Bibliothèque des jeunes de
Montréal-Ouest
Children's Library

Annual Report

2025 –2026

Overview of the past year

It is impossible to think of the Town of Montreal West without thinking of The Montreal West Children's Library. We are essential community players, proudly servicing the communities of the Town and neighbouring boroughs, as well as the students of Elizabeth Ballantyne Elementary school.

Every year, we develop and implement initiatives and programs in the aim of offering excellent services and resources to our loyal clientele, and attracting new patrons. We anticipate the needs of the community and work in line with our mission to accomplish the goals outlined for the year. Statistics show that the level of operations as well as services is maintained and is on the rise. We have introduced new services and collections, and continue to enrich children's lives by creating a life-long love for learning and growth.

A quantified measure of our excellency can be seen reflected in the score of the 'BiblioQUALITÉ' study. The *Association des bibliothèques publiques du Québec* collects 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. Both our Library and the Montreal West Public Library submit consolidated data on the library services offered in Montreal West. We are proud to report that Montreal West obtained the highest score of 5, or 100%, - based on 2024 data. 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 74%.

But most of all, we measure success with the sparkle in kids' eyes, the fact that they come and return to the Library feeling welcome, safe and surrounded by attention. This is due to the professional library personnel, the dedication with which the Library team approaches every task and makes the Montreal West Children's Library a beloved place for the young children who enter the doors of our cozy but vibrant and enchanting space.

We never miss an opportunity to partner with other community organisations in order to bring an inclusive service to the young patrons and their families.

This annual report provides details on statistics and description of activities. The statistics cover the period April 20th 2025 - April 20 th 2026.

The last four years in numbers
(April 20, 2025 – April 20, 2026)

PARAMETERS	2025-26	2024-25	2023-24	2022-23
Active membership + (Elizabeth Ballantyne community)	**409** **(205)**	**402** **(214)**	**398** **(NA)**	**434** **(NA)**
New community member accounts created	**100**	**81**	**98**	**168**
Total loans *Community loans* *EB School loans*	**21 815** *16 303* *5 512*	**22 422** *16 756* *5 666*	**22 602** *16 986* *5 616*	**28 629** *23 478* *5 151*
Average daily loans	**64**	**66**	**69**	**84**
e-book loans (Tumblebooks)	**133**	**68**	**145**	**219**
Community visits	**7 895**	**8 144**	**7 026**	**8 337**
Participants in activities	**3 054**	**2 641**	**1 912**	**1 857**
Book bags requests	**0**	**NA**	**59**	**9**
Acquisitions	**783**	**989**	**1 248**	**1 410**
Items weeded	**1 099**	**1 314**	**1 187**	**1 097**
Reference questions (Including EBS teachers requests)	**601**	**624**	**578**	**531**

Collection Development

Collection development is one of the most important operations, described and explained in the Collection Development Policy, which has been last updated in 2024. The acquisition of new materials – books, audio-visual items, costumes, puzzles, board games – is ongoing through the year and is being managed by the calendar outlined in the above-mentioned policy. Our collection consists of a total of more than 25 000 items. Costumes, puzzles and board games have been exclusively added thanks to generous donations. They are second-hand items, but we are proud to be upcycling them.

Our aim is to diversify our collection and offer a vast array of items for patrons to borrow. We anticipate the needs of our communities and we try to include at least one new feature every year. When an idea or a suggestion is expressed, we respond to it by evaluating and potentially implementing it. In 2025, the new collection of 'Story Kits' was introduced, starting with 10 'Story Kits'. Every 'Story Kit' contains books, stuffies, and educational and/or amusing activities.

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 2025, is $7 900 toward collection development expenses for 2025.

Activities, Programs and Initiatives

The Montreal West Children's Library strives to ensure that every member is positively impacted by an experience of borrowing books, actively participating in our activities, programs and initiatives. All through the year, we have offered stimulating educational and entertaining services and activities for the young patrons and their families.

