

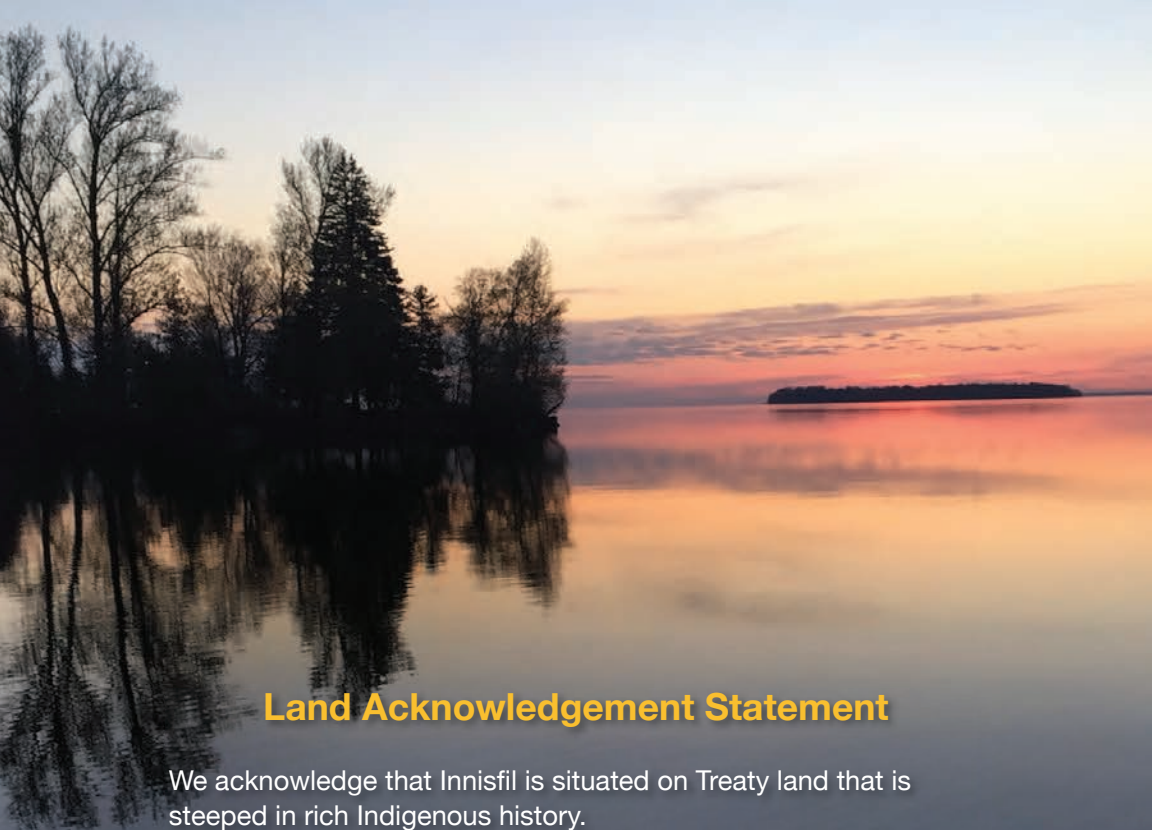
IDEAS
FOR
SOCIETY

Disruption

Sparks

Innovation

Report to the Community 2021-2022



Land Acknowledgement Statement

We acknowledge that Innisfil is situated on Treaty land that is steeped in rich Indigenous history.

The Library also acknowledges that this land is the Traditional Territories of the First Peoples of Turtle Island. It is shared between the Anishinaabe peoples of Beausoleil First Nation, Chippewas of Rama First Nation, and Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation and we thank them for generations of stewardship. This meeting place is still the home to many Indigenous people and, as settlers, we are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this land.

The Innisfil ideaLAB & Library acknowledges the forced sacrifices that are the foundation of Canadian society today. We are dedicated to honouring Indigenous history and culture and committed to moving forward in the spirit of reconciliation and respect with all First Nation, Métis, and Inuit peoples.

Disruption sparks **innovation**. And nothing has been more disruptive than the COVID-19 pandemic.

No stranger to change, we continue to re-imagine the way the ideaLAB & Library serves our diverse and growing communities and how we deliver services and experiences that not only meet community needs, but inspire transformation.

