

Annual Report

2016/2017



Annual Report 2016/2017 Halifax Public Libraries



PAUL O'REG HALL



“Libraries are about freedom.
Freedom to read, freedom of ideas,
freedom of communication.”

— Neil Gaiman



Dr. Paul W. Bennett
Board Chair

Ideas to Action

Public libraries are evolving in new and exciting directions — and our system is leading the way. Our 2016 Let's Talk Libraries outreach venture exemplified true community engagement and provided fresh impetus as we developed a new Strategic Plan for 2017-2021. Our Library Board, working in collaboration with our Chief Librarian/CEO and senior staff, have translated that community input into a plan of action. We have also begun to live that plan, committed to reflecting our community in all its diversity, be a resource for everyone, and a launch point for both personal and community growth.

Over 2016-17, it has been an absolute pleasure to serve as Board Chair and to work with our Chief Librarian/CEO and fellow Board members in putting those ideas into action in our fourteen library branch communities. Strategic plans, like ours, are truly visionary because they encourage us to reach further, push boundaries, and venture into new territories. Our annual report not only showcases our strategic priorities, but provides glimpses of how they reverberate through our broader library community each and every day. Our Library Board members are here to represent you and are always open to discussing how we might serve you even better in the coming year.

Our Possible

Our Libraries are at the heart of our communities, and at Halifax Public Libraries, people are at the heart of all we do. Your input and aspirations define our goals. Your learning, success, and connection-making are the best parts of our Library story.

This year, you made 3,599,421 total in-person visits to the Library and 2,175,083 visits online. We visited you in your community through Pop-Up Libraries, our Mobile Food Market partnership, and at special events like the Teens Now Talk Expo. Our new Strategic Plan and accompanying new identity embody this special focus on flexibility and innovation. We want to meet you where you are — in all senses of the phrase.

Watching the life that unfolds at the Library is truly inspiring. 2016-17 saw a wave of new creative programs take the spotlight, tailored by you. A Seed Library sprouted at our Sackville Branch. “Adulting” programs helped youth and the young at heart learn the skills to tackle some of the trickier joys of adulthood. We sang along at full-house concerts and gathered to cheer on our Olympic and Paralympic athletes.

When we come together as a community, our shared vision for the Library is achievable in every moment. *Reflecting our community, we are a resource for everyone and a launch point for growth.* Thank you for helping us make this possible. I look forward to seeing what we create together in the years to come.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Åsa Kachan'.

Åsa Kachan
Chief Librarian / Chief Executive Officer



“The Library is always a warm, welcoming space
for reading, learning, and community activities,
no matter where I find myself in HRM.”

— Lorraine Glendenning

Halifax Regional Library Board 2016-17



Chair Paul Bennett

Vice-Chair Tara Gault

Councillor Sam Austin

Councillor Lisa Blackburn

Stephanie Clark

His Worship Mayor Mike Savage, ex officio

Lorraine Glendenning

Leah Hamilton

Bradley Munro

Janet Newton

Cynthia O'Driscoll

Reflecting our community

An evolving, dynamic space.

When community members visit the Library, you contribute your unique voices, history, values, needs, and interests to the life in our branches. These are the building blocks that create the Library experience every day.

It is our goal to be the best possible reflection of our diverse community, so you feel at home. Here are a few examples of the many ways you shaped the Library this year.

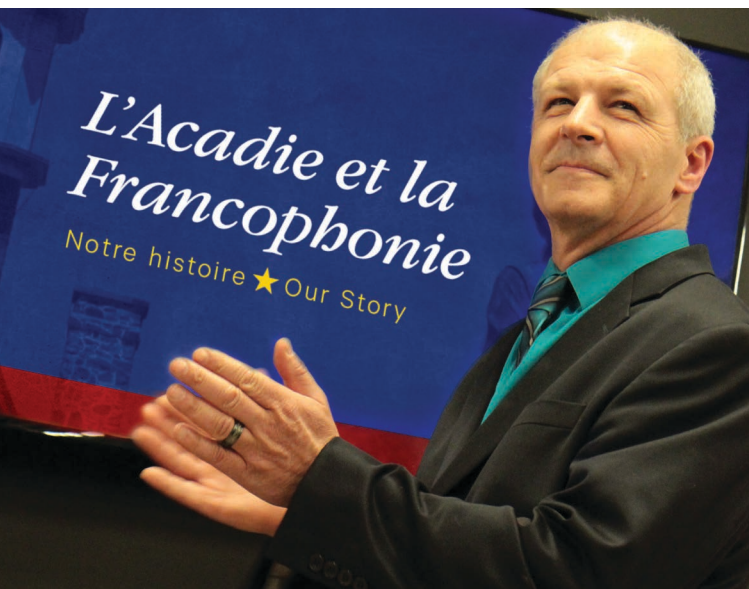


**“My library is...
my outlet to the
world!”**



18,443

**new library members
in 2016/17**



TD Presents African Heritage Month

Presented by TD Bank Group and brought to life in collaboration with a new advisory team, African Heritage Month 2017 was celebrated with over 90 community-driven programs. Important conversations like “Breaking the Colour Barrier in the RCMP” took place at the Library. Rising talent stole the show at “Lift Every Voice 2.” Experts mentored participants through entrepreneurship workshops, song circles, and artist residencies. February was a vibrant month at Halifax Public Libraries. We are proud to facilitate and support culturally-responsive and educational content year-round.

