REPORT TO OUR COMMUNITY

2023
LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Surrey Libraries recognizes that our work takes place on the ancestral, traditional, and unceded territories of the SEMYOME (Semiahmoo), ḵ̓ičəy (Katzie), kʷikʷəƛ̓əm (Kwikwetlem), Ɂ̓stəc̓əhtxw (Kwantlen), qiqéyt (Qayqayt), xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) First Nations and on the ancestral and traditional territory of the sc̓əwaθən məsteyəxʷ (Tsawwassen) First Nation.
MISSION AND VISION

Our mission is to connect **people**, spark **curiosity**, and inspire **lifelong learning** to enhance the lives of Surrey residents, with the vision of creating a literate, **inclusive**, thriving city.

VALUES

Values serve as our guiding principles, shaping our culture and behaviour. They help define our identity and purpose, influencing decision-making and actions. By aligning with these values, the Library creates a cohesive and ethical environment, fostering long-term success.

**INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM**
We champion the right for different voices and ideas to be heard, and the right for questions to be asked without censorship.

**COMMUNITY FOCUS**
We care about the well-being of our community and work to foster a sense of belonging and connection.

**EQUITABLE ACCESS**
We strive for our services to be accessible to all members of our community.

**INNOVATION**
We continuously explore and pursue new ideas to improve services, remaining flexible to find creative solutions.

**COLLABORATION**
We work with each other, our city, our community, and our patrons to support common goals and provide excellent service.

**SUSTAINABILITY**
We strive to be a leader in environmentally sound, socially equitable, and economically feasible practices.
EQUITY, DIVERSITY, INCLUSION, ACCESSIBILITY (EDIA) VISION STATEMENT

Our Library is the heart of our community.

To fully realize our values and vision of a literate, inclusive and thriving city, the Library is dedicated to the principles of equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility (EDIA). We strive to provide equitable access to services and resources that enhance the experience of all our patrons.

Diversity can be seen, read, heard, and felt at the Library. From our shelves lined with various genres, to our unique displays and artwork, to our patrons from all walks of life, and to our staff members offering unique insights and expertise. Our diversity is encouraged to live and breathe here. It is a reflection of our dynamic city, and is essential to our cross-cultural environment.

Everyone is welcome at the Library to share in a sense of community and belonging. We envision the Library as a cohesive space where our differences are embraced and celebrated as strengths. Our backgrounds, identities and voices come together in a central hub of knowledge, innovation and collaboration. Together, we can foster an environment where we all feel safe to gather, play, work, learn, and be ourselves.

We approach our EDIA efforts the way we approach a new book—with curiosity, open-mindedness, and an eagerness to learn. We value the insights and knowledge of our community and its partners who help guide us on this collaborative journey.

Community members in Challenging Stigma Program talked about their experiences with mental health, Indigenous experience, cultural oppression, and other topics.
MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR AND CHIEF LIBRARIAN

We are delighted to share with you some of the highlights of 2023, a year that marked a significant milestone for Surrey Libraries: celebrating our 40th anniversary.

As our current strategic plan came to an end, we embarked on a comprehensive engagement process to shape our future direction and vision. We conducted in-person and online consultations with staff, community groups, partners, and Indigenous people to gather feedback and input for our new strategic plan. Participants shared their hopes, needs, and aspirations for the Library and the community with enthusiasm.

In 2023, we were honoured to be elected as a member of the Surrey Urban Indigenous Leadership Committee, a coalition of Indigenous and non-Indigenous organizations working together to advance reconciliation and social justice. We are proud to be part of this initiative and to support the Indigenous community through our programs, services, and collections.

Another achievement was welcoming a record-breaking 32,985 new library members, reflecting a growing demand and appreciation for our services! We strive to meet the diverse and evolving needs of our community by providing access to information, education, and entertainment for all ages and backgrounds.

Surrey continues to be one of the fastest growing communities in the country and attracts a large number of immigrants and refugees. We supported these newcomers by translating our key brochures into five languages and producing 600 refugee and newcomer bags to welcome them to the community.

We want to express our gratitude to the City of Surrey and the Province of British Columbia for their ongoing funding and support. We also thank our generous donors, volunteers, community partners, and patrons for their invaluable contributions and collaboration. Finally, we thank our dedicated Library Board and staff for their hard work and commitment to making Surrey Libraries a welcoming and inclusive space for everyone.

Marilyn Herrmann
Board Chair

Surinder Bhogal
Chief Librarian

Based on an internal review and report:

$822 was the annual value library membership provided to the average cardholder in 2023
MAYOR'S MESSAGE

On behalf of City Council, I extend my congratulations to Surrey Libraries for another successful year in serving our diverse and growing community.

