

# REPORT TO OUR COMMUNITY

2024



**SURREY LIBRARIES**  
*discover·connect·inspire*

## Land Acknowledgement

Surrey Libraries recognizes that our work takes place on the ancestral, traditional, and unceded territories of the SEMYOME (Semiahmoo), q̓íçə́y̓ (Katzie), kʷíkʷə́łəm (Kwikwetlem), q̓ʷɑ:ńłə́n (Kwantlen), qíqéyt (Qayqayt), xʷməθkʷə́yəm (Musqueam) First Nations and on the ancestral and traditional territory of the s̓cəwaθən məsteyəxʷ (Tsawwassen) First Nation.

This publication has been produced following the Canadian National Institute for the Blind's (CNIB) Clear Print Accessibility Guidelines.



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# Mission and Vision

Our mission is to connect people, spark curiosity, and inspire lifelong learning to enhance the lives of Surrey residents, with the vision of creating a literate, inclusive, thriving city.

# Values

Values serve as our guiding principles, shaping our culture and behaviour. They help define our identity and purpose, influencing decision-making and actions. By aligning with these values, the Library creates a cohesive and ethical environment, fostering long-term success.

## Intellectual Freedom

We champion the right for different voices and ideas to be heard, and the right for questions to be asked without censorship.

## Community Focus

We care about the well-being of our community and work to foster a sense of belonging and connection.

## Equitable Access

We strive for our services to be accessible to all members of our community.

## Innovation

We continuously explore and pursue new ideas to improve services, remaining flexible to find creative solutions.

## Collaboration

We work with each other, our city, our community, and our patrons to support common goals and provide excellent service.

## Sustainability

We strive to be a leader in environmentally sound, socially equitable, and economically feasible practices.

# Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Accessibility (EDIA) Vision Statement

To fully realize our values and vision of a literate, inclusive and thriving city, the Library is dedicated to the principles of equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility (EDIA). We strive to provide equitable access to services and resources that enhance the experience of all our patrons.

Diversity can be seen, read, heard, and felt at the Library. From our shelves lined with various genres, to our unique displays and artwork, to our patrons from all walks of life, and to our staff members offering unique insights and expertise. Our diversity is encouraged to live and breathe here. It is a reflection of our dynamic city, and is essential to our cross-cultural environment.

Everyone is welcome at the Library to share in a sense of community and belonging. We envision the Library as a cohesive space where our differences are embraced and celebrated as strengths. Our backgrounds, identities, and voices come together in a central hub of knowledge, innovation, and collaboration. Together, we can foster an environment where we all feel safe to gather, play, work, learn, and be ourselves.

We approach our EDIA efforts the way we approach a new book—with curiosity, open-mindedness, and an eagerness to learn. We value the insights and knowledge of our community and its partners who help guide us on this collaborative journey.



Drumming Circle program at City Centre branch.

Our Library is the heart of our community.

# Message from the Board Chair and Chief Librarian



Dr. Balbir Gurm  
Board Chair

This past year was an extremely productive one and we are proud of the work we accomplished. In 2024, we began implementing actions from our updated strategic plan to achieve our goals of fostering a connected community, establishing welcoming learning spaces, empowering individuals, and building a resilient organization.

We're excited to have launched Mobile service. This initiative helps the Library extend services to our growing community beyond library walls and makes sure that residents in underserved areas have access to library resources.



Surinder Bhogal  
Chief Librarian

2024 saw Surrey Libraries welcome our first Indigenous Knowledge Keeper, Les George. Les helped bring Indigenous programming to Surrey Libraries and fostered a deeper understanding of Indigenous cultures among our staff and patrons.

Another key initiative undertaken included relaunching the StreetSMART program in partnership with the City of Surrey and Lookout Housing and Health Society. This program supports the unsheltered population in multiple ways including obtaining IDs, rental subsidies, income assistance, referrals to shelters and supportive housing applications, substance use and mental health services, transportation for appointments, and advocacy to assist people with multiple barriers.

The Library also made a concerted effort to increase communications and engagement with patrons through a variety of emails such as welcome messages, birthday messages, survey invitations, and information about special events and programs. Through these additional communications we aim to help patrons learn about the value of their library membership and to make the most of the services available.