With community at the core of all we do, we recognize that lasting change starts within. In 2021 we laid the groundwork for transformation and recovery by setting a number of crucial strategic directions.

Because disruption sparks innovation, we will:

WE WILL ➤

- **SPEAK UP** for diversity and inclusion;
- **OPEN UP** opportunities to strengthen connection and engagement with our community;
- **BUILD UP** our reputation as a trusted community asset;
- **RAISE UP** the Library's identity as an innovative hub; and
- **LIGHT UP** pathways to personal and professional growth.



Fresh Air Flicks returned in 2021



The Intersex Inclusive Pride Crosswalk at IBP

SPEAK UP

for diversity and inclusion

Our commitment to fair and equal access for everyone drives us to actively connect the community with ideas, knowledge, culture, services, content, media, technologies and each other.

In 2021, we dedicated our staff to the ongoing process of learning and unlearning required to truly speak up for diversity and inclusion in our community. Through programming, training, policy changes, partnership development and examination of core services, we are putting in the effort required to create truly equitable services and safe spaces for all members of our growing community.

We are committed to building equity, diversity and inclusion into our workplace and programs. While progress is being made, we recognize and appreciate that there is much more work to do.

Spotlight on Truth & Reconciliation

We are committed to the process of reconciliation with Indigenous communities, as outlined in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report.

Our path to reconciliation began in consultation with Indigenous communities to develop a formal Land Acknowledgement Statement. The statement was adopted by the Library Board and Innisfil Town Council and recognizes the First Nations on whose traditional territories we work and live. It demonstrates respect for Indigenous peoples, both in the past and the present, and the contributions they have made to our communities and nation.

Using and participating in a land acknowledgement offers recognition of the presence and resilience of Indigenous peoples. It is a reminder that we are accountable to these relationships. We recognize that colonialism is a current, ongoing

process, and we need to be mindful of our participation and are responsible for doing better. We are committed to this work and our adoption of a land acknowledgement statement is the first step in this journey towards reconciliation.

In our role as a place for education and space for learning, we continue to support the calls to action, and use our platform to provide resources to the community. We developed important programs and resources, giving children and adults the opportunity to learn about difficult topics in the wake of the traumatic discovery of mass graves at residential schools across Canada. Indigenous community leaders, like Gwen Beaver and Dr. Cynthia Wesley-Esquimaux guided our community in understanding the generational trauma caused by the residential school system and colonization through thought provoking and interactive programs. We recognized the first National Day for Truth & Reconciliation on September 30th with an intergenerational storytime with Indigenous elders.

Special Guests & Indigenous Leaders

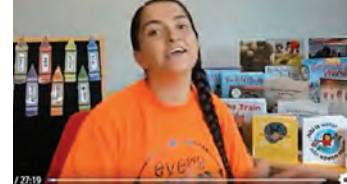


Intergenerational Storytime with Indigenous Elders

A selection of Indigenous Voices from the collection



Kristina Mortotsi (ideaLAB & Library) shares Indigenous Stories for Virtual Storytime



National Day for Truth & Reconciliation



Every Child Matters Art on display for the Nantyr Shores Youth Art Show

"We are responsible for doing better and Innisfil idealAB & Library is committed to this work." Library Board Chair, Anne Smith

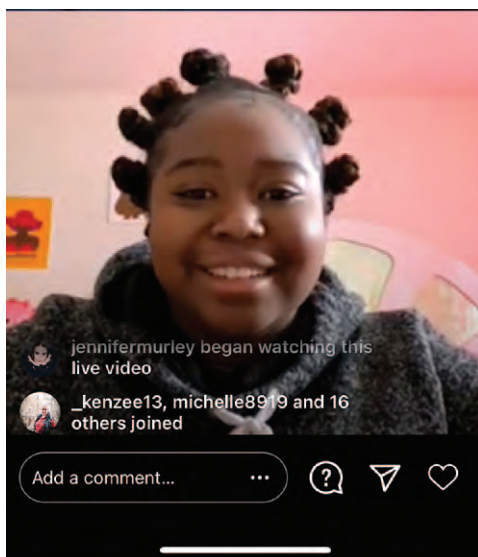


Partner Spotlight: Black History Month

Throughout February, the Library partnered with Making Change, Uplift Black, local authors, grassroots activists, and business owners to celebrate Black History Month.