Celebrating our Culture

Bienvenue, Notre histoire / Our Story à la bibliothèque centrale d’Halifax. The rich history and culture of our Acadian and Francophone communities is now a living display at Central Library. Developed in partnership with the Halifax Regional Municipality and our Acadian and French communities, the permanent, bilingual installation can be discovered in the local history area. Voyez-vous!

A Space for Past and Future

Halifax North Memorial Public Library hit a milestone anniversary in 2016, marking 50 years as a hub for community support, innovation, and creativity. We shared memories and celebrated its history together, and a simple renovation transformed our Teen Space, creating more room for the next generation of community leaders to gather.



A resource for everyone

The answer to your question.

Books on shelves of every kind, current technologies, knowledgeable staff, and hands-on workshops — you can find it all here. Our ability to be an ever-expanding resource for our community is strengthened by listening, checking in, staying on top of trends, and continuously learning alongside you. Here are a few exciting developments from this past year.

633,021

eLibrary checkouts and transactions

The CELA Collection

When it comes to format and reading technology - one size does not fit all. Individuals with print disabilities may have difficulty holding a book or reading and processing printed text. The Library has improved its collection of accessible items through the Centre for Equitable Library Access (CELA). Persons with print disabilities can now access 450,000+ new items in described video, audiobook, e-Text, and braille formats.

The Video Difference Legacy Collection

2016 marked the ending of one local chapter and the beginning of another. When Video Difference announced the closing of its doors, community members called on the Library to help preserve its outstanding curated collection, and we responded. The Library was proud to step up as a new home for this eclectic piece of Halifax culture by acquiring over 5,000 films.



658

Library volunteers gave
34,462 hours this year



Lynda.com

Meet Lynda, the newest member of our eLibrary's virtual shelf. Through the Library, community members get free access to high-quality professional development videos taught by experts on topics from PhotoShop, to Coding, to Project Management. Community members can learn with Lynda, on the go, from any device.

Welcoming Newcomers

It is our responsibility to embrace the power of language and use it to create bridges to a stronger community. This year, the Library successfully fulfilled its commitment to pair every Syrian Canadian who connected with us for support with volunteer tutors for English language learning. 135 Syrian Canadians have been matched and are learning from — and teaching — their partners in libraries across Halifax. Additionally, our 17 Newcomer Conversation Clubs provide safe and social spaces for individuals interested in practicing English.

This fall, Mahmoud Al Masalmeh, a new Syrian-Canadian, practiced names of body parts with his English partner so he could better communicate with his doctor. The connections made at these sessions are priceless, and the Library is proud to serve as this resource.

**“We laugh a lot.
Learning a language
is serious, but when
you can laugh about
it and have fun, it
makes it nicer.”**



A launch point for growth

Where the story begins

Your Library is here for you to explore, freely.

We aim to offer the best education and
enrichment opportunities for our community.

In turn, we learn from your achievements,
growing and adapting with you.



Member-Shaped Experiences

With over 300 programs every month, the Library has countless opportunities to inspire and be inspired. This year, you joined in, sharing dance moves to be incorporated in the Mocean Dance Movement Synthesis choreography project. Your love of Canadian Literature shone through our interactive “Get Me to the Giller” conversation online and in branches. You shared the behind-the-scenes of your craft by breaking the fourth wall with live theatre rehearsals. When community collaboration is at play, everyone benefits.



“Connecting with art is an experience that should be accessible to everyone.”

Maker Programs

The principles of STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics) are being applied and explored by all ages. This spring, kids learned principles of architecture and chemistry at the Library’s March Break programs. Makerspace days called on coders to change the world, one byte at a time. DIY is even better when it’s a shared experience at the Library.

Celebrating 40 Years

The Library’s partnership with Saint Mary’s University showcases the value of removing barriers to education and sharing knowledge throughout the community. In 2016-17, through SMU’s University Classes for Everyone, learners of all ages and backgrounds sat side-by-side with students 4,543 times in university lectures offered at the Library. In March, author Yann Martel took the stage for the 40th Cyril Byrne Memorial Lecture, which stands as the symbol of our two organizations’ dedication to community growth. Thank you, Saint Mary’s, for your decades-long commitment and vision.

