

To: Mayor and Councillors

Cc: SMT
Denise Hui, Library Board Chair

From: Susan Walters, Chief Librarian

Re: 2024 Annual Report to the Community

Date: June 26, 2025

On behalf of the Richmond Public Library Board, I am pleased to share a copy of our 2024 Annual Report (Attachment 1) to the community with you.

The report will be posted on the library's website https://www.yourlibrary.ca/about/annual_report/ and our Board Chair, Denise Hui, and I are looking forward to the opportunity to formally present the Annual Report to you at the July 14, 2025, Council Meeting.

Some notable report highlights include:

- The development of our new 2024 – 2028 Strategic Plan that affirms our mission and vision, introduces refreshed values and outlines our intention for the next four years:
All will feel welcome, find what they need, and leave inspired. We will make life-changing connections, every day.
- Hosting Dr. James Turk, the Director of the Centre for Free Expression from Toronto Metropolitan University, to lead a series of talks for community, library board trustees and staff on the importance of championing these core values of a democratic society.
- The introduction of refreshed spaces and services across our libraries that include meeting pods, flexible program rooms, new lobby space at the main library, new computer workstations and a laptop lending kiosk to serve the more than 1.1 million visitors that came through our doors in 2024.

City Council's ongoing support for the library is greatly appreciated and supports us in providing diverse opportunities for our community to learn, connect, and belong. There's something for everyone at Richmond Public Library.

Should you have any questions or require further information, please contact me at 604-231-6466 or 778-689-4634.



Susan Walters
Chief Librarian

Att. 1 Richmond Public Library 2024 Annual Report to Community

Greetings from the Mayor

On behalf of Richmond City Council, I invite you to browse the pages of Richmond Public Library's 2024 Annual Report to the Community.

The library is proud to be an essential source of information and learning and in 2024, they welcomed over 1.1 million people through their doors and over 2.7 million visitors to their website.

The library's new 2024-2028 Strategic Plan strongly complements and aligns to Council's goals and priorities. Richmond's libraries are welcoming,

safe and inclusive spaces located conveniently across the city. Acting as community builders, they are committed to barrier-free access; providing accessible resources to promote lifelong learning; and offering skill development programs and volunteer opportunities for teens, adults and seniors.

The library's collections and services fulfill core needs in our community and underpin Council's 2022-2026 Strategic Plan. Council strongly supports the library and holds a shared vision to meet the changing needs of all Richmond residents and create a community that is engaged, connected and informed.

I would like to thank the Library Board Trustees, community partners, volunteers and donors who have given their time, expertise and support to enhance library services for everyone in our community. Your contributions are invaluable!



Malcolm D. Brodie

Malcolm D. Brodie
Mayor



Message from the Board Chair and Chief Librarian

We are excited to share Richmond Public Library's 2024 Annual Report to the Community with you. Here in Richmond, we are not immune to challenges around intellectual freedom and freedom of expression, and the library plays an essential role in upholding these core values. We are committed to being a reliable and safe space where access to vital information is broadly and equitably available and providing a place where our community can come together to learn, connect and belong.

The most significant project of 2024 was the development of our new Strategic Plan: Your Library, Our Future. The process to create this plan considered the changing demographics of Richmond and shifting trends in how people use and access library services. A data-driven and community-focused approach welcomed the input of over 3,300 community members and staff.

- The new plan centers around five key areas of focus:
- Reduce and remove barriers to improve accessibility
 - Champion intellectual freedom and freedom of expression
 - Provide excellent customer experiences
 - Strengthen our social and economic sustainability
 - Improve brand recognition and engagement

This plan affirms our mission and vision, and introduces refreshed values that guide how we show up for each other and you. As you turn the pages of this report, you'll see how our friendly, expert staff are working to deliver innovative, collaborative and welcoming services and programs that align with our goals to support an engaged, informed and connected community.

There are many great initiatives launching throughout 2025 and beyond. Watch for our RPL To Go Van out and about in Richmond this summer and come visit one of your libraries soon!



Denise Hui
Denise Hui
Board Chair



Susan Walters
Susan Walters
Chief Librarian



Champion Intellectual Freedom and Freedom of Expression

Defending our community's freedom to choose what, when and where they want to read is core to who we are. In recent years, there has been an increase in requests for reconsideration across Canada and the USA as well as more challenges of library material. While these requests may be well-intentioned and intended to protect others, removing materials and restricting access to different viewpoints limits informed discussion and learning in our community.

