended regular meetings with Town of Bracebridge management and Regional Libraries meetings hosted by Southern Ontario Library Services to share best practices in providing services during the pandemic. A COVID-19 Safety Plan was developed to provide guidance for ensuring the safety of Library staff and patrons.

Library service in 2020 saw a significant restructuring which negated much of our usual gathering of statistics and subsequently eliminated the ability to make any relevant analysis of circulation and programs. While it was disheartening to see our circulation and program statistics plummet in comparison with the previous year, in the words of one of the Library staff, "On the positive side... we still registered new patrons, we got to connect with our old patrons on a whole different level and we came together as a staff to give our community the best service possible in these unprecedented times."

CIRCULATION AT THE BRACEBRIDGE PUBLIC LIBRARY

The pandemic had a significant effect on much of the Library's usual activities including the circulation of materials. While the annual report normally includes a thorough analysis of circulation statistics, any comparison to previous years would be irrelevant. The Library was "open" for less than half the hours in 2019, under very unusual and restrictive operations. The Library was directed to close on March 14th and curbside pickup commenced on June 1st. All materials returned to the Library were required to be quarantined; best practices suggested 72 hours. To put everyone's mind at ease regarding overdue items as a result, fines were suspended. However, charges were still assigned to lost or damaged items.

As many members of the public followed government health directives to stay home as much as possible or followed restrictions for limited access to physical library materials, it is not surprising that there was an increase in use of ebooks. However, there were many who were very happy to use curbside pickup for



print materials, commenting on how they “read” a print book versus an ebook and appreciated the ability to take a break from “screen time”. When the opportunity allowed for limited in-house browsing (commencing November 9th), we saw a significant increase in the number of people using that option over the curbside pickup.

Print materials for adult and children saw the heaviest use with 78% of total materials circulation versus 22% for audio-visual materials. An analysis of total patron uses of physical library materials and library ebooks show 55% physical materials and 45% ebooks.

With the layout of our facility, Circulation staff have always been the first faces of welcome for our patrons. The exceptional role they played during the pandemic in 2020 is to be commended. Though curbside pickups were primarily scheduled, these staff were sometimes required to inform members of the public who showed up at the door of the new rules and restrictions the Library was directed to follow. Staff remained calm, cheerful and compassionate even when confronted by those voicing their displeasure over being directed to the portable toilets in the nearby park when unable to enter the Library. Once government officials gave permission for in-house browsing, Circulation staff found a new role as “Door Monitors” to ensure compliance with COVID-19 screening and safety protocols, and was not without its challenges.

LIBRARY MEMBERSHIP

One thing that didn’t change in 2020 was the fact that we continued to welcome new members to the library, albeit in reduced numbers. We completed new registrations for 304 people (down from 784 in 2019) that enabled them to have access to the Library’s ebook collection, online databases and checking out the various physical collections available. At the end of 2020, we had over 7,000 library members who had used their card within the last 2 years.

As with previous years, adults continued to be our primary user group responsible for the majority of circulation. A circulation drop of 2% among children was understandable as many parents used their own cards to check out materials for curbside pickup. Adult circulation subsequently saw a 2% increase. Statistics generated by young adults remained low but on par with 2019.

Among the age categories, we also have tax-payer cottagers in those statistics. It was evident that cottagers either stayed at their primary residence as recommended by government health officials, or remained isolated at their seasonal residence; not venturing to the library as was also the case with our Bracebridge patrons. Circulation of materials among this user group also saw a significant drop from 3% to 1.7% of our annual total, represented by 597 items as opposed to 2,939 items in 2019.

COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT

The uncertainty of the pandemic put us in an awkward position regarding collection development. While there was concern over the effects on financial repercussions, recognizing that revenues which offset expenditures would be lost, we also needed to consider that patrons would continue to expect and request the latest publications for fiction and non-fiction materials and the collection needs constant updating.

Our librarians in the Information & Digital Services Department are responsible for the acquisition and removal of materials. Though that department lost a part-time staff member for about 5 ½ months due to the slowdown brought about by the pandemic, the remaining librarians ensured an up-to-date, attractive and useful collection using a continual withdrawal and replacement process.

