Bibliothèque des jeunes de Montréal-Ouest
Children's Library

Annual Report

2024 –2025

Overview

The year 2024 has proven to be excellent in terms of library services provision for the communities served by the Montreal West Children's Library. Our team is devoted to implementing projects, activities, programmes in order to maintain a high level of operations which engage the young patrons of the Library and educate them as faithful members of the community, developing their love for reading, learning, exploring and experimenting, building life-long habits for future adult readers.

Statistics show that the level of operations as well as services is maintained and is on the rise. The Library is as ever committed to enriching the lives of the young patrons, committed to ensuring a safe and welcoming place as an important point of service in Montreal West.

We are proud to report the 'BiblioQUALITÉ' score for the past year. The *Association des bibliothèques publiques du Québec* compiled, for a third year in a row, statistics from Quebec public libraries. Five indicators are used to measure different aspects of library operations: acquisition expenses, opening hours, human resources, space, sitting capacity. Together with the Montreal West Public Library, we submitted consolidated data on the library services offered in Montreal West, and we are proud to report that Montreal West obtained the highest score of 5, or 98%, - based on 2023 data. The weak point is the lack of physical space, for which indicator we have the score of 2. For comparison, 1042 public libraries have taken part in the study, and the average score of libraries deserving towns with population of less than 10 000 residents is 69%.

The partnership with the English Montreal School Board is maintained. Services offered to the Elizabeth Ballantyne Elementary school are a vital and important part of our operations.

Thanks to the generous donation from the Vohra-Miller Foundation we were able to replace the computer park with new computers and up-to-date software.

This annual report provides details on statistics and description of activities. The statistics cover the period **April 20th 2024 - April 20 th 2025**.

The last four years in numbers

PARAMETERS	2024-25	2023-24	2022-21	2021-20
Active membership - community Elizabeth Ballantyne	**402** 214	**398** *NA*	**434** *NA*	**381** *NA*
New community member accounts created	**81**	**98**	**168**	**137**
Total loans *Community loans* *EB School loans*	***22 422*** *16 756* *5 666*	**22 602** *16 986* *5 616*	**28 629** *23 478* *5 151*	**26 372** *24 110* *2 262*
Average daily loans	**66**	**69**	**84**	**78**
e-book loans (Tumblebooks)	**68**	**145**	**219**	**942**
Community visits	**8 144**	**7 026**	**8 337**	**5 989**
Participants in activities	**2 641**	**1 912**	**1 857**	**802**
Book bags requests	**NA**	**59**	**9**	**67**
Acquisitions	**989**	**1 248**	**1 410**	**1 359**
Items weeded	**1 314**	**1 187**	**1 097**	**2 352**
Reference questions (Including EBS teachers requests)	**624**	**578**	**531**	**448**

Collection Development

Collection development is ongoing through the year, as per the Collection Development Policy of the library. We are maintaining a diversified library collection, comprising of printed books, e-books, audio books in DVD and MP3 formats, DVDs, Blu-rays, costumes, board games, puzzles. The collection has close to 26 000 items.

The Collection Development Grant we receive from the *Ministère de la culture et des communications,* allows us to maintain an up-to-date collection. The application for the grant is done in partnership with the Montreal West Public Library and the assistance of the Town of Montreal West. The portion our Library received, in 2023, is $23 250 toward collection development expenses for 2023 and 2024.

Activities, Programs and Initiatives

We offer engaging and educational array of services, programs and activities aimed at youth 0 to 14 years of age. Our primary goal is to make sure every child enjoys a positive experience with the library not only by borrowing books, but by actively participating in the activities and programs.

StoryWalk®

Our StoryWalks have become regular and well anticipated installations. As usual, three StoryWalk® were presented last year. In the Spring of 2024, the book **'Mystère du printemps'** by **Rhéa Dufresne** and **Philippe Beha** was displayed. The StoryWalk® in the Summer of 2024 was once again provided by the TD Summer Reading Club. It featured the story **'The Darkest Dark'** by **Chris Hadfield** – bilingual panels. In September-October, we installed the story **'NaMOOste'** by local author **Marlee Kostiner** (in English).