StoryWalk®

Our StoryWalks® have become regular and anticipated installations. Three StoryWalk® were presented last year. In the Spring of 2025, we displayed the book **'Printemps'** by **Marianne Dubuc**. The StoryWalk® in the Summer of 2025 was once again provided free of charge by TD Summer Reading Club. It featured the story **'Treasure'** by **Mireille Messier** – in English and French. In September-October, we installed the story **'The Leaf Thief'** by Alice Hemmin and Nicola Slater (in English).

Canadian Children's Book Week 2025

The Canadian Children's Book Week is a celebration of Canadian creators of books for the young readers. In 2025, we had the joy of welcoming author-illustrator Carmen Mok who animated an entertaining event of exploring her writer's world. Children listened to her stories and tried some illustration techniques.

Author Carmen Mok (left) with participants in her activity

Bill Foster Writing Contest 2025

From February to April 2025, children were invited to submit texts on a subject of "Travel", in English or French, illustrated or not, as part of the Bill Foster Writing Contest. We received 12 entries. An independent jury composed of local author Dara Murphy, teacher-assistant Kate Marien and librarian Dolly Tawil selected the three winning texts in two categories: 6 – 9 years old, and 10 – 13 years old. The announcement of the winners took place at an Awards Ceremony in June. Joan Foster presented the prizes to the winners and honorary mention. The winners were:

Category 6-9 years:
1st place: Genevieve Marchand Keilman "Back in Time"
2nd place : Mireille Mangerel Oligny "Les Toutous Disparus"
3rd place: Evelyn Lloyd "Escaping the Forest"
Honorable Mention Sophia Risacher "Little Beaver, Turtle & Frog"

Category 10-13 years:
1st place: Simon Kuchinsky "Damon and the Kattos"
2nd place: Ella Bounic "A Road Trip Gone Wrong"
3rd place: Felix Kuchinsky "Saving Santa"

For a first time, we collected the texts and printed them in a book. One copy is catalogued and is available to be borrowed; the other was donated to Joan Foster. The Writing Contest was back in February 2026, entry submissions just closed on April 2nd.

From left to right: Dara Murphy, Geneviève Marchand-Keilman, and Joan Foster

Moomin – Stop-motion animation

The year 2025 marked the 80th anniversary of the publication of the first book in the series 'Moomin' by beloved author Tove Janssen. For that occasion, we organised a stop-motion animation activity, where children handled small paper Moomin characters and produced short movies, using an application on their phones.

Chess Tournament

The Chess tournament gathered a good crowd of youngsters who competed against each other and demonstrated strategy, rapidity and competitiveness all by respecting one another. The chess tournaments we organise are well attended and anticipated. In 2025, the winner was Cedrick Weymouth.

Books and Music

Reading books often times evokes emotions. Starting from this point, we developed a unique project, whereby children who play an instrument would compose a musical piece after reading a book. Children were given two months to read a story and then come up with a composition. In November 2025, at a special event, the musical compositions were performed in front of an audience. Author and musician Dara Murphy collaborated on this project and assisted with the realisation of this exiting initiative.

Dara Murphy with the participants in the Books and Music event, showing the books that had inspired them to compose

Halloween celebration

Maintaining the tradition, we offered 'Spooky Tales and Pumpkin decoration' activity which was attended by a big number of families. Children came dressed up in their Halloween costumes and after a spooky story-time, decorated small pumpkins offered by the Library, and took them away to decorate their homes.

Pretzel Wreath workshop

Crafting before the end-of-the-year holidays brings a lot of joy. In 2025, we instructed the young participants and the accompanying adults how to make wreaths out of pretzels, white chocolate and candy. The results were spectacular and delicious.

The pretzel wreath workshop participants and their creations

Holiday Tales

Traditionally, on occasion of the end-of the-year holidays, we gathered to read stories on Christmas, Hannukah, Kwanzaa, and then invited the kids to participate in a winter craft.