On behalf of the City Council, I congratulate Surrey Libraries for yet another successful year that saw a record number of electronic library materials lent out. In 2023, over four million books and eBooks were borrowed from Surrey Libraries. Another record was set with more than 17,100 children signing up for the Summer Reading Club.

Always looking to improve and innovate, I look forward to the new projects for 2024 such as the Mobile Library service – a library on wheels that will travel to areas that are underserved by library services and to people who cannot easily access their local branch.

The materials, programs and services provided by Surrey Libraries are truly top notch. Through its extensive array of resources and opportunities for literacy and lifelong learning, the Library also plays a pivotal role in supporting the personal and professional growth of our residents, as well as their overall health and well-being. A hub for continuous learning, creativity, and leisure, Surrey Libraries is a major contributor to the enrichment of our city.

With over 170,000 active members in our community, I hope to see every Surrey resident making use of the Library’s offerings, enabling everyone to benefit from the wealth of information, knowledge, and inspiration that our libraries provide.

In addition to a vast collection of books and eBooks, Surrey Libraries offers a variety of online resources including streaming video, educational programs, and career development tools. Surrey Libraries plays a key role in bridging the ‘digital divide’ by providing essential access to technology for members of our community who may not have it otherwise.

On behalf of Surrey City Council, I commend the Board, staff, and volunteers of Surrey Libraries for their unwavering commitment to excellence. There truly is something for everyone at the library. I invite you to take full advantage of all that Surrey Libraries has to offer by visiting one of the branches or online at surreylibraries.ca.

For each dollar invested in Surrey Libraries, $5.46 of value was generated for the community in 2023.
We supported special literacy and learning events such as the Challenging Stigma program, CBC Kid's Book Live event, Word Vancouver festival, and hosted the Reading Link Challenge.
To make sure Surrey Libraries is continuing to meet the demands of our changing community, we conducted a strategic plan review that included in-person and online engagement with staff, community groups, partners, and Indigenous people to gather feedback for the new plan.

To support and welcome the many immigrants and refugees settling in Surrey, we produced 600 newcomer bags to let them know about Library services available.

We launched Bee-bots to help support digital literacy in young children.

We installed an Everbright Light Wall and many other children’s active play items using donor funds to enhance early childhood education through play.

Your Tech-to-Go equipment is fantastic! I borrowed both the audio and VHS/DVD converters and took them to a presentation I gave for the BC Genealogical Society on Digitizing your Family History.

~ Margaret Sharon, BCGS

To support our patron’s growing use and requests, we significantly expanded eBook, eAudio, and eMagazine collections to over 112,000 titles. Circulation of these collections increased by 16% over the previous year.
LITERACY AND LEARNING

As a public library, literacy and learning is a cornerstone of Surrey Libraries’ work.

From support of English language learners, to storytimes for children, to one-on-one technology support, our programs support life-long learning and a range of literacies. We continued to provide many programs both online and in our branches.

WHAT YOU TOLD US

81%
Agree or Strongly Agree that Surrey Libraries is the go-to place for literacy and learning

TOP LOANED TITLES

Fiction
It Starts With Us

Non-Fiction
Cambridge IELTS 14 General Training

eBook
Happy Place

eAudiobook
Fourth Wing

Young Adult
The Summer I Turned Pretty
HIGHLIGHTS OF 2023

- Over 2.9 million physical items borrowed
- Over 1.1 million eBooks and eAudio borrowed
- 341,315 reference questions answered
- 127,382 children participated in programs
- 30,890 adults participated in programs
- 17,128 kids joined the Summer Reading Club
- Added new online resources: Cantook, Code Combat
- Read 49 Days

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CONNECTIONS

In an increasingly connected and busy world, Surrey Libraries plays an important role as one of the few remaining democratic public spaces in our community.

The Library connects Surrey residents with resources and services that help enrich their lives and also connects people to others with similar interests.

Our commitment to connection also means supporting efforts of reconciliation with Indigenous communities.

We work with partners to leverage resources for greater community benefit. We continue to prioritize professional development for staff and provided funding for credentialed courses, workshops, and conferences.

I value how Surrey Libraries is always changing and adapting with the times. The team has done a really good job of supporting newcomers in the community and acting as a hub for information as well as providing programs/services to support integration.

~ Feedback from the Patron Satisfaction Survey
GAYLE HARRIS MEMORIAL EDUCATION AWARD RECIPIENTS

This fund was established by Barbara E. Harris in memory of Gayle Harris, a beloved children’s librarian at Surrey Libraries. The award is provided to staff who are studying to obtain their Master of Library and Information Science degree.