Canadian Children's Book Week 2024

Canadian Children's Book Week is the most important event in the children books' world in Canada. It celebrates Canadian creators of books for the young readers. This pan-Canadian initiative brings authors and illustrators to libraries and schools, and allows for inspiring meetings

and workshops. In 2024, we hosted author **Katherine Battersby** who presented her books, and with the participants' help, created new illustrations in her own distinctive style.

Above: Katherine Battersby reads from her book "Cranky Chicken"

'Festilou' Storytelling Festival 2024

Storytellers from the Montreal Storytellers Guild visited our Library as part of the French 'Fesilou' storytelling festival in May 2024. The animators told captivating stories and transported children to different places through folklore interpretations.

Above: A member of the Montreal Storytellers Guild telling a story

Bill Foster Writing Contest 2024

The popularity of the Bill Foster writing Contest translates in the increased interest and participation. In 2024, we introduced a new feature – the contest had a theme, and children were invited to submit texts related to "Imagination". The conditions are broad – the texts can be in English or French, illustrated or not, handwritten or typed, in a literary form of the children's choice. We received 16 entries. An independent jury composed of author Dara Murphy, Elizabeth Ballantyne support teacher Kate Marian, and author Marlee Kostiner selected the three winning texts in two categories: 6 – 8 years old, and 9 – 13 years old. The announcement of the winners took place at an Awards Ceremony in June. Joan Foster, benefactor of the Contest, presented the prizes to the winners. The winners were:

Age 6-8
1st place: *The Sickness of Magic*, by Genevieve Marchand-Kielman
2nd place: *The Fruit Bowl*, by Evelyn Lloyd
3rd place: *Joel and the Bat*, by Ocean Petersen-Kramer

Age 9-12
1st place: *The Crow Lord*, by Henry Lobach
2nd place: *The Diary of a Villain*, by Ronan Hunt-Douglas
3rd place: *My Tooth Fairy*, by Madeleine Paterson

The stories submitted were all compiled in a printed publication which is part of the Library's reference collection.

The Writing Contest was back in February 2025, entry submissions just closed on April 17th.

Above: Joan Foster, Dara Murphy and Ekaterina Valkova-Damova with participants in the Contest

Yoga with Marlee Kostiner

The installation of the Autumn StoryWalk® was enhanced by a Yoga session with the author of the book – "NaMOOste". Marlee Kostiner read her book, and invited participants to make poses like the ones described in her book.

Above: Yoga in the Park with local author Marlee Kostiner and her book "NaMOOste"

Rock Snake

This simple idea proved to be an excellent reading advisory technique – from children to children. Colored rocks were made available to anyone visiting the Library, and children would write the title of their favourite book, or of a book they strongly recommend. These suggestions were used in Instagram posts with the wish children would get inspired and borrow the books.

Halloween celebration

For Halloween, the traditional 'Spooky Tales' attracted a big crowd of 30 participants – all wearing costumes and ready for fun. Story-time and pumpkin decoration were part of this much cherished event at the Library.

Mosaic workshop

The mosaic techniques is known to develop fine motor skills in children. By arranging small colorful pieces of glass and gluing them together on a glass surface, children produced beautiful designs, and the item can be used as a decoration at home. This workshop had a big turnout and was greatly enjoyed.

Right: Geneviève Marchand-Keilman and her friend demonstrate the glass jars they have decorated

Cookie decorating workshop

The end-of-year holidays can be made cozier with a calming activity of cookie decoration. Children learned how to make the sugar icing, and then decorate the cookies with color edible elements.