Collection Development Strategy

With over 485,000 print and digital items in our collection, we are committed to ensuring that there is something for everyone at the library. We create our collections with our diverse community in mind and to support our selection process. In 2024 we launched a Collection Development Strategy, now available for the public to read.



Fostering Community Conversations

Throughout the year, we provide opportunities for meaningful community conversations to take place. In 2024, 131 people attended conversations that included the Human Library® and a series of talks for staff, Library Board and the public led by the Director of the Centre for Free Expression from Toronto Metropolitan University Dr. James Turk.

Freedom to Read Week

Every year the library celebrates Freedom to Read Week with both in-branch and digital book displays featuring well-known titles that have been banned in the past. Community members are encouraged to borrow these books and formulate their own opinions about what they read.

Book Clubs

Book clubs are offered year-round and there are options for all ages and interests, with programs being held at all library locations. Library book clubs invite people from diverse backgrounds to come together and engage in respectful discussion around book themes, while celebrating and acknowledging their different points of view. In 2024, 283 people attended 44 book club programs at the library.

Reduce and Remove Barriers to Improve Accessibility

Laptop Lending Kiosk at Brighthouse

One of the newest and most popular features at Brighthouse library has been the introduction of a laptop lending kiosk. These fully charged loanable laptops allow customers to use them in-library for up to three hours, with the freedom to use them in any of the library's spaces, including in the new meeting pods, study rooms and the renovated front entrance lobby. In their first year of service, there were over 4,200 laptop check-outs.

Rhyme Time with RPL

Busy caregivers have enjoyed the introduction of the Rhyme Time with RPL video series, a collection of 19 professionally produced videos (and growing) featuring RPL staff sharing songs, rhymes and stories. Viewed over 50,000 times since Spring 2024, these videos can be accessed at any time, from anywhere, lowering barriers to participation.



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A Library Card for Every Child

Under the previous Strategic Plan, one of RPL's goals was to ensure that every child in Richmond has access to a free library card so that they can experience all of the benefits that come with having one. Started in 2019, the Inspire Curiosity Library Card initiative has facilitated card access for children in grades 1, 4 and 8 by providing opportunities to apply for a library card at school. Last year, over 1,400 Richmond children signed up for a library card.

Community Connect Boxes

Launched in October 2024, the library introduced a pilot project, Community Connect Boxes, to engage vulnerable and socially isolated seniors living at care homes across Richmond. Four boxes were deployed bringing joy and alleviating social isolation for 420 Richmond residents. The boxes contain a variety of games, puzzles and reading materials, which have proven successful as conversation-starters and have increased residents' social engagement both with care home staff and with each other.



Accessible Digital and Physical Services

In alignment with the Accessible British Columbia Act's goal of removing barriers within the community, Richmond Public Library has enhanced accessibility and inclusivity across its services and digital platforms. The library integrated ReachDeck into its website to support speech, reading, and translation, alongside a new accessibility feedback web page, and introduced the Phonak Sound System for community events to ensure clearer audio for program participants who are hard of hearing.

The library also introduced an online study room booking system to simplify how customers reserve a private study space and installed video conferencing equipment at the Ironwood and Brighouse locations to enable programs to have a virtual component.

These new services have facilitated how customers utilize and participate in library spaces and programs, with almost 8,500 study rooms booked in 2024.



Read the
Accessible
BC Act Here

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★ Provide Excellent Cu

Digital Creation Stations Now Available System-Wide

The library extended its Creation Station technology to the Cambie, Ironwood and Steveston locations, including the introduction of a Cricut Maker 3 at the Steveston library and 3D printing and photo scanning capacity at the Ironwood library. Having this technology available at the branch locations improves access for residents of those communities.



QR Codes - A Better Way to Stay Connected

As more and more people rely on a smartphone equipped with a camera to navigate their day, the introduction of QR codes on all library program flyers has simplified how community members can quickly access library program information and register on-the-spot.



Curious how it works? Scan this QR code for a special surprise, available exclusively for Annual Report readers.

A Smarter eNewsletter

To make communicating with our community of readers simpler and more efficient, the library introduced a new eNewsletter that supports sending dynamic content tailored to customers' interests. In addition, smart analytics enable staff to select eNewsletter content that reflects what people are consuming.