WHAT YOU TOLD US

87% Agree or Strongly Agree that Surrey Libraries consistently provides good service

87% Agree or Strongly Agree that Surrey Libraries staff are knowledgeable & helpful

76% Agree or Strongly Agree that they are satisfied with the range of services offered to the community

Left to right: Robyn Sundar and Sarah Cryderman, Gayle Harris Memorial Education Fund Award Recipients for 2023.
After signing up for his Library card, Visar felt more connected to his new home.
When I arrived in Canada in 2019, I felt overwhelmed and isolated. As a newcomer, I felt a language barrier and cultural divide. I wanted to learn English faster, so I opened an account at Surrey Libraries – Guildford branch.

As soon as I stepped into the Library, I was greeted with a friendly atmosphere and a sense of belonging. Staff showed me how to use my library card and access newcomer programs. I immediately registered for the English Conversation Circle program. This was my first connection with Canadian society.

“As soon as I stepped into the Library, I was greeted with a friendly atmosphere and a sense of belonging.”

Through the program, I met new people. I started to feel more confident and comfortable speaking English. The Facilitators helped me improve my language skills and learn about Canadian culture. They also introduced me to volunteer opportunities at the Library, such as delivering books to seniors through Accessibility Services.

I loved volunteering because I could help people who couldn’t visit the Library themselves. I saw how much it meant to them to receive books. The smiles and thanks from the seniors warmed my heart.

When I applied for a job, the Accessibility Services Manager at Surrey Libraries gave me a reference. With this help, I got my dream job. I felt grateful to the Library for the opportunities it provided. Surrey Libraries has become an essential part of my life in Canada, and I am proud to share my story to show others how important the Library is to our community.

~ Visar Alimehaj

Read other stories shared at surreylibraries.ca/shared-stories
Surrey Libraries was honoured to be voted in as a member of the Surrey Urban Indigenous Leadership Committee.

The Library acknowledged National Indigenous People’s Day by featuring Indigenous resources and collections, and participating in the City’s National Indigenous People’s Day event.
WE HIRED OUR FIRST EVER INDIGENOUS SERVICES COORDINATOR
to help develop deeper connections with our Indigenous community and to develop programs for them. Some of the highlights of the Indigenous Services Coordinator’s work included:

- Established an **Indigenous Book Distribution initiative** for outreach visits.
- Initiated **Indigenous Public Art** project for City Centre branch.
- Created and signed a **partnership with Waceya Métis Society**.
- Reached out to **Totest Aleng: Indigenous Learning House**.
- Co-hosted a session with Skookum Surrey **to listen to Indigenous community’s ideas** on updating our strategic plan.
Our branches are vital community hubs, welcoming everyone from newborns to seniors.

We work to ensure individuals and families feel welcomed and can easily access library services. We offer multilingual services and materials to accommodate the diverse language needs of our community.

We work to provide our services to those with disabilities by offering accessibility services such as assistive technology and adaptive equipment. We host programs and events that celebrate diversity and promote cultural understanding.

Surrey Libraries has been a lifeline for me during my PhD studies. The library has provided me with everything I need to succeed, from books and articles to computers and study spaces. I love the fact that the library is free and open to everyone. It’s a place where people from all walks of life can come together to learn and grow. This is more than just a place to find books. It’s a community hub where people of all ages can come to learn, explore, and connect with others. The library is a place where I can be myself and pursue my interests without judgment.

— Frank Obi

91% Agree or Strongly Agree that Surrey Libraries is welcoming and inclusive.
Library Board members, Balbir Gurm and John Gillies welcomed the Minister of Municipal Affairs, the Honourable Anne Kang, and MLA Mike Starchuk for a tour of Cloverdale branch and the Family History department.

From left to right: Mike Starchuk, Anne Kang, Balbir Gurm, John Gillies

Thanks to the generosity of donors, Surrey Libraries was able to add many new play-to-learn items at our branches.
The Library Board is made up of community volunteers who are appointed by City Council. Its main responsibilities include setting strategic direction, developing policies, and financial oversight.
# Financial Summary for 2023

## Revenues

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>City of Surrey Transfers</td>
<td>22,094,789</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provincial &amp; Federal Grants</td>
<td>2,898,050</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fees</td>
<td>403,631</td>
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<tr>
<td>Neighbourhood Development Contributions</td>
<td>100,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Donations &amp; Other</td>
<td>111,485</td>
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## Expenditures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Human Resources</td>
<td>18,236,808</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials, Supplies &amp; Equipment</td>
<td>4,173,549</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Branch Operations</td>
<td>2,527,980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>649,585</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Library services cost just $3.49 per month per citizen*

*2023 expenses: $25,587,922 divided by Surrey's population based on City's planning department projection for 2023 610,480 = $41.91 per citizen/year/12 = $3.49

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Full financial statements can be found at [surreylibraries.ca/about-us](http://surreylibraries.ca/about-us)

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It is a peaceful, clean and organized place to sit and read. I believe reading connects us to our inner real self. I find my solace in the library and this is one of the most beautiful things about Canada that fills my heart with Hope and Joy.