Elf on the Shelf

In December, children were encouraged to look for our own Elf who was hiding at different places in the Library every day. For 14 days, a total of **37 entries** were made for the draw of eight books. The Elf on the Shelf was an entertaining activity that allowed children to get familiar with various locations in the Library.

Lego Challenge

The annual Lego Challenge was designed to bring the children to explore space, geometry and construction. Plenty of challenges were introduced so children can unleash their creative imagination.
The 15 challenges were timed and the young participants could complete them within the allotted time frame.

Lego Challenge activity

Ozobot Programming

Ozobots are tiny, smart robots designed to teach coding and STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Math) skills to children aged 5 to 12 years old. Coding is executed by using drawing color codes with markers on paper. They are widely used in education for hands-on, interactive learning. Our activity attracted children who enjoyed mastering new skills.

Lunar New Year art

According to the Lunar calendar, 2026 is the year of the Horse. We collaborated with the 'Peek-a-Boo' activity center who animated a multi-media art workshop and took the participants on an exploration of different techniques for producing an art project.

Lunar New Year art

Author Meeting – Joanne Levy

In preparation for the Bill Foster Writing Contest, we organised the virtual meeting and presentation of Canadian author Joanne Levy. From her home in Toronto, she shared invaluable tips and techniques to help children structure their thoughts and ideas, and be ready to start writing. The workshop at the end allowed participants to develop a short text using a few prompts.

March Break

In March 2026, we offered a week of engaging and entertaining activities for the Spring Break. Children participated in a diamond painting class, Scrabble game gathering, paper mobile craft, basic hand-sewing workshop, and baking class.

Eleni and Isaak Marloh in baking class

Elisabeth Helfield after diamond painting craft

Dragon Egg Treasure Hunt

The Library received a precious donation of 25 paper eggs, masterfully crafted by volunteer Carling Cheng. This donation gave us the impetus to develop an amusing Dragon Egg Hunt. Children listed to stories about dragons and eggs, and then went around the Library to search and find the paper eggs hidden in different places. The hiding spots had to be guessed by answering riddles and/or clues, and aimed at educating the children about different library locations. Carling Cheng explained how the eggs were made, and then graciously allowed children to keep the eggs they have found.

Slime Workshop

Back by popular demand, the Slime workshop was once again well attended. Children learned how to make slime, color it, and keep it fresh for long-term use.

Video Games Workshop

"Explorations Learning" center led a Video Games Workshop and helped children as they developed their own simple video game. They created unique characters with superpowers and special abilities; crafted a special world for the game's setting. By the end of the workshop, children were able to play through their game. The games were uploaded, and were shared with the participants.

Video Games Workshop with 'Explorations Learning'

Programs

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

Take and Make :	monthly craft activity, free craft kits distributed for crafting at home
Child-Parent Book Club	monthly meetings (September to May)
Family Movies :	monthly screening of a movie for the whole family
Story-time and Craft:	bi-monthly story-time Sunday program
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
Manga Drawing (NEW):	weekly class introducing the basics of manga drawing
Dungeons & Dragons (NEW)	weekly gathering of D&D enthusiasts who build stories and fantastical worlds

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 2025

The theme of the TD Summer Reading Club in 2025 was '*Around the World'.* The library team showed, as usual, a great deal of creativity that transcribed in original activities, decorations and engaging challenges which aimed at enticing children to participate in the summer fun. **72 reading passports** have been created and maintained**. 1 120 participants** were counted to have taken part in the different activities and challenges organised by us.

The Launch party of the Summer Program featured a musical concert with the beloved children's musician **Shawny**. Among the popular songs he performs, he had also included songs on the theme of travel and countries of the world.

