



Canadian Federation of Library Associations
Fédération canadienne des associations de bibliothèques



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Ex Libris Association (ELA) and the Canadian Federation of Library Associations/Fédération canadienne des associations de bibliothèques (CFLA-FCAB) are pleased to announce that the **West Vancouver Memorial Library is the W.K. Lamb Award for Innovative Services to Seniors recipient for 2021.**

ELA's W.K. Lamb Award Committee selected West Vancouver Memorial Library ([WVML](#)) for the outstanding work of its Assistive Services Department in serving a wide population of seniors through their expanding range of accessible collections, materials delivery to care homes programs and events tailored to their senior communities and for building partnerships with area libraries, seniors' homes and the Squamish Nation Elders' Centre. The Committee was especially impressed with the Dial-a-Story: Indigenous Storytelling by Squamish Elders, presented in partnership with the Squamish Nation Elders Centre. As outlined by Acting Customer & Community Experience Coordinator, Kendra Sakamoto: "This program provided a low-barrier opportunity for patrons to connect with others, and not only allowed isolated members of the community to listen to a story, but also gave Squamish Elders a chance to tell their stories and connect with their wider community." WVML's Assistive Services team makes weekly deliveries of library materials to seniors living in Care Homes or who are homebound. The library also maintains collections of DAISY players, Talking Books, and dementia-friendly pastime kits and simple music players, and offers extensive readers' advisory to its patrons to encourage learning and use of these materials.



Committee members were gratified to receive 13 excellent submissions from libraries across Canada although selecting a single award recipient was very difficult. Consequently the ELA Board agreed to recognize the outstanding work of several libraries with secondary honours and a special mention.

Brighton and Oakville public libraries shared the runner-up award for their novel seniors' programs. Brighton Public Library ([BPL](#)) became a "Dementia Friendly Library". Heather Ratz, CEO stated: "In collaboration with the Alzheimer Society of Hastings-Prince Edward, we began a journey to increase our awareness of dementia and implement strategies and services that we hoped would be valuable resources for those living with dementia, and their caregivers. We introduced a series of Cognitive



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Readers that include features such as large print, reading cues, single page printing and contrasting colours and layouts. Like other libraries before us, we created Cognitive Care Kits that we hope will connect people living with dementia to activities they enjoy, thus enriching their lives and inspiring engagement. We are thrilled to be part of a bigger initiative to help build a dementia friendly Brighton community.”

In its strategic plan, Oakville Public Library ([OPL](#)) committed to connecting seniors to technology, developing OPL Connection Kits. As CEO, Tara Wong explained: “The Kits provide a vital service for OPL’s most vulnerable and isolated residents. By including a bundle of tablets and/or Wi-Fi hotspots that can be borrowed from the library, the Kits provided accessible library resources, communication tools and internet access, and closed a key gap in the continually growing digital divide; especially access to technology for those most in need. For many, the library is their only outlet for learning and socialization and when libraries were closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many people were unable to regularly access the library collections and public spaces, and as such, were without the tools that they needed to support their social connections and lifelong learning. The Connection Kits are an innovative example of how OPL made an immediate and meaningful difference in people’s lives, ensuring that those in the community were able to stay connected and engaged.”

Toronto Public Library ([TPL](#)) was awarded an Honourable Mention for their outstanding work in supporting seniors during the pandemic and for sharing their experiences widely in mainstream media. North York Central Library Manager, Kim Huntley and Learning and Community Engagement Manager, Alex Carruthers summarized TPL’s efforts as follows: “TPL recognized the isolating effect the pandemic was having on our most vulnerable senior customers, many of whom are often socially isolated and have no access to the internet. Staff provided support to seniors by making thousands of wellness check telephone calls, calling to provide vaccination information, establishing a seniors’ tech help line for low-income seniors, and offering programs online to help seniors stay engaged. The heartwarming nature of these services attracted media attention and wonderful feedback from the seniors themselves, and was a truly rewarding experience for staff. As an added benefit, we gained valuable insight about how best to deliver services to this particular age group. It was our goal to do what public libraries do best -- connecting customers with trusted information sources while providing an exceptional customer experience -- even during a public health crisis.”

Named for Canada’s first National Librarian, the W.K. Lamb Award recognizes outstanding library service to seniors. Open to any library across Canada, whether private, public, governmental, special or postsecondary it is awarded biennially, when merited. The award is co-sponsored by Ex Libris Association (ELA) and the Canadian Federation of Library Associations/Fédération canadienne des associations de bibliothèques (CFLA-FCAB).

ELA and CFLA-FCAB congratulate the award recipients and thank all 13 libraries for their submissions and for providing such excellent programming for seniors. To learn more about the award, please visit: <https://www.exlibris.ca> <https://cfla-fcab.ca>

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