



# Annual Report

April 25, 2022 – April 23, 2023

## Overview of the past year

What an awesome year to report on! Gradually passing on from one exciting initiative to another, we seem to have seamlessly transitioned back to the usual reality of library work, somewhat quickly leaving the challenges of the pandemic behind. We have managed to weather the storm and emerge stronger and renewed.

Statistics indicate a return to a state of affairs that the Library has been used to, at the same time incorporating new initiatives and activities. Even if some services had suffered since 2020, we are resolutely getting back to 'normal'. Online participation in activities is a privileged option but not a necessity or obligation, and provide for a varied form of entertainment.



2022 provided a unique opportunity to measure up against public libraries in Québec. The *Association des bibliothèques publiques du Québec* led a first ever study on the services offered by Quebec public libraries, called 'BiblioQUALITÉ'. Five indicators were used to measure different aspects of library operations: acquisition expenses, opening hours, human resources, space, sitting capacity. We submitted the statistics for this study together with the Montreal West Public Library, as we both serve the Town of Montreal West. We are proud to report that Montreal West obtained the highest score of 5, or 92%, (for 2019) the only weak point being the lack of physical space, for which indicator we have the score of 3. The statistics for 2020 award us the score of 98% - a raise due to the abolition of library overdue fees, and a free membership for residents. 'BiblioQUALITÉ' received a broad media coverage in October 2022, during Public Libraries Week, and the Town of Montreal West was mentioned alongside the other cities and towns with attributed score of 5. For comparison, 1042 public libraries have taken part in the study, and the global

score is 66%.

As usual, the Library has managed to successfully engage the community in educational and recreational initiatives and remain true to its mission. We embrace every opportunity to bring to the library community a diverse and motivating ensemble of services and programs. The library staff is devoted to making the Montreal West Children's Library a privileged place for the young from the neighbouring communities and from Elizabeth Ballantyne School.

The report provides details on statistics and description of achievements. The statistics cover the period April 25<sup>th</sup> 2022 - April 23<sup>rd</sup> 2022.

## The last four years in numbers (April 25 – April 23)

PARAMETERS	2022-23	2021-22	2020-21	2019-20
Active membership (Elizabeth Ballantyne community excluded)	<b>434</b>	<b>381</b>	<b>447</b>	<b>404</b>
New community member accounts created	<b>168</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>165</b>
Total loans <i>Community loans</i> <i>EB School loans</i>	<b>28 629</b> <i>23 478</i> <i>5151</i>	<b>26 372</b> <i>24 110</i> <i>2 262</i>	<b>20 143</b> <i>18 970</i> <i>1 173</i>	<b>35 510</b> <i>25 199</i> <i>10 311</i>
Average daily loans	<b>84</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>104</b>
e-book loans (Tumblebooks)	<b>219</b>	<b>942</b>	<b>256</b>	<i>NA</i>
Community visits	<b>8337</b>	<b>5 989</b>	<b>1 840</b>	<b>6 330</b>
Participants in activities	<b>1 857</b>	<b>802</b>	<b>1 356</b>	<b>764</b>
Book bags requests	<b>9</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>249</b>	<b>216</b>
Acquisitions	<b>1 410</b>	<b>1 359</b>	<b>1 447</b>	<b>1 288</b>
Items weeded	<b>1 097</b>	<b>2 352</b>	<b>1 117</b>	<b>1 035</b>
Reference questions (Including EBS teachers requests)	<b>531</b>	<b>448</b>	<i>NA</i>	<i>NA</i>

## Collection Development

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Collection development is ongoing through the year, as per the Collection Development Policy of the library.

Our Library strives for diversification of its services, anticipating the needs of the patrons, satisfying their needs all by following current trends in library services. Thus, we introduced a new type of collection – Board Games. The launch of the collection on February 1<sup>st</sup> was done with 30 games, all of them donated. We receive board games from the community on regular basis and the collection is constantly growing.

More costumes have been added to the Costume Collection (started in 2022) which is seeing an unprecedented success. No costumes have been purchased yet, all the items are donations, which is a perfect example of strengthening the ties in the community and teaching children about the importance of reuse and sharing. The collection currently counts 56 costumes, and more are about to be added to it.

An application was submitted to the *Ministère de la culture et des communications*, for the Collection Development Grant administered by the Ministry on annual basis. This application was done in partnership with the Montreal West Public Library and the assistance of the Town of Montreal West. The Library received, in 2022, a grant of \$12 450 toward collection development expenses. In April 2023, the new Grant application was built and submitted.