~ Feedback from the Patron Satisfaction Survey
Participants in a SingAloud program for newcomers

We welcomed **32,985** new library members in 2023, up from **25,921** in 2022.

**TRACKING OUR PROGRESS**

We welcomed **32,985** new library members in 2023, up from **25,921** in 2022. **27%** New Cardholders
THANK YOU
TO OUR GOVERNMENT AND CORPORATE SUPPORTERS

1170110 B.C. Ltd
ABC Recycling
Animals Inc.
Benevity Inc.
Best Buy Canada
CanadaHelps
Coast Capital
Courthouse Libraries BC
CUPE 402 | Surrey City Workers
CUPE 402-02 | Surrey Library Workers
D2R Trucking Ltd.
DP World
Envision Financial, a division of First West Credit Union
FASTSIGNS Surrey
FortisBC
Google Employees
Guildford Town Centre
Gulf & Fraser
Hamber Foundation
Homelife Benchmark Realty Corp.
Imperial Hobbies
Khalsa Credit Union
Kidsbooks
Kwantlen Polytechnic University
Microsoft Rewards | Give with Bing
Neena Deol Services Inc.
North Surrey Lions Club
OverDrive
PCI Developments
Prospera Credit Union
RBC Employees
Scott Road Productions (S1) Inc.
SSR Roof Supply Ltd.
Staples Professional
Surrey Fire Fighters’ Charitable Society
Surrey International Writers’ Conference
TELUS Employees
United Way
WBTV Canada Productions Services Inc.
Whitehots Inc.
THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS AND VOLUNTEERS

DIAMOND LEVEL DONORS (20+ years of giving)
Beth Barlow
Hazel Blackwood
James Gilholme
Barb Harris
Irma Herzig
Vincent Holmes
Melanie Houlden
Anne Larsen
Marcia Lui
James McCann
Mary Murray
Alan Newberry
Nina Olausen
Dorothy Randall
Brenda Storey
Karen Thayer
Dianne Warner
Donald Weisner
John Wilson

GOLD LEVEL DONORS (6–10 years of giving)
Gerrard Greenstone
Barton Hildebrand
Cyndy Hill
Malook Chand Kaler
Winnifred Kowalewch
Jim Walsh
Shu-Yung Yang
Agnes Baker
Janina Baker
Joan Baldwin
Ruby Batliwalla
Lynn Belanger
Helga Benson
Narinder Bhagirath
Gurmeet Bilku
Jean Bose
Marsha Bourgeois
Marie Braun
Marlene Bremner
Garret Brouwer
Pamela Brown
Laura Bushell
Coralea Button-Chua
Joan Bywater
Ralph Campbell
Helen Carbonell
William Carlson
Ellen Carter
Karen Cauty
Amandeep Chatrath
Judy Chevalier
Li Chi
Jason Chow
Helen Christiansen
Heather Clark
Mai Clark
Teresa Clarke

SILVER LEVEL DONORS (2–5 years of giving)
Tomoko Adachi
Syed Ahmed
Dale Anderson
Joan Armitage
Mala Ashok
Marilina Atkinson
Anita Aytona
Nav Badhan
Cherry Baedak
Rita Bailey
Patricia Colley
Cesarina Conte
Rose-Marie Cooper
Richard Cotton
John Cowan
Pauline Cox
Randy Cridland
James Cullina
James Darbyshire
Sheila Davidson
Kim Davies
Lorraine Davies
Carmen Diez
Karen Dwyer
Linda Elko
Dawn Ellis
John Erslavas
Jenny Escobell
Tracy Farrall
Marina Fatkin
Gail Ferraby
Adrian Florescu
Lydia Francescutti
Elizabeth Friday
Robert Friedrich
Heather Fuchs
Yu Ge
Twyla Gerbrandt
Anureet Gill
Renu Goel
Connie Gogol
Sharon Goldberg
Christine Grant
Sheila Gregor
Balwant Grewal
Evelyn Hall
Gail Hall