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Customer Experiences ★



Refreshed Spaces

To enhance the customer experience at **Brighthouse library** and ensure our entire collection of popular magazines is visible for browsing, the library relocated its print magazine collection to the first floor and installed new display units.

To respond to the community's evolving needs for places to learn and connect, the reimagined lobby entrance space offers an enticing selection of 35 comfortable seats, including armchairs, side tables, and restaurant-style booths, providing a wide variety of options for studying, working, relaxing, reading or gathering with others.

Another exciting addition to the Brighthouse library was the installation of bookable meeting pods, which are fully enclosed, soundproof pods that can accommodate up to four people. Customers can book a pod up to seven days in advance, providing a valuable peace of mind to those needing to reserve a quiet and private space to meet with others or work alone.

The **Ironwood library** has undergone renovations aimed at optimizing existing spaces to better support hybrid programming and to provide a platform for enhanced library experiences. The computers were relocated out of the original computer lab, freeing up that space for hybrid programming opportunities. Accessible countertops were installed and a bookable meeting space was introduced to support customers needing a quiet space for holding private in-person or online meetings.

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Memorable Brands for Library Events

The library is proud to brand some of its most impactful events with memorable and relevant visuals. In some cases that branding can carry on year-over-year as notable events return on an annual basis. This branding strategy supports our community in making it easier to recognize events as being offered by the library. In 2024, some of the library's most notable visuals represented **Richmond Reads**, featuring internationally best-selling author Daniel Kalla, a series of plant talks by award-winning plantsman and local nursery owner Gary Lewis, and a highly anticipated visit by the authors of **The Littlest Dinosaur**.



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Improve Brand Recognition and Engagement

Media Coverage of Library Events

Recently, the library welcomed the Richmond Sentinel for a feature-length video interview about the new Community Connect Boxes. In addition, the library hosted City TV News who filmed a piece about the Human Library[®] and connected with a group of local Journalism students from BCIT who developed a story about the positive impacts of Mahjong on local seniors.



2024-2028 Strategic Plan

The library's 2024-2028 Strategic Plan, entitled Your Library, Our Future, was implemented. This plan affirms the library vision and mission while introducing updated values that will guide the library's intentions for the next four years. The new goals and priorities will inform resourcing, operations and activities.

Welcome to RPL – where all will feel welcome, find what they need and leave inspired. We will make life-changing connections, every day.



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Strengthen our Social and Economic Sustainability



Poverty Reduction Initiatives

The Community Services Pop Ups continued throughout 2024, serving over 1,250 customers and bringing together a variety of vital community-based resources and supports in one place at monthly drop-in sessions held at the Brighthouse library.

Building and expanding on the reach of this program, the Ironwood library introduced the Community Services Connectors, where people with lived experience in marginalized communities gave back to their peers by helping to connect other vulnerable community members with resources and social services. This pilot program has proven to be a valuable resource, assisting 250 community members in its first year. Both programs are continuing through 2025.

WorkBC job fairs and hiring events continue to be impactful and well-attended, providing meaningful networking opportunities that connect local employers and service providers with job seekers. Almost 50 employers were represented at two job fairs, and connected with over 1,100 community members. Congratulations to all who walked away with jobs from these events!

Low income tax clinics continued for their 13th year, providing tax filing assistance free of charge by trained volunteers from the Lord's Harvest Fellowship to low income residents with simple tax returns. Over 200 residents received income tax filing support.

RPL was the recipient of the 2025 British Columbia Library Association (BCLA) "Building Better Communities" award for its pivotal role in partnering with the City of Richmond to deliver the Community Services Pop Ups and the Community Services Connectors program.

News Flash

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Indigenous Programming

Richmond Public Library is dedicated to the process of Truth and Reconciliation by providing strong Indigenous programming by Indigenous voices. Underpinned by our Strategic Plan, the library is committed to offering programs and experiences that provide Richmond residents with empowering opportunities for cultural learning, reflection and understanding.

The Indigenous Author Series returned for its second year and highlighted both well-known and emerging speakers and presenters with events for both children and adults. Since its inception in 2023, the Indigenous Author Series has hosted 23 programs and reached over 760 community members. The series returns in 2025.

INDIGENOUS AUTHOR SERIES



Brandon Reid



Wild Moccasin
Dancers



Dallas Hunt



Kung Jaadée



Jody
Wilson-Raybould



Monique
Gray Smith



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Cultural Celebrations

Library staff and community look forward to annual cultural celebrations that would not be possible without the generous partnership of local organizations. These events invite the public to come and immerse themselves in rich cultural and traditional experiences, fostering a strong sense of community and togetherness. This year, almost 2,500 people attended Black History Month, Lunar New Year, and the Islamic Art Experience.