## Activities, Programs and Initiatives

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All through the year, we have maintained a stimulating array of services, programs and activities to educate and entertain the young. Our primary goal is to make sure every child receives a positive experience with the library not only by borrowing books, but by actively participating in our activities and programs.

### **Comic Books Month Quiz**

Comic Books are celebrated in May. An online quiz was created with questions on popular English and French comic books. This amusing activity was a great opportunity to get familiar with some characters or titles, and re-examine the knowledge on others. Three of the participants with the highest score on their answers received comic books as a participation award.

## **Monique Polak – Author reading**

The author reading was organized in conjunction with the Public Library. The activity was aimed at participants of all ages. Monique Polak – a celebrated Montreal author – presented and read from her latest picture book ‘The Brass Charm’.

## **StoryWalk®**

Our StoryWalks have become a regular anticipated event. Three StoryWalks were presented last year: ‘Mystere du printemps’ by Rhéa Dufresne and Philippe Béha– in the Spring, ‘Terrible’ by Elise Gravel (bilingual) in the Summer – as part of the Summer Reading Program, and provided by TD Summer Reading Club, and ‘Squiggle’ by Carole Lexa Shaefer in the Fall. We always offer an activity related to the StoryWalk® in order to engage the young and spark their interest even more. For ‘Mystère du printemps’ children were invited to spot and count the animals in the story; for ‘Terrible’, they were encouraged to invent and draw their own monster; for ‘Squiggle’ children could make a squiggle out a thread of yarn, like in the story itself. Participants enter a draw, and one child wins a copy of the book presented as a StoryWalk®.



## **Bill Foster Writing Contest**

From February to April 2022, children were invited to submit a text on a subject of their choice, in English or French, illustrated or not, as part of the Bill Foster Writing Contest. We received 14 entries. An independent jury composed of Sarah Brunel, Linda Wishart and Isabella Byrne selected the three

winning texts. The announcement of the winners took place at an Awards Ceremony, on May 28th, in Strathearn Park (*see above photo*). The winners were: 1<sup>st</sup> place- Clara Bergeron, 2<sup>nd</sup> place – Mia Secko, 3<sup>rd</sup> place – Clara Chapman. The writing Contest was back in February 2023, entry submissions just closed on April 23<sup>rd</sup>.

## **Creative Writing Workshops**

This year, we decided to offer two workshops on creative writing in preparation of the Writing Contest. Author Monique Polak visited the Library for an inspiring time with those who intended to learn about the creative writing process, how to start writing by shaping ideas and events into captivating stories. Monique Polak made a detailed rendition of both workshops in her blog. You can read them here, dated January 28<sup>th</sup>, and March 12<sup>th</sup>:

<https://www.moniquepolak.com/monique-s-blog>



## **Pop-up Libraries**

For a fourth consecutive year, from June 26<sup>th</sup> to August 30<sup>th</sup>, in collaboration with the Montreal West Public Library, we set up two Pop-up Libraries: a collection of children's books was available to borrow from the Public Library, and a selection of books for adults were made available at the Children's Library.

## **Land Art**

In September 2022, we decided to take the children on a creative ride, experimenting with material one can find in nature: rocks, sticks, feathers, flowers etc. Everyone created beautiful ephemeral pieces of art in Strathearn park.



## **Lego Challenge**

A classic toy, Lego invariably attracts the attention and interest of children. In addition to our Lego Club, we organised a Lego Challenge competition on November 5<sup>th</sup>. Children were presented with different challenges involving the use of Lego bricks and their imagination.



## **Halloween celebration**

For Halloween, the traditional 'Spooky Tales' returned after a pause of two years. Story-time and pumpkin decoration were part of this much cherished event at the Library.



### **La lecture en cadeau**

It has become a tradition to take part in this annual initiative of the *Association pour l'Alphabétisation*. We organise the collection of new books donated by visitors to the Library. These books are distributed, by the Association, to children from disadvantaged milieux in the following year. The Montreal West community is taking this initiative to heart, and the donations were most generous.

### **Gift-wrapping workshop**

Simple as it may seem, gift-wrapping could be quite a challenge to children. We figured it will be useful to teach them how to wrap gifts of different shapes. The Holiday season is the perfect time for an activity of this sort. Children tried their hands at some basic techniques, and were very happy to learn how to present gifts in a beautiful manner.



### **Holiday Storytime with visit from Santa**

Santa Claus visited the Library in December, as part of the Holiday Tales activity. Picture books were read on the three holidays of the season, when Santa made an appearance to the children's delight, and gave out little surprise gifts. The activity at the library finished with a craft of a penguin sock puppet.