In an effort to not over-extend the Library’s 2020 budget, acquisitions were reduced with only 78% of the collection budget expended.

According to our database reports, 3,982 items were added to the Library collection in 2020. This figure does not include electronic databases and ebooks because they are not catalogued as part of our in-house collection. We remained fairly consistent with 2019 as print materials accounted for 88% of the new items



acquired, with audio visual, including music CDs and DVDs, at 12%. With fewer higher-cost Reference materials purchased, the average cost of print material was \$22 per item (down from \$33) and \$23 for audio visual material. Bracebridge Public Library patrons have access to the provincial shared ebook collection available via OverDrive on our website. This is a consortium purchase administered by Southern Ontario Library Services, an agency of the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries which provides support to public libraries.

The table below summarizes 2020 acquisitions as a percentage of the budget compared to percentage of circulation.

<u>Category</u>	<u>% of Budget</u>	<u>% of Circulation</u>
Adult Collection	49%	51%
Young Adult	4%	1%
Children's	17%	23%
Audio Visual (Adult & Children's)	23%	22%
Magazines	7%	3%

The Adult collection saw an increase in percentage of circulation from 45% to 51%, which is consistent with the analysis of use by membership noted above. Reading interests did not vary, with fiction leading the way followed by history. It is not surprising that topics on home economics (cooking/sewing) and fine arts (drawing/painting) were popular as people sought ways to entertain themselves at home.

RESERVE SYSTEM

In addition to being able to reserve Bracebridge Library materials for pick-up, patrons have the benefit of the Inter-Library Loan (ILLO) system. The ILLO system provides reciprocal borrowing among libraries throughout Ontario and enables us to satisfy the individual interests and informational needs among our patrons beyond our own collection. Unfortunately, concerns about the spread of COVID-19 resulted in libraries suspending the ILLO services when the government officials ordered the closure of libraries in mid-March. Eventually, the practice of quarantining materials coming into libraries reduced the concern among most libraries and the service resumed in September. While we do offer the service, the low use for the remainder of the year is perhaps a sign that many patrons were still concerned about receiving materials from libraries in regions experiencing significant COVID-19 cases and the fact that many people are still not venturing out into the community to facilities like the Library, unless necessary.

With patrons unable to come into the Library to choose their own materials for most of the year, use of the reserve system whether via the Library's online catalogue or with assistance from Library staff, skyrocketed. It will be interesting to see if use of the reserve system remains high in 2021 as patrons have discovered how easy it is to place items on hold for quick checkout either curbside or in-house.

The following table compares 2020 to 2019 reserve activity.

<u>Location</u>	<u>2020 Reserves</u>	<u>2019 Reserves</u>	<u>% Increase</u>	<u>Monthly Average</u>
Bracebridge Public Library	10,511	4,340	142.2%	876
Inter-Library Loan	464	970	-52.2%	39
Total	10,975	5,310	106.7%	915



INFORMATION & DIGITAL SERVICES

For the first 2 ½ months of 2020, our Information & Digital Services Librarians were responsible for collection development and all in-house instructional and entertainment activities directed primarily to our adult patrons. The restrictions brought about by COVID-19 affected a large part of the service normally provided by these staff members. Needless to say, statistics related to information requests in 2020 would not provide any valuable analysis.

Our part-time Librarian was placed on a Declared Emergency Leave when the closure commenced. This staff member had been responsible for the Visiting Library Service which was an immediate casualty with long-term care facilities closing their doors to library volunteers delivering materials and home-bound residents following government health directives to avoid contact with others.

It is to the credit of the two remaining Librarians that they quickly turned their focus on creating a library experience for patrons via online access. They continued to provide assistance via telephone and used their reference skills to provide personalized selection service (not as easy as it sounds!) for curbside pickup. With many people suddenly on work leaves or assigned to work from home, Library staff created online tech tutorials describing how to access government financial assistance programs and how to use Zoom®.

Without the benefit of in-house displays and bulletin boards, marketing of the Library's resources and services relied more than ever on our website, monthly newsletter, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and the creation of Bracebridge Library YouTube channels. Fortunately, our Library has offered a variety of online resources and educational "tech" programs for many years but there were some new skills to be learned and video equipment purchased to facilitate this "new" online Library.