Writers for Readers Author Fair

To celebrate and support local authors, promote reading and invite engaging discussion amongst community, the library hosted Writers for Readers, welcoming three bestselling authors and 14 local authors. Almost 380 people attended author talks and circulated booths to connect one-on-one with authors.



Summer Reading Club

The annual Summer Reading Club, a free literacy program to engage children with libraries and promote reading throughout the summer, returned, welcoming over 4,000 children. Programming ranged from reading challenges to author visits, writing workshops and exciting partnership events and experiences.

Physical Literacy Passport

In collaboration with the City of Richmond Parks, Recreation and Culture Division and the Richmond Oval, the library introduced a Physical Literacy Passport, providing children and youth with an incentive to engage in active play while visiting various community locations as an addition to the goal of reading throughout the summer. Set up as a scavenger hunt, approximately 40 participants located hidden objects throughout the city all summer long, completed the activity challenge and collected stamps for a chance to win prizes.



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E OF YOUR RPL CARD



THANK

We want to extend our gratitude and appreciation to all of our donors and volunteers. A huge thank you goes out to the Friends of the Richmond Library who donated \$45,000 from book sale proceeds. Your generous contributions enhance the collections, programs and services the library provides.

The Dayson family has a long history of giving in the Richmond community. Here at the library, we are able to provide access to a robust Judaica collection and programs that connect community thanks to the longstanding support of the Dayhu Family Foundation.

Donors Anar Shariff and Afzal Mangalji see libraries as sources of information, and safe spaces to visit and study. In the last year, their donation provided the funds to create opportunities for community to share a sense of connectedness, inclusion and acceptance through the Community Art Wall, and a series of staff, Board and public talks exploring intellectual freedom led by Dr. James Turk.





Past Library Board Trustee Susan Koch was a big library user as a child and teenager, something that has not changed over the years.



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“RPL is an oasis for me. Walking in the door, no matter which branch, gives me that same comfort as walking into a lush forest, calmness along with excitement at finding something new... I like to imagine others discovering the magic and the stories.”

— Susan Koch

A special thanks also has to go out to our 162 teen, adult and senior volunteers. Without them, the library wouldn't be able to provide many unique programs and events — they are invaluable.

Pulling it all together to create amazing customer experiences are our expert and friendly staff. Whether you walk into one of our libraries or visit a pop-up library service, you're sure to be welcomed by our staff. They are there to help you deepen your own learning, locate the perfect book or introduce you to our unique library services.



2024 Donations

Thank you to the many generous donors who helped us improve and expand access to essential programs, collections and services.

DONATIONS \$5,000 - \$19,999

Friends of the Richmond Library; Anar Shariff; The Dayhu Family Foundation

DONATIONS \$1,000 - \$4,999

Anonymous (!)

DONATIONS \$500 - \$999

Huiyuan Ma; Janice Tang; Meng Zhen; Monan Zhang; Richard & Carolyn Hart; Robbin Greig; Stephen Li; Susan Koch; Tina Ippel

DONATIONS \$400 - \$499

Cindy McPherson

Get a
tax receipt
with your
donations!



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DONATIONS \$300 - \$299

Chuen Bit Lee; Jay Bagtas

DONATIONS \$200 - \$299

Annie Ho; Anonymous (!); Caitlyn Lam; ChinHung Lin; Ella Ferguson; Grasiella Rathwell; Hannah Franke; Karen Hakansson; Linda Cagno; Ma Cecilia Garcia; Marian McEavish; Michael McBurney; Rosie Liu; Stephanie Shack; Wai Tze; Yuri Lewis

DONATIONS \$100 - \$199

Amy Ma; Angeline Singh; Anonymous (!); Arne Moller; Claire Smythe; Debbie Pawluk; Denise Hui; Edwin Shadoe; Evan Klegeris; Frida Wang; Heather Nicolaas; Isabel Huenefeld; John Shepherd; Judith Tait; Lai Shan Judy Chan; Lilly Lee; Linda Bishop; Linda McNab; Lori Chambers; Margaret Meloche; Marilyn Sakiyama; Marleen Da Silva; Maureen Hooper; Mimi Chen; Patricia Ling; Pei-San Tsai; Phyllis/Howard Lowe; Rosemary Nowicki; Rudy Chiang; Ryan Luetzen; Sandy Richard; Shirley Stonier; Susan Johnsen (United Readers Book Club); Suzanne Laferte; Wendy Wang