Drawing Contests – free movie tickets

The Library has developed a partnership with 'Mingotwo Public Relations' who are offering free tickets for children movies' premières. We take this opportunity to create engaging events to make children win the tickets they receive. For every movie offering, we organise a drawing contest, coloring contest or other. The movies 'Harold and the Purple Crayon', 'Spellbound' and 'Paddington in Peru' were featured in these events.

Elf on the Shelf

In December, we invited children to look for our own Elf who was hiding and changing places every day of the week. For 10 days, a total of 37 entries were made in the jar for the draw of eight books. The Elf on the Shelf was an entertaining activity that allowed children to explore every possible corner of our Library.

Holidays Tales

The traditional "Holiday Tales" was organised again, in order to observe the holidays at the end of the year, and educate children on the different celebrations. Children listened to tales on Hanukkah, Christmas and Kwanzaa. Participants then crafted a seasonal craft project.

Lego Challenge

The popularity of building with Lego does not subside. The Lego Challenge initiative is always well attended, and creates genuine interest and excitement. In January of 2025 we once again invited children to respond to different building challenges and / or compete with the creations they invented.

Above: Samuel August shows his Lego creation

Lunar New Year art

According to the Lunar calendar, 2025 is the year of the Snake. 'Peek-a-Boo' activity center taught the participants of the multi-media art workshop how to make a snake project with many various art supplies.

March Break

In March 2025, we offered a week of educational and entertaining activities for the Spring Break. The children could attend movie screening, take part in an Ozobot coding class, try their hand at cooking during a cooking class, and experiment with a science project.

Cooking Class and
Ozobot coding activity

Taylor Swift Friendship bracelets

Taylor Swift is a cultural phenomenon, and her popularity among even young fans gave us the idea to organise a workshop for making friendship bracelets – as those fans exchange during Taylor Swift concerts. We were not completely surprised to see a good turnout of real 'Swifties' who made a few bracelets each, to be able to trade with their friends.

Yarn Wrapped Egg

A colorful decoration for the first days of Spring always brings joy. A decoration using an egg shell and wrapping it in colorful yarn makes a beautiful item to put up at home. Children would use their patience and fine motor skills to master the art of wrapping the egg.

Paper Bead Jewelry

It is possible to make jewelry using unusual everyday material. Paper can be rolled up to produce beads and then string them to make necklaces or bracelets. Participants had a lot of fun crafting and exchanging in a friendly social environment.

Programs

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

Story-time and Craft (NEW) :	bi-monthly activity, on the week-ends
Craft to Take :	monthly craft activity, 15 craft kits distributed per month.
Child-Parent Book Club :	monthly meetings (Sept. to May) on the last Friday of the month.
Family Movies :	monthly screening of a movie for the whole family.
Board Game Mania:	a different game is being played at the monthly meeting.
Cubetto:	monthly coding activity for 3-5 year olds.
Mother Goose and Tales for Tots:	weekly program running all year round
Lego Club:	weekly program running for five sessions per year.
Scratch Club:	weekly coding program running for five sessions per year.

Chess Club : weekly program running for five sessions per year.
Ozobot programming : weekly coding program, running for five session per year.

Mother Goose and Tales for tots

Parent and Child Book Club meeting

We provide services to two daycares: 'Little Red Playhouse' visits the Library for their weekly story-time all year round; 'Curzon' daycare benefit from story-times at the Library for ten weeks in September through November.

Summer Reading Program 2024

The theme of the TD Summer Reading Club in 2024 was '*Space'.* The implementation of the summer program ran smoothly, with a total of **71 registrations**. Many challenges were available in the Library to motivate the visitors to learn about space and everything related to it. The program opened with a party - a concert with the children's musician Shawny.
Total number of participants in all activities was 679 children.

The activities organised as part of the Summer Reading Program were held in Strathearn park, provided the weather was appropriate, or in the Library. The list of those activities is as follows:

Craft om the Park: twice a month, original projects related to 'Space'.
Mother Goose in the Park: weekly story-time, songs, and nursery rhymes for the very young ones
Book talks: bi-weekly meeting for presenting books read, and exchanging ideas for reading.
'The Planets' by Holst: an innovative concept of listening to one classical piece (one planet) per week, and accomplishing a project inspired by the theme of the planet
Weekly Trivia Quizzes: online quizzes sent via the distribution list

Our partnership with the Montreal West summer camps was once again maintained. Campers were enjoying story-time three times a week.