### **Holiday Raffle Game**

The holiday raffle consisted of an educational game, where children were asked to first find three items, read the call number of three books on them, use the catalogue to locate the books on the shelves, and fill out a paper in order to enter a draw. This game attracted a big name of participants, and we had three lucky winners of popular books.

### **Yayoi Kusama - Mixed Media Art workshop**

'Peek-a-Boo' Activity Center conducted this mixed media workshop featuring an art piece by artist Yayoi Kusama.

### **Billet d'Or**

The *Association des bibliothèques publiques du Québec* introduced this program from February 12th to February 25<sup>th</sup>. 14 golden tickets have been sent to every Quebec library, and one golden ticket was hidden per day in the library. Visitors who found them could enter a draw for a big number of prizes. The initiative aimed at raising awareness for libraries and increasing library visits across the province.





### **Lego Robotics**

This activity allowed children to build a robot out of Lego bricks, and make it move using a coding system. 'Peek-a-Boo' Activity Center offered the participants an opportunity to experiment with coding and mechanics.

### **March Break**

In March 2023, due to renovations in the school, the building was off limits, and we had to close the Library. Nevertheless, we offered daily challenges through our mailing list. Different in nature, the activities were entertaining and had an educational component.

### **Board Game Mania**

Playing board games is considered a literacy exercise, as well as a perfect social activity. With a collection of Board Games available, an activity of this sort provides a showcase of what the Library can offer for loan. The first edition of this program took place on April 15<sup>th</sup>, with a good turnout. New games will be presented at each Board Game Mania event that will consequently be added to the collection.

### **Programs**

In addition to the events and activities, we have maintained the following programs:



- Take and Make (monthly activity): parents collect craft supplies from the Library; children create a project at home, following the instructions' video prepared in advance.
- Cubetto – initiation to programming for very young children (monthly activity)
- Parent-Child Book Club (monthly activity)
- Mother Goose and Tales for Tots (weekly activity)
- Scratch programming (weekly activity)
- Lego Club (weekly activity)

*Above: the book club group; below: a session of Scratch programming*

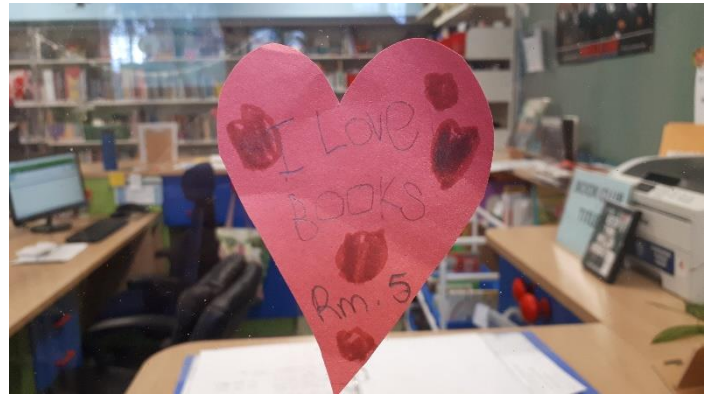


Services to daycares are ongoing. 'Little Red Playhouse' and 'Curzon' daycares benefit from story-times at the Library on weekly basis.

Here are pictures of the collaborative initiatives we had organised at the Library. They adorn the Library and make it a bright, happy place. Every visitor has had a chance to take part in these, during regular visits:



***Paper Flower Garden (April-June 2022)***



***What I like about the library (February 2023)***

## Summer Reading Program 2022

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In 2022, we offered an engaging, stimulating and enjoyable Summer program, under the auspices of the TD Summer Reading Club. The theme – *'Once Upon a Time'* – allowed the staff to use their creativity, implement different activities and reading challenges allowing children to maintain their reading habits during the summer months, prevent the 'summer slide', and create a long-lasting relationship with the Library.

At the Library, the staff had outdone themselves to decorate and create a welcoming environment during the summer. The program was launched by a party with the reading of the newly installed StoryWalk of the book *'Terrible'* by Elise Gravel, and games. Children were able to register and participate in different reading challenges, outdoor and online activities. We counted **101 registrations** (compared to 91 in 2021), and **1258 books read** (compared to 892 books in 2021). A total of **284** children participated in the activities organised (compared to 2021 - 163 children participated in the activities).

The popular 'Take and Make' craft activity was offered on a bi-monthly basis. We maintained 'Mother Goose in the Park'. By-weekly quizzes were sent by e-mail to the membership with questions on the theme of the week. The Friday Book Talks in the Park were attended by those willing to share their reading experiences. The Closing Party was a huge success with **28 children** participating in an array of games. The readers with highest scores in their summer reading passports were rewarded, as well as those who have participated in the other reading challenges. The reader with the highest number of books read was Jaden Riven, 2<sup>nd</sup> place for Diya Krishna, and 3<sup>rd</sup> place for Felix Kuchinsky.