TECHNOLOGY

Those who have not frequented a public library in the past twenty years would be surprised at the amount of technology used in today's library. From the automated system that governs the searching, cataloguing and circulation of material, to online databases and the latest electronic formats, to the PCs used by the public and the staff to find and organize pertinent information, technology is an integral part of the library industry.

One of the repercussions of the pandemic for a large number of people was the transition from working in an office alongside multiple co-workers, to working from home. It is common knowledge that many residents in the rural areas do not have reliable Internet service, or perhaps have no service at all as they relied on their place of employment for access. Our "normal" service provides access to public computers and wireless connection for personal devices but for a large part of the year, we could not allow patrons to enter the building. Recognizing the increased need for Internet access in our community during the pandemic, we purchased an additional wireless "hotspot" which was placed in the back stairwell to facilitate access for people parked in the Library parking lot. Unfortunately, we discovered that older devices had more difficulty picking up the signal, but many were pleased with the ability to connect. In previous years, we charged a small fee for wireless access to non-cardholders, but it was felt that the hardships experienced in 2020 warranted free access.

In spite of the challenges presented by the pandemic, we were able to accomplish our budgeted project to update the Library's online catalogue. The move to SirsiDynix's Enterprise product brought many new features to update and improve the catalogue search experience for our patrons. We received positive feedback particularly regarding the "quick search" buttons for new books and DVDs, and Large Print items. The catalogue platform also allows for better promotion of featured materials.

Our website provides a variety of useful databases which make the Bracebridge Library "virtual" 24/7 to Library cardholders. To name a few, these include Ancestry (genealogical searches), Auto Repair Source, Consumer Reports, Flipster (online magazine subscriptions) and of course ebooks.



It is not surprising that 2020 saw a significant increase in access to ebooks. Avid readers love their books and many transitioned to electronic formats. It is possible that those experiencing unemployment due to the pandemic also sought ways to pass the time making use of the Library’s “e-resources”, which include databases and ebooks. In 2020, e-resources represented a significant 48% of total collection use (not including materials used in-house).

The following table compares the number of users of technology provided by the library over three years.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Database Use</u>	<u>Public PCs</u>	<u>Wireless Use</u>	<u>Ebook Use</u>
2020	3,480	1,226	2,770	29,637
2019	3,088	6,390	2,836**	23,044
2018	3,803	7,224	4,263	18,905

** Wireless use in 2019 dropped due to technical problems.

Technology in the Library also includes computer equipment and software that enables staff to manage inventory and patron records, as well as the popular public computers. Government permission to allow public access to our computers was on and off throughout the fall. The biggest challenge for staff was trying to provide technical assistance while still maintaining the mandated distance of 6 feet/2metres.

In order to maintain up-to-date equipment, COVID-19 did not stall our annual replacement of 5 or 6 staff and public computers with warranties set to expire.

With COVID-19 safety protocols in place, staff were able to conduct a special outdoor event using our Green Screen technology.

CHILDREN’S SERVICES

All Library departments felt the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. With the Library closed to public access for the better part of the year, the Children’s Department had to stop in-person programming and focus on virtual programming. We did see good attendance for programs within the first 2 months, including a new pre-school program called Music & Rhythm.

The Children’s Librarian required time to learn how to use video editing equipment to both film, and edit, library videos to be posted on social media. Ashleigh Whipp created a YouTube account called “The Miss Ashleigh Story Time Channel” and uploaded videos to that site. Some of the videos created included regular story times, balloon science videos, fun facts about animals, biographies about famous people, craft videos, and lately, cooking videos. These videos were well received and appreciated, especially in the early stages of the COVID pandemic when everything was essentially shut down. Ashleigh’s dogs, who often crashed some videos, were big hits with small children. Families enjoyed this personal side to Children’s staff. This online platform meant that families could watch story time videos, or cooking videos at their leisure. Some parents commented that they would re-watch favorite story times before bedtime.

In addition to online videos, the Children’s Department developed “craft-in-a-bag” programs for families to receive when they used curbside pickup. These craft bags were especially popular during the holidays and were seasonally appropriate. They provided a nice incentive to check out children’s material which was required in order for a child to receive a free bag.