Programming included live storytimes, virtual dance and yoga classes, anti-Black racism and allyship training, a virtual cooking class, and youth-led social media takeovers.

We shared curated book lists, highlighting Black authors, Black characters, and anti-racist reading.



Youth-led social media takeover for **Black History Month**

Spotlight on Collections

In 2021, the Library began conducting a Diversity Audit on the young adult fiction collection. This project will ensure that the collection includes a wide variety of perspectives, experiences, and points of view.

Our collections should simultaneously represent our community while also

providing a gateway for readers to learn about experiences outside of their own. Ongoing diversity audits will ensure a well-balanced collection.

Through an ongoing review of the resources offered by the Library, we can ensure that our collection truly reflects our community.

Partner Spotlight: Be Yourself with Innisfil Pride

Positivity and inclusivity were showcased at Innisfil Beach Park with Canada's first Intersex Inclusive Pride Crosswalk at the main entrance of the park.

Working closely with the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, Innisfil Pride, Uplift Black and the Town of Innisfil, we were able to demonstrate our commitment to equity, education and creating welcoming spaces for all residents and visitors to the Town of Innisfil. This crosswalk sends a strong community message that you can walk freely and be yourself when you are in Innisfil.

Jennifer Murley (Innisfil idealAB & Library), Shelly Skinner (Uplift Black), and Jake Tucker (Innisfil Pride) at the unveiling of the **Innisfil Pride Crosswalk**

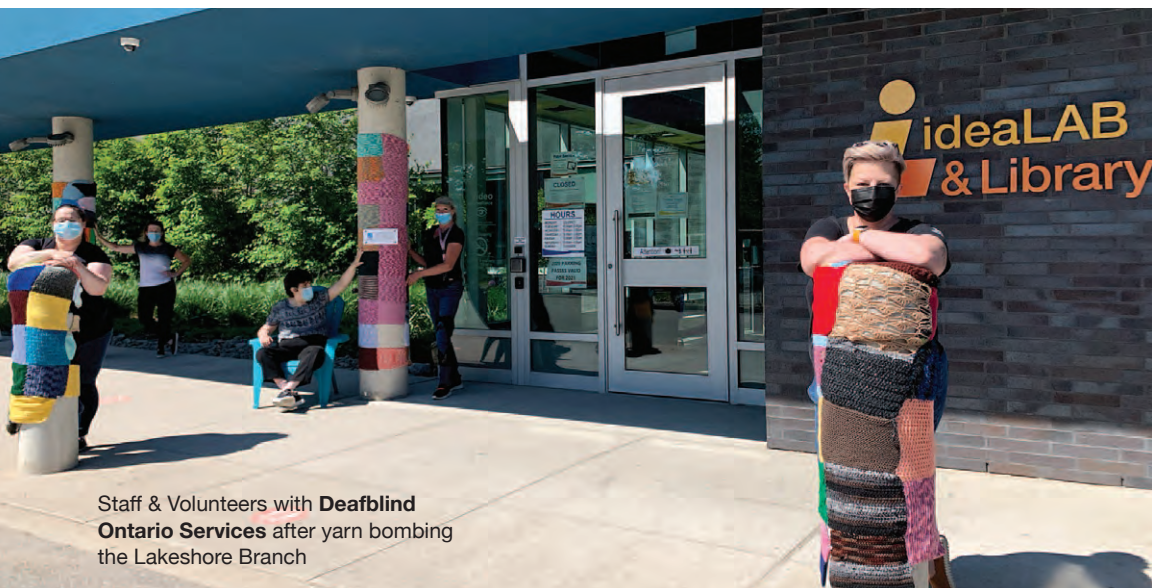




OPEN UP

opportunities to strengthen connection and engagement with our community

As a community hub and connector we are constantly exploring new opportunities for collaboration and sparking new relationships between organizations and community changemakers. Whether we are partnering with community members or organizations, or bringing our community the information or services that they need, we are invested in fostering connections that build a stronger community.