During the summer of 2022, we were glad to renew our collaboration with the Town of Montreal West Summer Camps. Seven different groups of campers enjoyed story-times as part of their daily routine, for a total of over 600 campers benefiting from our story-time hour.



## Volunteering at the Library

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Volunteering is a vital part of our operations. We are happy to be assisted on regular basis by two volunteers who form the bindery team – Véronique Belzil-Boucher and Janet King. They are in charge of covering new books and repairing damaged books. A total of 799 books have been covered (133 volunteering hours), and 39 books have been repaired. Our accounting is expertly done by Sow Fun Lee, for a total of 40 hours per year. Many students contact us with requests to complete volunteering hours as part of their mandatory community service. They assist us with various tasks. We counted on the help of a number of volunteers for the 'Lunch with the Library' at Art Etc Craft Fair. The total number of volunteering hours for the last year is **885**.

## Fundraising and Donations

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We received a grant from Canada Summer Jobs toward one position for the Summer of 2022 and received \$3 725 toward salary expenses for the Summer Reading Program Assistant.

Art Etc. – The Montreal West Craft Fair - was back in 2022. Our Library is given the opportunity to provide the lunch service at one of the days of this event, and last year we were once again invited to take part in this initiative. The Library's Board members took active part in organising the event which involves

offering a lunch menu, a raffle, toy and craft corners for the children, lunch service to the crafters at the Fair. We are happy to report that over \$1 500 was raised for the Library due to the effort and excellent work done by the Board and the many volunteers who joined to help out. Special thanks to Michelle Wyse for the ideas, organisation, and implementation of the 'Lunch with the Library'.



*Board members and volunteers working at the Art Etc 'Lunch with the Library'*

An application has been submitted in February 2023 for the 'Community Services Recovery Fund' grant. This grant is aimed at organisations who have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, and focuses on adaptation and recovery of their services. We have applied with the project entitled 'Développement de la culture informatique'.

The Community Nights organised by the Town of Montreal West have returned, so did our participation at those events. The Library's stand features publicity for events, books, games for the passers-by, as well as sale of Freezes which goes toward our fundraising income. We took part in St. Jean-Baptiste day and Canada Day as well, with a beautiful float led by loyal members of the Library.



*The Library float for the Canada Day Parade, accompanied by parents and children – members of the Library*

Two book sales have been organised – in May and in September 2022, and raised \$574.05.

Our Library has already an account with 'Mabel's Labels' and we receive 20% of the purchases parents make on the website.

We have received a donation from Joan Foster in the amount of \$1000; a donation from The Golf Tournament: \$1500; Hay Foundation - \$1500. Susan Upham - \$ 570 towards an activity with related to the Bill Foster Writing Contest.

## Elizabeth Ballantyne School

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The ongoing partnership with the school is flourishing. As of September 2022, class visits have resumed, and book borrowing during class visits has also been reinstated. The teaching personnel uses the Library as their resource center, and students and their families visit after the classes are over for the day.

Elizabeth Ballantyne students are taking part in our after-class activities.

We have announced the 'Battle of the Books' reading challenge in the beginning of the school year, and have been reading books with the three grade 6 classes in preparation of this event which is to take part in May 2023.

On February 17<sup>th</sup>, Elizabeth Ballantyne students participated all in the traditional annual Skate-a-Thon – a fundraising event for collecting funds for the purchase of books for the Library. We are happy to report that the children managed to raise over \$1 880 towards new additions to the book collection. Our most sincere gratitude for the involvement and work of the EBS teachers and parent volunteers who made this event possible.



*Cookies and hot chocolate provided by the Library to students at their way back from the skating rink, after participating in the Skate-a-Thon*

## **Publicity and Outreach**

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Carlton University are conducting a study on non-profit organisations, their project being entitled 'Charity Insights Canada Project'. Our Library has been randomly selected to participate in the study. It consists of answering two or three questions on a weekly basis in the course of the year: 2022 - 2023. We will receive an overview of the trends in the charitable sector in Canada, published as part of their report.

We have prepared the panels for two StoryWalks at the demand of the daycare 'Les Colibris', who have installed them near the daycare, situated in Saint-Laurent.

Our Instagram account is kept up to date with information on upcoming events, reading suggestions, and spotlight on past activities. It is followed (as of April 23<sup>rd</sup>) by 175 individuals and institutions.