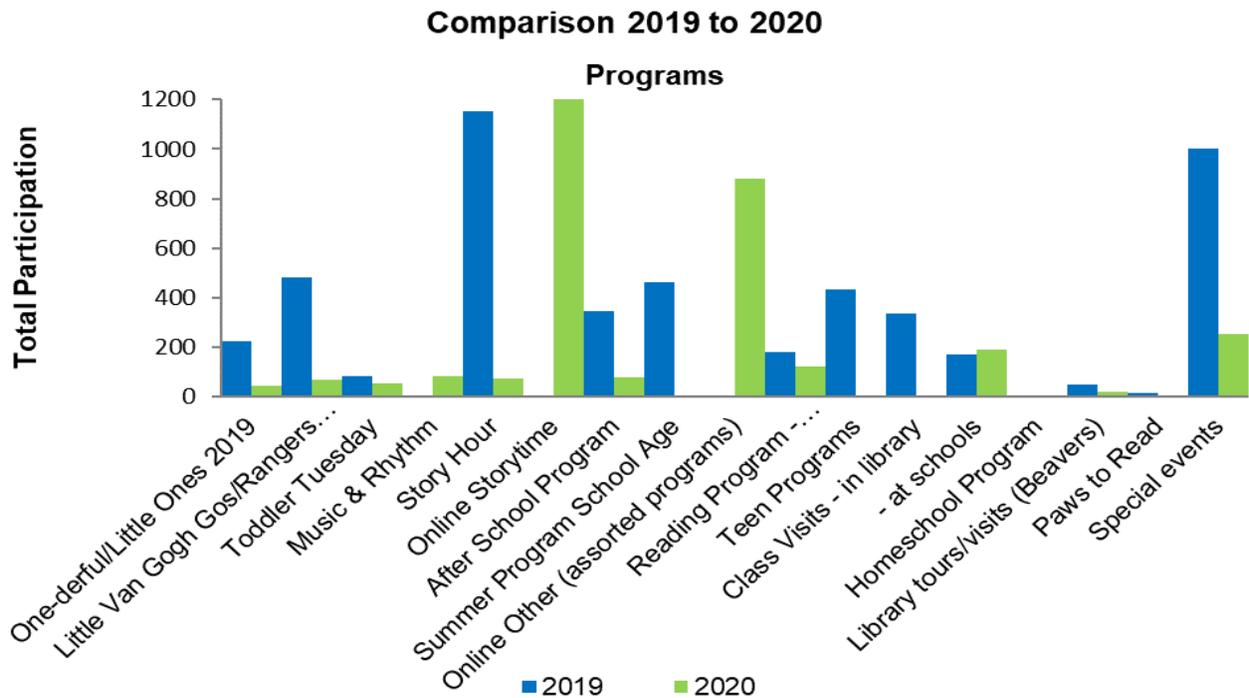
The best measure of the service we provide to the community is the feedback from Library users themselves such as the following:

We just wanted to share a picture of [our daughter's] August kid craft creation - Bucky the Reindeer! She looooved having a little craft goody bag. It is so helpful to have little extras in this crazy, mostly housebound time! Thank you so much!

The Children’s Department also reached out to the community and engaged in partnerships in 2020. Inspired by a local Facebook posting, Ashleigh created a “Holiday Card Stop” program where the Library collected holiday greeting cards to be distributed to retirement homes and long-term care facilities in the area. Over 180 cards were collected and distributed. She also partnered with the local women’s shelter and social service agencies by introducing “Blitzen’s Book Drive”. The aim of this program was to purchase books for over 30 underprivileged children in Bracebridge. The Friends of the Library generously donated \$500 to purchase the books and Minds Alive Toy Store gave a 10% discount.

A visit to the Children’s Department is very much about the experience of coming together with others, being surrounded by the world of books and developing a relationship with the enthusiastic personae of the Children’s staff. The loss of this experience in 2020 was felt by children, parents and staff. Although the COVID pandemic altered traditional library programming, it created the need to develop new skills and creativity. Families have appreciated these efforts and enjoy being able to connect virtually. Going forward, having an online presence will be continued even after the end of COVID-19.

While it was an unusual year with very irregular statistics as noted in the graph below, we still had 4,052 parents and children engaged in Library programs; 18% less than the 2019 figure of 4,936. Online engagements accounted for 2,855 of that total. The following graph compares participation in programs between 2019 and 2020.