‘Little Red Playhouse’ daycare had a weekly story-time as well.

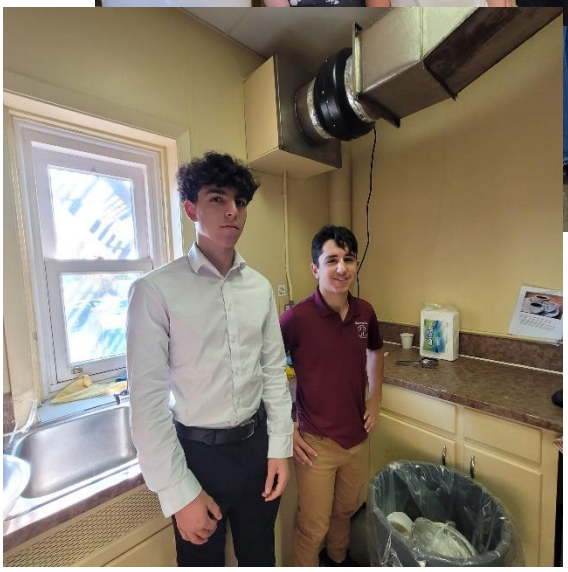
At the end of the Summer Reading Program, we organised a closing party with amusing craft, awards ceremony for the best readers and participants in the challenges at the Library, and a tasty ‘space food’ snack.

Above: Story-time for Montreal West Summer Camps

Above: Jet-packs made during Craft in the Park

Volunteering at the Library

Volunteering is a vital part of our operations. We were saddened to lose a cherished volunteer and Board member who was giving her time and heart to the Children's Library – Janet King. She passed away in 2024. The bindery team is now reduced to only Véronique Belzil-Boucher who is covering new books in herr workshop at home. A total of 108 books have been covered. Our accounting is expertly done by Sow Fun Lee, for a total of over 50 hours per year. Many students 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 **230.**



Volunteers at the Art. Etc. 'Lunch With the Library'

Fundraising and Donations

We received a grant from Canada Summer Jobs toward one position for the Summer of 2024 and received $4 919 toward salary expenses for the Summer Reading Program Assistant.

Our Library is given the opportunity to provide the lunch service at one of the days of the Craft Fair – Art Etc, and in 2024 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 $2 000 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', and to the many merchants who provide the food and beverages for our fundraiser.

A Grant of $ 5000 has been given to the Library by the Chamandy Foundation.
Two Birthday parties took place in our Library, which raised $500.
We have received a donation from Joan Foster: $1 000; Hay Foundation - $2000.
Two book sales have been organised – in May and in September 2024, and raised $320.
Our Library has an account with 'Mabel's Labels' and we receive 20% of the purchases parents make on the website.

Elizabeth Ballantyne School

Our ongoing partnership with the Elizabeth Ballantyne school is as active as usual. The class visits are integral part of the students' curriculum. The thirty-minute library period comprises of an English and

French reading, selection of books to borrow, development of the students' library culture. The teaching personnel uses the Library as their resource center. Students and their families visit after the classes are over for the day. Elizabeth Ballantyne students are taking part in our after-class activities.

Students from grade 5 met with author Heather Camlot, as part of Canadian Children's Book Week in 2024.

Students from cycles 2 and 3 listened to a group of four storytellers from the Montreal Storytellers Guild as part of the 'Festilou' storytelling festival.

In May 2024, we held a Trivia quiz for grade 5 and 6 classes. All through the year, we had been reading chapter books, and the classes competed by answering questions on the books. The classes who answered the most questions and scored best, were awarded with a pizza party.