Staff & Volunteers with **Deafblind Ontario Services** after yarn bombing the Lakeshore Branch

Partner Spotlight: DeafBlind Ontario

The month of June is Deafblind Awareness month and DeafBlind Ontario Services “yarn bombed” our Lakeshore Branch to raise awareness. Each knit or crochet square in this large scale tactile art project symbolized the coming together of people in the field of deafblindness. The project raised awareness and knowledge of

deafblindness with the goal to influence appropriate services for people who are deafblind around the world. Community members were invited to knit or crochet squares for this community art project, with Library staff leading tutorials and our Crafting for Humanity participants leading the charge in creating pieces for this unique art. The art was on display at the Lakeshore Branch for the month of June.

Partner Spotlight: Simcoe County Libraries

Simcoe Reads is a partnership program with 7 local Libraries across Simcoe County. As a local “battle of the books,” Simcoe Reads encourages participating municipalities to champion a specific title and invites community members to participate by reading the selected books and voting for a winner.

This year, the Library was honoured to have Innisfil represented by Community Champion, Anne Smith, who defended the novel, *The Company We Keep* by Frances Itani.

Community members across the County were invited to participate in specialized book clubs and submit reviews of the books leading up to the final debate in October. Programs like Simcoe Reads not only inspire community connections between people and municipalities, they support community wellbeing and mental health needs.

Through joint programming like Simcoe Reads and the Simcoe Author Talk



Library Board Chair, **Anne Smith**, representing Innisfil in Simcoe Reads

series, our local library ecosystem has strengthened its ties to our communities and to each other.

Innisfil bibliophiles had the opportunity to attend a dozen engaging, timely talks with authors who inspire, teach and transport their readers into worlds unimagined – more than double the events we typically host in a year!

Partner Spotlight: Innisfil Seed Library

The Innisfil Seed Library continues to be an invaluable resource for community members to achieve food security and learn to grow fresh food in their own backyards.

“Enjoyed it, honestly. Been stuck in the house with Covid, this gave me something to look forward to.”

- participant in the virtual Seedy Saturday events

The Seed Library encourages residents to participate in gardening activities and spend time outdoors, activities that are proven to strengthen mental health.

The Innisfil Seed Library continues to develop reliable resources for the community through its Mindful Gardening YouTube channel, releasing more videos throughout the year on various growing and gardening topics. In partnership with the Seed Library we delivered both virtual and in-person programs throughout the year.

BUILD UP

our reputation as a trusted community asset

We are embracing our role as an open, warm, welcoming space for all. First and foremost, we are a community resource. We are all inundated with information every day; the Library is the key to unlocking reliable, relevant and trustworthy resources.

Shannon Kelly-Robb
(ideaLAB & Library)
connects with customers
every day.



Our Most Trusted Resource - Our Staff

Our greatest asset is also our most trusted resource: our dedicated Library team members. We take the guesswork out of research. We research and select books and other resources for carefully curated book lists on a range of topics. From anti-racist readings to supporting mental health to the democratic process, we guide our community, wherever their learning journey takes them.



“Whenever I come into the branch, I scan the “Staff Picks” for a recommendation from Kate - I always know it will be a great read!”

Your favourite book might be one you haven’t met yet

Staff Picks & Recommendations:

When you are stumped, stopped in your tracks, unable to visit in person or simply in a hurry, we have your reading recommendations covered! We help hundreds of Library customers find their new favourite books and uncover hidden gems with our well considered suggestions!

Home Library Service: This service is available to Innisfil residents who are unable to come to the Library to pick up items. Whether confined to home due to chronic or temporary disability or due to lack of transportation, this service is available to anyone in need. Assistive devices from our Library of Things have been added to our roster of deliveries, opening up wider opportunities for users.

Book Bag Programs: Staff hand pick a selection of titles for families, teachers and child care providers based on their needs and interests. This service was expanded as a result of the pandemic - and was a lifesaver for parents and caregivers who were homeschooling children for longer than expected.

Google can bring you back
100,000 answers,
a librarian can bring you
back the right one.

– Neil Gaiman

Partner Spotlight: Elections Canada & the Democratic Process

The Library is the home of curiosity, and a safe space to explore current events and new ideas. We provide a critical service to the community as a non-partisan, safe and welcoming space to encourage the democratic process. In 2021 we were a location for Elections Canada information sessions, a co-host of Federal debates in partnership with the Simcoe County Greenbelt Coalition and the Simcoe County Youth Environmental Alliance, and a polling station for the community during the 2021 Federal election.



