

Good evening. My name is Phyllis Coffin and I am the chair of the Nackawic Public/School Library Board. Our public library is located in the Nackawic High School, the result of a memorandum of agreement between the municipality, the school district and the New Brunswick Public Library Service. Opened in 1973, it was the first public/school library in the province, and serves Nackawic, Millville, Zealand, Hainesville, Dumfries, Prince William, Bear Island and other communities in the surrounding area.

The mission of our public library is to inspire lifelong learning, advance knowledge, and strengthen our community.

We inspire lifelong learning by creating more able learners and researchers – we teach learning and information literacy skills through partnership with Western Valley Adult Learning Association to provide free computer courses, as well as / training patrons on the use of the library online services. We support creativity, research and problem solving.

We advance knowledge by providing free and open access to materials and information – through identifying, acquiring and preserving items that enhance our areas of expertise, and connecting with organizations whose materials complement our own. We also provide free wireless internet access 24 hours per day, seven days per week, as well as two internet computers with print capability for use by the public.

We strengthen our communities by promoting full citizenship and participation in society – through the provision of dynamic resources to help patrons understand and engage in society, the creation of safe and reliable places where our patrons can enjoy, honor, celebrate and engage with our communities, and by offering unique materials of historic importance, bringing our diverse communities together.

Our library offers services to all members of the community.

For children – pre-school storytime twice per week, *Welcome to Kindergarten* in conjunction with Nackawic Elementary School, *Hackmatack Book Club* (for grades 3-5), *Young Adult Book Club* (Middle school students), *Summer Reading Club* (ages 0-12), which encourages children to keep up reading skills during the summer months, as well as special programs throughout the year.

Young Adults/Adults – *Teen Reading Challenge*, encouraging young adults to read, *free computer courses*, *Wellness events* in partnership with the municipal Wellness Committee, *author readings and book launches*, *Art exhibits* featuring the work of local artists and students of all three schools, *Reading Room* used by students and various community groups for meetings and programs, *Coffee Hour* every Friday morning providing a comfortable environment for community members to explore the resources available at the library.

During the last year, we held 302 programs with 3,543⁵⁶⁰⁺ participants, and have a membership of 1,365 patrons. Our two free public access computers had 417 users, and there were 151 individuals who connected to the internet through our free wireless access.

We are wheelchair accessible and also provide an adaptive workstation computer which enables persons with physical and literacy challenges to have access to electronic resources not provided by standard computers. We are also in partnership with Centre for Equitable Library Access which provides alternative format resources for persons with vision impairment and other challenges.

Our library also has formed partnerships with several businesses in the community. These businesses have made presentations at the library for the benefit of all community members, as well as the high school student population.

Having a public library located in a school also forges a connection between the schools and the community. Leadership Classes from the high school volunteer to help with library programs for children. The library has a program called *FranConnection* which connects francophone members of the community with French Immersion student from the middle school. This provides French language interaction in a setting other than a classroom.

The public library plays a vital role in the life of any community by providing early childhood education, lifelong learning opportunities, continuing education, and services and electronic resources that are free for everyone. We trust that any decision made during this process will preserve the community's access to the public library service.