The Sunroom at Central Library

The sun is shining on a new art exhibit space on the 5th Floor of Halifax Central Library. The Sunroom launched in February as an accessible space where everyone can experience the joy of art. It was made possible by the generous support of Margot and Layne Spafford. Here, emerging and established Nova Scotian artists display their works, adding fresh perspectives, and sparking discussion and connection.



**Life
unfolds
at the
Library**

Turn the page. The Library experience is different every day. It's the perfect place for fresh starts and test ventures. A small business networking session or laughter yoga class might just be the beginning of your next chapter.

Explore the unexpected. The Library is right around the corner. We're popping up at community events and working to bring you interesting stories, authors, and conversations, wherever you are. Find us where you need us.

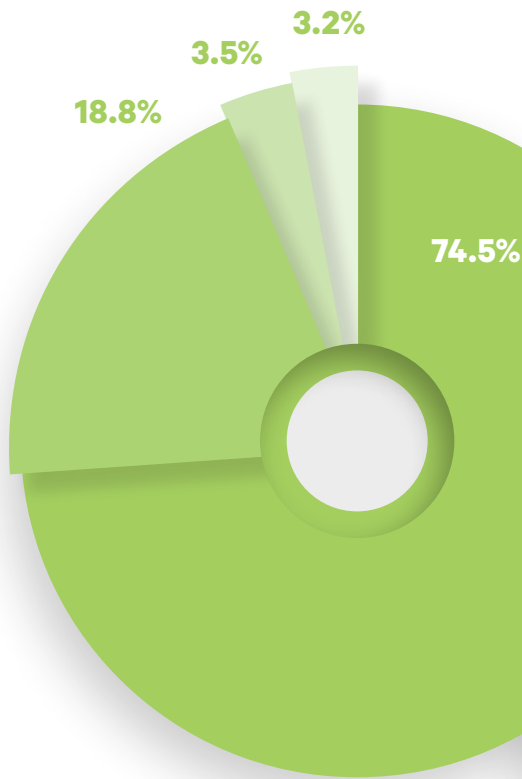
Create something new. The Library is a common ground for unfettered experiences and experimentation. Live remote radio broadcasting, cosplay competitions, paper plane flying — make it happen here.

Make a connection. The Library is yours for the making. Our Library members, visitors, volunteers, and staff make up a true “human library.” Every interaction is an opportunity for growth, and being our community's source for connection and sharing is why we exist.





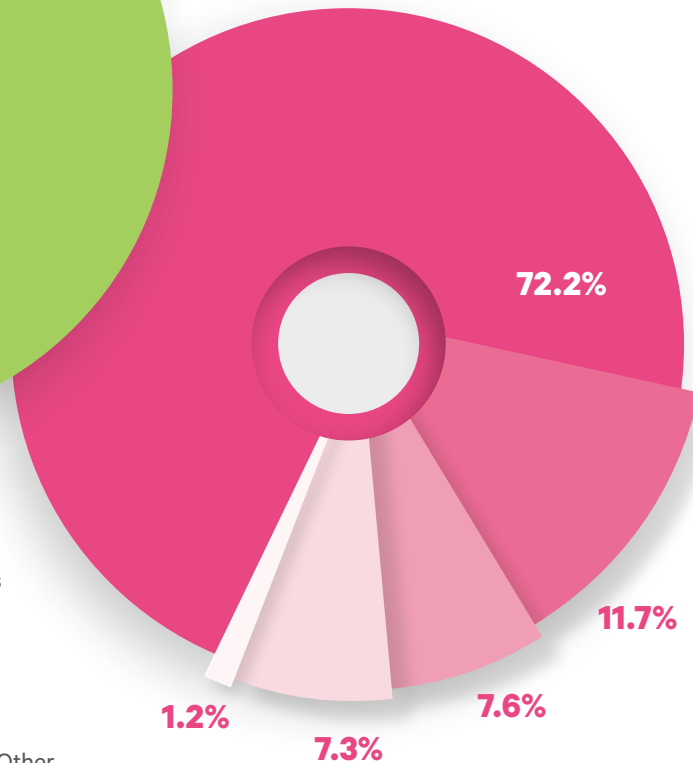
Revenue



\$19,525,676	Municipal
\$4,921,750	Provincial
\$911,055	Library-Generated
\$847,500	Special Projects & Donations/gifts

\$26,205,981

Expenditures



\$18,918,394	Salaries & Benefits
\$3,070,813	Facilities
\$1,979,789	Library Materials
\$1,903,211	Special Projects & Other
\$333,774	Donation/Project Grant revenue transferred to reserve

\$26,205,981