We want to extend our thanks to the City of Surrey and the Province of British Columbia for recognizing the value of libraries in our communities. Thank you also to the many volunteers, donors, community partners, and patrons who support our libraries. Finally, we extend a heart-felt thanks to the Board and staff of Surrey Libraries for their ongoing dedication, enthusiasm and commitment to building a better community.

# Mayor's Message



Brenda Locke  
Mayor

On behalf of Surrey City Council, I am delighted to congratulate Surrey Libraries on another outstanding year of service to our community. In 2024, we witnessed an unprecedented milestone as a record 33,301 individuals registered for library cards—a testament to the deepening connection and enthusiasm our residents have for library services. This past year also marked a significant 19% surge in the circulation of physical materials, with 3,561,691 items borrowed. Furthermore, the demand for eBooks and eAudiobooks soared, reflecting a 17% increase, with more than 1.4 million titles enjoyed by our patrons.

These impressive achievements underscore the vital role Surrey Libraries plays in fostering literacy, lifelong learning, and community well-being. Our libraries continue to be a cornerstone of knowledge, creativity, and leisure, providing resources and opportunities for personal and professional growth. With a diverse array of programs and services, Surrey Libraries supports the educational and recreational needs of our residents, bridging the digital divide and ensuring access to technology for all.

I would like to express my profound appreciation to the Library Board, staff, and volunteers for their steadfast dedication and commitment to excellence. Their hard work has transformed our libraries into dynamic hubs of continuous learning and an integral contributor to the enrichment of our city. I encourage every resident to take full advantage of the Library's offerings, whether by visiting a branch or exploring the extensive online resources available at [surreylibraries.ca](https://surreylibraries.ca).

Together, let us continue to support and celebrate the invaluable contributions of Surrey Libraries to our community.

Mayor Brenda Locke  
City of Surrey

We processed 6,607 patron purchase suggestions for new collection items.



## Year in Review

**We launched the Mobile Library to bring the joy of reading and essential library services to underserved areas and populations across Surrey. This innovative library on wheels offers over 1,000 items to borrow, including books for all ages, both fiction and nonfiction.**

The Mobile Library visits many community locations such as recreation centres, food banks, and settlement agencies, ensuring everyone has access to library resources. In addition to books, the Mobile Library provides free library cards, basic technology help, and free Wi-Fi.

Mayor Brenda Locke cuts the ribbon to officially launch the Mobile Library along with (from left to right): MLA Begg, MLA Sims, MLA Starchuk, MLA Kang (Minister of Municipal Affairs), Trustee Gurm, Mayor Brenda Locke, Cllr. Kooner, Chief Librarian Surinder Bhogal, and Cllr. Bose.



Our friendly and knowledgeable staff are always on hand to assist patrons, making the Mobile Library a welcoming and valuable resource for the community.