DONATIONS \$50 - \$99

Audrey Fung; Allison Joe; Anonymous (!); Carol Oerzen; Colleen Carrington; Emmanuel Mendoza; Graham Fleming; Janet Lawrence; Jim & Linda Reid; John Adams; Karen Mori; Laura Bell; Lella Ma; Leonard Miller; Lisa Hsieh; Lorenzo Sy; Nicole Wang; Ronald Medd; Sharon Doucelin; Shawn McIntyre; Shu Li; Sonya Lam; Susan Vaessen; Vanessa Vintanilla; Vincí Tse; William A (Bill) Speer; Xinyao Du

DONATIONS UP TO \$49

Alan Statham; Anne Santa Ana; Annette Chiu; Anonymous
 ()j; Andrei Obratzov; Axel Hovbender; Bernadette
 Chong; Charles Macleod; Christina Shum; Dan Phillips;
 Douglas Densen; Elaine Yeung; Ellie Zhu; Guangshan
 Gao; Halbo Zhou; Jiumin-Ming Huang; Junxiong Lei;
 Laria McKee; Lidi Ma; Lisa Cheung; Louis Lee; Lu Li;
 Lulu Tsai; Peter Buk; Phoebe Xie; Provincial Employees
 Community Services Fund; Rick McCallion; Ronald Loyer;
 Sheila Conception; Xiaohui Zhang; Xiaoxiao Wu; Wynne
 Hu; Yaqiong Wu; Yu-Chia Huang; Yu-Hsuan Huang



2024 Statement of Revenue & Expenses

OPERATING REVENUE	\$10,675,400
Municipal Contribution	\$52,891
Donations	\$434,722
Grants	\$123,350
Fines & Miscellaneous	\$29,521
Investment Income ¹	
Total	\$11,315,884
CAPITAL	\$610,000
Municipal Contribution	\$15,946
Gain on Sale of Assets	
Total Revenue	\$11,941,830
OPERATING EXPENSES	\$8,756,021
Salaries & Employee Benefits	\$505,119
Supplies & Equipment Services	\$534,625
General & Administration	\$523,214
Building, Lease & Maintenance	\$129,317
Utilities	
Library Subscriptions & Databases	\$805,824
Contribution for Capital Improvements	\$224,809
Total	\$11,478,929
CAPITAL Amortization²	\$1,000,787
Total Expenses	\$12,479,716
Annual Surplus (Deficit)	(\$537,886)

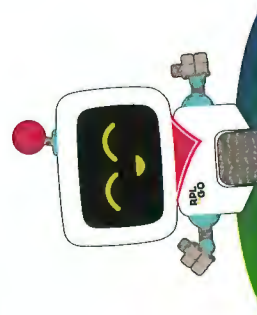
¹ Investment income is generated from endowment funds administered by the Vancouver Foundation and the Richmond Community Foundation.

² The cost of an asset, such as a book, is spread over the estimated useful life of the asset or the book and this annual expense is referred to as "amortization".

Watch for these Programs, Services and Collections in 2025



The library's vibrant and distinct mobile RPL To Go van made its debut appearance at a preschool visit to King George Park in the Cambie neighbourhood in May. By taking the library to where the community gathers, we are connecting residents with resources, services and programming outside of the traditional library walls of our buildings. Look for the RPL To Go van featuring **Spark**, our free-wheeling robot mascot, at events, festivals and celebrations this year.



2025 welcomed the launch of the all new Community Conversation Series, providing spaces for community to gather, connect, learn and express differing viewpoints in a safe and unjudgmental way. The series kicked off with an engaging talk exploring misinformation by Ahmed Al-Rawi in May, and will welcome conversations on climate change and addiction later in 2025 as well as encompassing the popular Human Library[®] event.



Introducing the
**Special Collection on
 Chinese Culture**
 中華古今文獻精藏
 at the Brighthouse Library

In May, the library opened the doors and welcomed the public to explore the Special Collection on Chinese Culture. This valuable and rare collection offers over 5,200 books on art, calligraphy and paintings. Dedicated staff are on site during open hours to help interested customers with requesting and viewing materials from the collection.



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**Visit one of
 our libraries today!**