Fresh produce
and dairy



#FeedInnisfil

We teamed up with our partners at the Town of Innisfil to build community resilience and support neighbours helping neighbours offering the newest locations for the Troy Scott Community Fridge project.

Found at our Lakeshore and Cookstown branches, everyone is welcome to take as much food as they need from the fridges and pantries, as often as they like.

Locating these fridges in our busiest locations has helped reach residents where they are, increased community exposure to the community fridge concept and resulted in more individuals, businesses and organizations donating and caring for their neighbours.



With safety measures in place, staff are able to connect with and support our community



Access the fridges
at the Lakeshore and
Cookstown branches
for use or donations

Pantry items are
also needed



Pandemic Support

Staff dedicated significant resources throughout 2021 to help community members, especially seniors and those with low or no digital literacy skills, to find and book vaccine appointments. As vaccinations became more available, we met the community need to print vaccine certificates at no cost.

"Our kids are LOVING the musical instruments, scarves and train kit! Toy boredom during this pandemic has been a real struggle for all our Littles. Thank you for **meeting this need** and making these available. We are blessed with the **BEST library EVER!**"

~ Library user comment

RAISE UP >

the Library's identity as an innovative hub

We are committed to pushing beyond our comfort zone to challenge and inspire community transformation. We bring together new ideas and technologies, finding solutions and creating space for exploration. When you find us out in the community, enter our doors, or join us in a virtual space you may be surprised by what you can discover.

More than Books - We have what you need in the Library of Things

Our Library of Things keeps growing - with lendable technology, robots, assistive devices and HackLab kits, in addition to some exciting new collections added this year.

Throughout the course of 2021, we developed and launched a number of new lendable kits for public use

Family visits to the Library are always special



Laura Jeffrey
(ideaLAB & Library)
showcasing her crochet skills



that were formerly in-library only resources. Residents can take home Instrument kits, Storytime Kits, Learn at Home Kits and a variety of toys and board games.

Having access to a robust Library of Things gives residents access to a variety of free, at home activities to support families and individuals and provide some much needed entertainment.

Seniors HackLAB Kits brought the HackLAB home to isolated and vulnerable seniors. These kits, available free of charge, were extremely popular and could be adapted to accommodate the unique needs of individuals or organizations. Over 1900 kits were distributed to community members, including residents at Lakeside Retirement Home and Sandy Cove Acres.



Learn at Home
kits are available to
order online



Library customers
show off their Seniors
HackLAB kit creations

Made with Love - Crafting for Humanity delivers big impact in small packages

Our team has been gathering weekly with adults and teens to put their creative skills to use in serving the community. From knitting mittens and scarves for those in need in the cold winter months to sewing beanies for chemo patients to creating twiddlemuffs (knitted hand warmers that provide sensory stimulation for people living with dementia), this group of dedicated community members have found purpose in service, and connection in crafting.



Twiddlemuffs created by
Crafting for Humanity participants

"So proud of my community when I see heartwarming acts like this."

- Facebook comment about the scarves and mittens left around Town for anyone in need.

Larger than Life! Public Art Grows in Innisfil

As Innisfil's culture champions, we led a number of public art initiatives that created unique outdoor experiences and opportunities for safe community building, while also supporting our local arts community.



Steam roller printmaking with PRNT Collective



Print BIG! Printed under the drum of a 900 pound lawn roller in the parking lot of the Cookstown Branch, community members watched the spectacle as a huge machine rolled over carefully carved woodblocks to create large scale works of art. BIG Printmaking was the signature event of Makerfest '21, in partnership with the PRNT Collective and Georgian College. The community watched, enthralled, by the work of the large machine and impressed by the skills of the participating artists.



Tree of Life Labyrinth beside the Cookstown Branch

Grow BIG! The Tree of Life Labyrinth is a living art installation located on the grounds adjacent to the Cookstown branch. Designed and created by artist Denis Bolohan, the Labyrinth was a tribute to Innisfil's past and an outlet for exploration and quiet reflection - a much needed respite from the daily trials of pandemic life. News of this living art installation spread far and wide with hundreds of shares across social media platforms including by local residents, businesses and art galleries.

Celebrate BIG! In celebration of Innisfil's bicentennial, ten utility boxes throughout the Town have been transformed into commemorative landmarks featuring rich and vibrant historical photos celebrating our heritage. Every photo has been carefully selected from Our Stories Innisfil to reflect a notable building, family, event, or geographic feature of the neighbourhood in which each box is found.