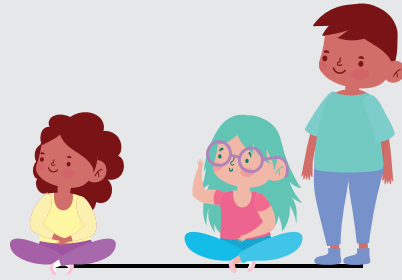




**2,337,855**  
in-person visits to  
branches



**194,532**  
reference questions  
answered



**121,812**  
children participated  
in programs



**1,480,168**  
eBooks, eAudiobooks, and  
eMagazines borrowed



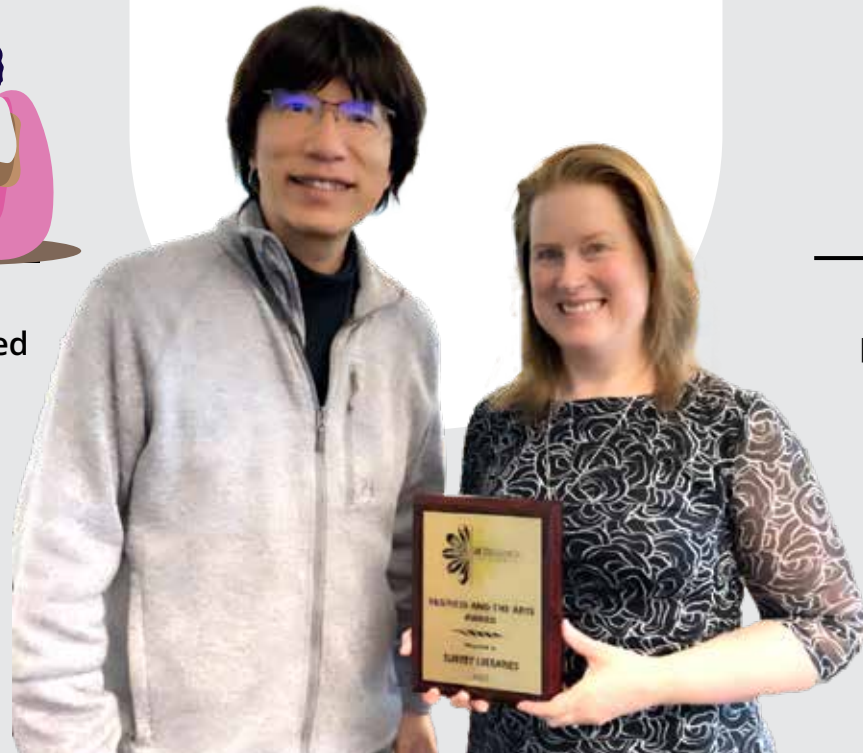
**35,239**  
adults participated  
in programs

# 2024

## Highlights

### Arts Council Award

Surrey Libraries won the Arts Council of Surrey Business and the Arts Award for going above and beyond contributing to the arts in Surrey.



**17,727**  
children joined the  
Summer Reading Club



**3,561,391**  
physical items  
borrowed

## A Connected Community

Our goal is to ensure everyone feels connected—whether it's to information, ideas, or each other. Inside the Library and out in the community, we celebrate local culture and foster social connections to help reduce isolation. We make decisions by considering diverse perspectives from our staff and community, all informed by data. By engaging with community partners, we leverage resources to create a meaningful impact.

We welcomed  
33,301 new  
members.



We expanded  
World Language  
Storytimes to  
help reach more  
patrons.



We translated library information  
brochures into five languages  
(Tigrinya, French, Simplified Chinese,  
Traditional Chinese, and Korean) to improve  
communications with patrons whose first  
language is not English.



## Our Commitment to Reconciliation

**Surrey Libraries is committed to Reconciliation and is working to respond to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action.**

Through programming and other initiatives, we are working to build more meaningful connections between the Library, the Indigenous community, and the citizens of Surrey. Our aim is to grow understanding of the rich cultural fabric of the Indigenous history of these lands, to showcase Indigenous culture, and to also listen and learn from our Indigenous communities.

### Indigenous Knowledge Keeper

Surrey Libraries welcomed Les George as the first Indigenous Knowledge Keeper to help foster a deeper understanding of Indigenous cultures.

### Métis titles

We added Métis titles for book club kits in consultation with Waceya Métis Society.

### Indigenous Book Distribution

We distributed 412 books by Indigenous authors at National Indigenous Peoples Day event and other outreach to help promote Indigenous cultural literacy.

### Indigenous Cultural Awareness Training

We offered Indigenous cultural awareness training to all staff through InterLINK to build a common understanding of the diverse histories, cultures, and contributions of Indigenous peoples and to foster a more inclusive and respectful workplace environment.



**From left:** Amelia Boissoneau, Indigenous Services Coordinator, Les George, Indigenous Knowledge Keeper, and Surinder Bhogal, Chief Librarian.

Les George drumming during the opening of the Indigenous Knowledge Keeper Welcome Feast.





## Welcoming Learning Spaces

**Our branches are vital community hubs, welcoming everyone from newborns to seniors.**

Our spaces, both physical and online, are designed to be welcoming and inclusive for everyone. We work to ensure individuals and families feel welcomed and can easily access library services. We offer multilingual services and materials to accommodate the diverse language needs of our community. We work to provide our services to people with disabilities by providing accessibility services such as assistive technology and adaptive equipment. We host programs and events that celebrate diversity and promote cultural understanding.



Provided ongoing programming for seniors to support the City's Age-Friendly Strategy and growing aging population. Programs included Literature Club for Seniors, Seniors Book Club, and Audiobook Club.



Introduced programs such as English Conversation Circles, Studythons, and information sessions specifically aimed to support international students.



Added Envoy Connect Audiobook Players to our Accessibility Services collection.