VOLUNTEERS

We are grateful to the many people who volunteer their services to help forward the role of the Library whether it involves the Visiting Library Service, helping with our Statistics Week, high school students achieving their 40 hours of community work, or those sharing their expertise to present programs on a variety of topics. Unfortunately, their participation was very limited in 2020 as COVID-19 safety protocols prevented public interactions. It was dismaying but understandable that long-term care homes were not allowing delivery of materials via our Visiting Library Service.

The wonderful volunteers from the Horticultural Society were able to maintain our beautiful front garden; however, the Friends of the Library group who volunteer their time in many ways, including fundraising, found the bulk of their activities curtailed due to the restrictions directed by government health officials.

REVENUE/FINANCIAL

Using Statistics Canada’s 2016 census population for Bracebridge of 16,010, the cost of library service this year was about \$52.00 per capita for the taxpayer.

Libraries serve a purpose in the community akin to social services and education, and as such rely heavily on tax dollars for support. The Ontario Public Libraries Act restricts how revenue may be generated in recognition of ensuring that library access for all is not deterred by financial barriers. We are fortunate to have municipal support that ensures this access for all. With revenue down in 2020, the municipal contribution this year represented 95% of the Library’s budget, 3% more than 2019.

In light of the unique library service provided during the pandemic, the Library Board followed the example of every library, if not most, throughout Canada by waiving overdue fines. We recognized the challenges for people restricting their movements in the community, coupled with the government directive to quarantine all returned materials making due dates difficult to enforce. In-house access was also restricted which significantly affected our revenues from printing and Internet fees.

It was very uplifting to receive donations this year from individuals and organizations. One patron provided \$1,000 to be expended on our new seed library and we were very thankful to receive a generous donation from the Pittsburgh-Muskoka Foundation of \$2,529 CDN. For many years we have been the beneficiary of a donation from the Spinning Reels movie club who were unable to operate as health officials directed the closing of cinemas. The Friends of the Bracebridge Public Library also donated \$500 to support the Blitzen’s Book Drive previously noted.

2020 FINANCIAL SUMMARY (UNAUDITED)

The following is a summary of the 2020 financial activity.

<u>Revenue Source</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Expenditure Areas</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Tax Levy:		Staffing:	
Town of Bracebridge	\$829,222	Salaries & benefits	\$556,453
External Grants & Other:		Operations & Capital:	
Province of Ontario	\$33,008	Library resources	\$111,517
		Building maintenance	\$4,402
Fees, fines, donations, fundraising	\$13,967	General operations	\$203,825
TOTAL REVENUE	\$876,197	TOTAL EXPENSES	\$876,197



HIGHLIGHTS OF 2020

Though the year did present us with some discouraging precedents for Library operations, there are many highlights to mention. Perhaps the most important was the way that staff came together to continue the Library's role in providing everyone with materials and experiences in accordance with our motto on this report's title page. Ensuring that the public had access to our materials was accompanied by experiences that pivoted from in-person events to online events.

Fortunately, we had begun the year with great plans which included a travelogue presented by Barry Faulkner on the Camino de Santiago which saw good attendance. The travelogue was a tie-in to the Town's Fire & Ice Festival at the end of January.



The Library as a Technology Hub has been one of our key Strategic Plan Goals. As such, we began the year with Librarian Sarah MacNeal presenting several Tech Tutorials. January saw sessions on "Setting up your smartphone", "Get to know your tablet", "Photos on your phone/tablet" and "Tips for typing on your phone/tablet".



A large audience attended a presentation by local author and advocate Dr. Eva Olsson, who spoke about her experience during the Holocaust and shared her inspiring message of anti-bullying/anti-racism.

February saw the initiation of our first Cookbook Club. A small group of participants shared and enjoyed a very informative discussion about baking techniques. This month's theme was chocolate, which meant some great samples were tasted. Unfortunately, subsequent Cookbook Club meetings were curtailed by the closure of the Library for in-person activities such as this. However, Librarian Justine Splane promoted cookbooks via the Library's YouTube channel.