These colourful displays are a fun and unexpected way to share public art for all to enjoy, to create a sense of place and belonging within our community, and to celebrate the bicentennial. Locations include: Cookstown, Big Bay Point, Stroud, Alcona, Gilford, Sandycove, and Lefroy.

Hope BIG! The Hope Tree returned to Innisfil Beach Park this winter. This tree helps brighten our spirits during the winter months and ignites a spark of hope. The Hope Tree mail box is an outlet for community dreams and wishes - creating connections through shared aspirations.



LIGHT UP

pathways to personal and professional growth.

As a recognized, award-winning leader in innovative library service, we are driven to actively connect the community with ideas, knowledge, services, and each other. We work closely with the community to respond to their needs – empowering them to fulfill their personal, professional and community aspirations.

Bringing Families Together with Stories in the Sun (and rain and wind!)

A major challenge during the pandemic has been supporting families with young children. Preschoolers struggled to focus on a computer as parents and experts worried about too much screen time. Distancing requirements and capacity limitations meant that our traditional preschool programs were simply not possible.

Thanks to loosening restrictions and strong partnerships with Town of Innisfil Staff, we offered our first Outdoor Family Storytime at Innisfil Beach Park; its popularity exploded as we added new locations at Belle Ewart Park, Dempster Park, and the Cookstown Fairgrounds.

At Belle Ewart Park, one new family, shared that it was their first time visiting the park and they felt like they found a hidden gem. And so did we! The success of outdoor storytimes will allow us to continue to reach under-served areas of Innisfil in new, innovative ways. Each park we visited catered to a different audience and had a unique atmosphere for storytime, providing opportunities for connection with each other, their neighbourhood and the Library. But some things remained constant: the demand for more opportunities to safely gather and the smiles on the faces of children, caregivers and our Library team members.

Partner Spotlight: Agilec & Employment Ontario

As job seekers and employers continued to struggle during the pandemic, a series of workshops in partnership with Agilec were launched in early 2021.

We worked together to enable employers and job seekers to speak with Agilec staff and have direct access to resources, programs, training and education options, and information on financial support available. Agilec provides many free Employment Ontario services and programs that are funded in part by the provincial and federal governments.

Through these partnerships, we are able to provide the services and training necessary to individual growth and economic recovery.

Workshops included:

- Employer information session – to provide an overview of services for businesses, including grants and training incentive programs
- Job seeker information session
- Second career training
- Resume building
- Interview preparation

A Digital Innisfil For Seniors

The pandemic has caused significant strain on the community. The isolation and lack of resources experienced by Innisfil's seniors was exacerbated by the pandemic. In response to the concerns identified in the Community Needs Assessment, we continue to help some of our most vulnerable citizens cross the digital divide.

With the support of the New Horizons for Seniors grant, we were able to:


- Reduce the financial barriers associated with purchasing technology by creating technology buying guides and “try before you buy” lending programs;
- Increase access to technology through the Library of Things and resources that build digital literacy skills;
- Increase access to virtual programming and services for seniors;
- Create opportunities for seniors to connect virtually with friends and family, book medical appointments and much more; and
- Build new relationships with senior members and organizations who support seniors.

Devices available to borrow include:

- Bookstands – to support hands-free reading
- Hand-held magnifiers
- DAISY Player and CD player for audiobook listening
- Cricut devices for crafting
- Kobo e-reader
- Laptop, tablets and iPads
- Light therapy lamps



**OVER 500 PEOPLE
PARTICIPATED IN
ALMOST 30 OUTDOOR
FAMILY STORYTIMES.**



Borrow these devices with your Library card

Your ideaLAB by the Numbers

We ran **1030 programs** and events for 7,065 children, tweens, teens and adults of all ages!

177 754 materials circulated, both physical and digital - that's over 177 000 ideas sparked and imaginations stirred!

In 2021, our videos (how-tos, guides and more) had over 70 000 views - that's over **3200 hours of learning** new skills or being entertained!

Nearly **4000 activity kits** were delivered for free or low cost to our community to keep them engaged, learning and active at home!

We answered over **14 500** questions!

Disruption

Sparks

Innovation