Equipped each branch with a Sensory Kit to help neurodiverse patrons enjoy using the Library.



Offered American Sign Language (ASL) storytimes for deaf and hard-of-hearing children and their families.



Added several play-to-learn items at branches, such as KEVA Planks, DUPLO® Wall, and the Light Wall at City Centre.





# Empowered People

We provide resources—whether it’s our collections, technology, or highly trained staff—to help individuals succeed in life and contribute actively to society and the economy. Our employees are supported to keep learning, stay healthy, and be productive, ensuring they can offer excellent service.

We added new digital resources.

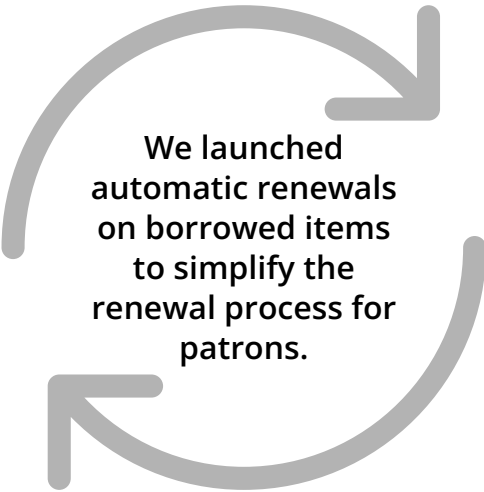


## Gayle Harris Memorial Education Award Recipients

This fund was established by Barbara E. Harris in memory of Gayle Harris, a beloved children’s librarian at Surrey Libraries. The award is provided to staff who are studying to obtain their Master of Library and Information Studies (MLIS) degree.



**Left to right:** Sarah Cryderman, Robyn Sundar, and Aliyah Khan, Gayle Harris Memorial Education Fund Award Recipients for 2024.



We significantly expanded eBook, eAudio, and eMagazine collections to over 106,000 titles.

## Share Your Story

Submit your story at [surreylibraries.ca/share-your-story](https://surreylibraries.ca/share-your-story)



“Two years ago, my 7 year old grandson Logan asked me to help him read better. I jumped at the chance. We have come to Guildford branch every week since then. He is always eager to learn and it’s a joy to see him improve. He can read anything now and I love to listen to him read.

Our favourite spot is the Children’s Room with all the decorations and bookcases full of books for kids of all ages. We sit side by side at a table and he reads to me, or we practice sight words and make our time worthwhile and fun.

He enjoys the Summer Reading Club, checking out his own books and he leaves each week proud and full of confidence. My favourite time at the Library with Logan though, is when we sit side by side, each reading our own books to ourselves.”

Brenda Tillyer

Read more stories at [surreylibraries.ca/shared-stories](https://surreylibraries.ca/shared-stories)



## Share Your Story

Submit your story at [surreylibraries.ca/share-your-story](https://surreylibraries.ca/share-your-story)



"My heart is full of gratitude for the incredible opportunity to share Nayan's Family Fruit Salad at Surrey Libraries. It was one of the most amazing experiences of my life. I truly enjoyed working with all of you and felt so supported throughout the entire process.

I used to sit in the Newton branch, penning the words of this book, dreaming of a day like this. To see it come full circle, to return as an author and share this story with the community, was deeply meaningful. It felt like a dream come true, and I am so thankful to you for making it possible.

The love, kindness, and enthusiasm you all brought to the event made it such a memorable experience. I could feel the joy and excitement in the room, and it reminded me why sharing this message of inclusiveness, diversity, kindness, and connection is so important.

Thank you, from the bottom of my heart, for all of your support, kindness, and encouragement. Working with Surrey Libraries has been a true honor, and I look forward to more opportunities to collaborate and inspire the community together."

Navjit (Navi) Sandhu, Author of Nayan's Family Fruit Salad

Read more stories at [surreylibraries.ca/shared-stories](https://surreylibraries.ca/shared-stories)

## A Resilient and Strong Organization

We continuously improve our policies, processes, and procedures to provide excellent service and meet the needs of our growing city. Our commitment to the environment guides our work and decision-making.

We completed 68% of actions in the Sustainable Libraries Certification Program, reflecting our dedication to reducing our environmental footprint and promoting sustainability.



Bike Repair Station at Ocean Park branch.