Here is the list of the activities held between June 25 and August 30th:

Mother Goose in the Park: weekly story-time, songs, and nursery rhymes for the very young ones
Pajama Story-time: weekly evening story-time
Movie Nights: weekly screening of movies
Craft in the Park: bi-weekly craft sessions in Strathearn Park
Book talks: bi-weekly meeting for presenting books read, and exchanging ideas for reading.
Trivia Quizzes: weekly online quizzes sent via the distribution list
Cubetto programming: bi-monthly introduction to programming classes for children 3 – 5 years of age

Our partnership with the Montreal West summer camps was once again maintained. Some groups of campers were visiting the library for story-time; for others, a member of our staff was reading stories in the parks where the campers were organised for the activities. A total of **620 children** have been reached out with the enthralling stories and lively animation.

'Little Red Playhouse' daycare continued their visits thought the summer, and the Library invariably was prepared with a selection of age and level adapted stories for their groups.

A very exciting event was organised as part of the Summer Reading Club – the visit and story-time with Canadian-Irish author **Nadine Hughes-Campbell**. She has created a series of award-winning picture books on the travels of a small boy in different cities of the world, which was a great representation of the summer theme. The children from 'Little Red Playhouse' were captivated by the stories and the reading.

At the end of the Summer Reading Program, we organised a ceremony where the best readers were announced and rewarded. The readers with the highest number of books read over the summer were:

Mila and Kiara Soueidan (52 books each)
Evelyn Lloyd (44 books)
Jaden Riven (40 books)

A spectacular Around the World Culinary Trip followed this ceremony. Families were able to 'travel" from one table to another tasting dishes specific for the different continents, play games originating on different continents, and collect stamps in their passports. Children with travel documents with all stamps were eligible for special prizes.

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.

As part of the Canadian Children's Book Week in May 2025, we organised the visit for grade 1 and 2 classes with author **Joanne Levy**. Her presentation was centered on the writing experience and how everyone can write with the help of tips and techniques.

In May 2025, we held a Trivia quiz for grade 6 classes. All through the year, we had been reading the book 'The Boy in the Striped Pajamas' by John Boyne, and the three grade 6 classes competed by answering questions on the book. The class who answered the most questions was awarded with a pizza party.

Amanda Cupido, an award-winning podcast producer, TEDx speaker, author and entrepreneur, author of the book *'Let's Talk Podcasting for Kids'* was our special guest in October 2025. She had a presentation in front of Grade 6 students which was a segue to a podcast the students did with her, and published it on Amanda's website. The event was attended by the Director of Communications and Marketing for the EMSB Michael Cohen.

Grade 6 with author Amanda Cupido

In December 2025, Grade 6 were put to the test to answer question on the book that was read to them during library visits – '*The Girl on the Lake'*. Both classes demonstrated excellent skills and behaviour, and ended with a tie; consequently, both classes were awarded doughnuts and hot chocolate treat.

Grade 6 enjoying a treat as an award for the literary Trivia Quiz excellent score

Heather Camlot, Canadian author of novels and non-fiction books, visited the Library to talk about her just-published book *'One Goal – How Soccer Can Help Save the Planet*'. Grade 4 students assisted to a lively presentation of the publication that introduced and solidified science concepts.

Author Heather Camlot presenting her book 'One Goal' to Grade 4

Volunteering at the Library

Volunteering is a vital part of our operations. We are happy to be assisted on regular basis by Véronique Belzil-Boucher who is in charge of covering new books. 108 books have been covered (36 volunteering hours). Our accounting is expertly done by Sow Fun Lee, for a total of over 50 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 **310.**

Fundraising and Donations

We received a grant from Canada Summer Jobs toward one position for the Summer of 2025 and received $4 950 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 2025 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. We are especially grateful 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.

Birthday parties at our Library are a special fundraising opportunity. Five Birthday parties took place in our Library, which raised $ 900.

We have received a donation from Joan Foster: $1 000;

Two used book sales have been organised – in May and in September 2025, and raised $290.

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

Publicity and Outreach

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 20th) by 324 individuals and institutions.