While we had to cancel many of our regular programs such as the Edible Book Festival, Annual Volunteer Appreciation Tea and community outreach at the Pride Picnic and Fall Fair, we found electronic ways of eventually continuing programs such as our Adult Book Club, Crochet Circle and always popular author presentations. Adult YouTube videos were recorded for the Bracebridge Horticultural Society, and Author Talks with Lloyd Walton and Gary Dennis, all following COVID-19 safety protocols. A Zoom® platform account was purchased for Library use and was used extensively including an author talk with Maureen Jennings, creator of the Murdoch Mystery series and Drew Hayden Taylor, an award-winning author, playwright and humourist. We were pleased to present a very successful author presentation in partnership with the Muskoka libraries. We had close to 200 participants join the Zoom webinar for bestselling author Emma Donoghue. Feedback by attendees was very positive and we hope to offer similar collaborations in the new year.



For many years, we have hosted a presentation by the Muskoka Cottage Country Writers called “Tall Pine Tales” which always draws a large crowd. This year, we reached out to Tall Pine Tales with the offer to host their annual event virtually. Information & Digital Services Librarian Sarah MacNeal filmed 17 Muskoka writers for the event. Videos with individual stories were released from September 8 – 30. In September, on YouTube alone, the videos had 785 views.

In the fall of 2019, the Town submitted an application to the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (ICIP) for funding for the Multi-Use Community Centre (MUCC) project. Despite the disappointing news in the summer of 2020 that the Town’s application was unsuccessful, work continues on the MUCC. It has been determined that the project will be completed in phases with the Arena in Phase 1, Library in Phase 2 and Fieldhouse in Phase 3. Any future infrastructure grants which will expedite the phases will be pursued.

As we moved into the fall, October brought a new experience to the Library. We rented the Library facility for 3 days to a film production crew for several scenes in a future Hallmark movie called Tycoon’s Kiss. While we had to suspend our curbside pickup, the production was a positive event of the whole community and we were thrilled to be part of it. Ontario Public Library Week also took place October 19 – 24. We missed the celebration that can only be experienced when people gather, but staff still offered some special activities. Our Children & Youth Services Librarian created a “story walk” in the Library garden, a virtual author talk was presented with Erica Bauermeister (joining us from Seattle!) and a Halloween “green screen” event provided an opportunity for some fun picture-taking in our parking lot.



When our patrons are asked what they like about the Library, it is the staff they think of first. One of the many activities in 2020 that was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic was the presentation of long service awards to Town and Library staff. It was hoped that the usual presentation would occur by the end of the year, but this was not possible. This year we had a smaller acknowledgement for the following Library staff: Carolyn Dawkins (35 years), Nancy Beasley (20 years), Sharyn Wilson (10 years) and Julene Jones (5 years).

Library staff have traditionally shown great enthusiasm for participating in the Santa Claus Parade, but the continuation of the pandemic in December resulted in some uncertainty as to whether the parade would take place. Eventually a “reverse” parade was planned by the local Rotary Club whereby entries were stationary while the public drove by. Although time did not permit full staff participation, a valiant effort was made by a few. This picture notes the mask-wearing that became the “norm” in 2020.





BRACEBRIDGE PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD

The members of the Bracebridge Public Library Board in 2020 were:

Barbara Hutchinson, Chair	Councillor Chris Wilson, Council Representative
Evelyn Brown	Paul Feist (January – November)
Rick Hallam	Carol Anne Robinson
Tatiana Sutherland	Margaret Walton
Joanne Wolochatiuk (starting March)	

BRACEBRIDGE PUBLIC LIBRARY STAFF

The members of the staff of the Bracebridge Public Library in 2020 were:

CEO/Chief Librarian	Cathryn Rodney
Information & Digital Services Librarians	Cindy Buhne
	Sarah MacNeal
	Justine Splane
Children & Youth Services Librarian	Ashleigh Whipp
Children's Assistant	Ann Marie Taylor
Library Assistant/Office Manager	Carolyn Dawkins
Inter-Library Loan Coordinator	Nancy Beasley
Circulation Clerks	Sue Ronson
	Trudy Vincent
	Sharyn Wilson
Pages	Holly Beaudoin (starting end of February)
	Kelly Fry
	Julene Jones
	Kate Neice (to end of February)