PLATINUM LEVEL DONORS (11–20 years of giving)
Surinder Bhogal
Helen Burritt
April Cox
Gilbert De Gaye
Sara Grant
Darcy Hamilton
Surendra Handa
Earl Hansford
Wenwen Hao
Paula Hart
Jaden Haywood
Gertrud Heiniger
Wayne Henry
Marilynn Herrmann
Leigh Holyoak
Monica Hordos
Veda Hotel
Janet Houghton
Bing Hu
Yang Zhou Hu
Norma Janzen
Chaminda Jayasekara
Parnaam Jhaj
Jose Jones
Fernando Jubany
Stephen Juras
Gurmail Kahlon
Eric Kailly
Satya Kathoria
Surinder Kaur
Ena Keil
Graham Kell
Michael Kelly
Sieglinde Kessler
Charles Kidwell
Nicole Hyeseung Kim
Charles King
Albert Kirkham
Kiren Klair
Veronica Klotzbuher
Barbara Kochanski
Lynn Koyzan
NEW DONORS

Anonymous Donors
Luis Acosta Monsalve
Angenita Ager
Tina Alden
Gamaliel Alina
Maritza Alvarez
Cindy Armstrong
Sadia Aslam
Ann Baker
Priscilla Balak
Janet Baldry
John Banks
Gurpreet Banwait
Jacqueline Barszczewski
Suzanne Barton
Jagjit Bassi
Karen Beaman
Daniel Bendell
Arnell Bercero
Harmit Bharaj
Pooja Bhatia
Hari Bhatti
Amrik Bhugra
Tara Bissonnette
Frances Bitara
Pat Boston
Pat Bowden
Bonnie Boyd
Leonor Bradley
Calle Branner
Keith Bridgefoot
Noel Broadfoot
Colin Brown
Susan Brown
Nancy Bruschetta

ANNUAL REPORT 2023
The team at Surrey Libraries takes every care to ensure our donors are recognized accurately and respectfully. If you’ve noted an error or oversight, please accept our apology and contact us directly at 604-598-7307 to help us update our records so we can recognize you appropriately.

IN MEMORY
Pat Anderson
Gloria Bissonnette
Treena Bray
Daddy
Ralph Darbyshire
Steven George
Gramps
Surjit Gosal
Sika Gyamfi
Frey Home
Gurdial Klair
Janis Lee
Rupa Singh

IN HONOUR
Hiraya Reagan Gonzales
Marilyn Herrmann
Alethea Hui Kesornbua
RJ and Solenn Klair
M&M
Oliver
Shirley Plant
Herbert Edwin Wood
Victor Wimaladasa

ACCESSIBILITY VOLUNTEERS (individuals)
Mick Sandhu
Flora de Montreuil
Frandy Tirona
Elaine Becker
Martha Anderson
Navdeep Sidhu
Carla Kolb
Dorothy Stuivenberg
Carolyn Smith
Shawn Feddes
Arjot Bindra
Nancy Poirier
Geeta Podicheti
Harpreet Bindra
Athena Cho
Helena Williams
Visar Alimehaj
Gloria Xue
Pawandeep Kaur
Susan Soo
Yuzhuo Gu
Carrie Jagpal
Jagroop Rai
Morgan Vader
Valerie Newton
Nasreen Shaheedi
Manpreet Kaur
Dhanlaxmiben Patel
Tejvir Josan
Janet Cronkhite
Alvaro Perez Hernandez
Jan Penhorwood

ACCESSIBILITY VOLUNTEERS (organizations)
Celebration & Rainbow Manor
Thompson Community Services
Bethayne House: Milieu Family Services
Jacob Community Connections
Milieu Family Services
95th House Community Living Society
Semiahmoo House Society
Hope House

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Volunteers with the Semiahmoo House Society help support Surrey Libraries home delivery service. This program brings library materials to those who can’t visit library branches.
VISIT US

CITY CENTRE
10350 University Drive
604-598-7420

CLAYTON
7155 187A Street
604-592-2727

CLOVERDALE
5642 176A Street
604-598-7320

DIGITAL BRANCH
surreylibraries.ca
604-598-7901

FLEETWOOD
15996 84 Avenue
604-598-7340

GUILDFORD
15105 105 Avenue
604-598-7360

MOBILE LIBRARY
mobilelibrary@surrey.ca

NEWTOWN
13795 70 Avenue
604-598-7400

PORT KELLS
18885 88 Avenue
604-598-7440

SEMIAHMOO
1815 152 Street
604-592-6900

OCEAN PARK
12854 17 Avenue
604-502-6304

STRAWBERRY HILL
7399 122 Street
604-501-5836

MOBILE LIBRARY
mobilelibrary@surrey.ca