We added 98,000 new physical items to our collections.



## Library Board 2024

The Library Board is made up of community volunteers who are appointed by City Council. Its main responsibilities include setting strategic direction, developing policies, and financial oversight.



Dulce Amba Cuenca



John Gillies



Dr. Balbir Gurm



Saman Kaluarachchi



Cllr. Pardeep Kooner



Kulvinder Kular



Patria Pascal



Alisa-Thao Pham



Rachel Smith



Tanveer Sohal



Lisa Werring

## 2024 Financial Summary

Revenues	
City of Surrey Transfers	25,718,621
Provincial & Federal Grants	1,124,786
Fees	406,886
Neighbourhood Development Contributions	100,000
Donations & Other	608,051
Expenditures	
Human Resources	19,681,120
Materials, Supplies & Equipment	3,170,799
Branch Operations	2,546,766
Other	717,603

Annual value of library membership provided to the average cardholder was **\$1,032 in 2024**. For each dollar invested in Surrey Libraries, \$7.68 of value was generated for the community.

**Library services cost just \$3.19 per month per citizen\***

\*2024 expenses: \$26,116,288 divided by Surrey's population based on City's planning department projection for 2024  
682,235 = \$38.28 per citizen/year/12 = \$3.19





“My family and I have thoroughly appreciated the exceptional services provided by Surrey Libraries, and we would like to express our gratitude whenever possible. A heartfelt thank you to all the dedicated library staff for their outstanding work.”

Donor's message from  
CanadaHelps.org

## Thank you to our government and corporate supporters

ABC Recycling  
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City of Surrey  
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Surrey Fire Fighters' Charitable Society  
Surrey International Writers' Conference  
Surrey International Writers' Conference Fund, held at Vancouver Foundation  
SurreyCares Community Foundation  
Talentz Technologies Inc.  
United Way  
White Rock & South Surrey Newcomers Alumnae  
Whitehots Inc.



# Thank you to our donors and volunteers

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IN HONOUR

In honour of AC Ashok  
In honour of Baby Kobe  
In honour of Gurman Singh  
In honour of Harvey Wipp  
In honour of Hiraya Reagan Gonzales  
In honour of Jora and Nishaan  
In honour of Librarians everywhere  
In honour of Lyrica Liu  
In honour of Mandi Thompson  
In honour of Pam and Kent Nicholson  
In honour of Victor Wimaladasa

IN MEMORY & LEGACY GIFTS

In memory of Bernice Brooks Ringler  
In memory of Betty Kawasaki  
In memory of Bob Giles  
In memory of Janis Mary Lee  
In memory of Jeremy Burningham  
In memory of Jesus Christ  
In memory of Kathryn Crawford  
In memory of Mae  
In memory of Murray Robinson  
In memory of My Dad  
In memory of Nellie Coates and Ina Wells  
In memory of Ralph Darbyshire  
In memory of Ranjit Bariana  
In memory of Sam & Julie Turone  
In memory of Treena Bray  
In memory of Udaynath Shukla  
Estate of Donna Jean Embree

ACCESSIBILITY VOLUNTEERS  
(Individuals)

Visar Alimehaj  
Maryam Badkoubah  
Janet Baldry  
Christopher Baldry  
Elaine Becker  
Arjot Bindra  
Harpreet Bindra  
Athena Cho

Janet Cronkhite  
Flora de Montreuil  
Shawn Feddes  
Yuzhuo Gu  
Carrie Jagpal  
Tejvir Josan  
Vilas Joshi  
Pawandeep Kaur  
Carla Kolb  
Valerie Newton  
Jan Penhorwood  
Alvaro Perez Hernandez  
Geeta Podicheti  
Nancy Poirier  
Thomas Prior  
Jagroop Rai  
Cindy Richards  
Mick Sandhu  
Nasreen Shaheedi  
Navdeep Sidhu  
Carolyn Smith  
Susan Soo  
Dorothy Stuivenberg  
Laura Thomas  
Frandy Tirona  
Sukhdeep Ubhi  
Morgan Vader  
Helena Williams  
Gloria Xue

ACCESSIBILITY VOLUNTEERS  
(Organizations)

95th House Community Living Society  
Celebration & Rainbow Manor  
Hope House  
Jacob Community Connections  
Semiahmoo House Society  
Thompson Community Services

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