




Impact Report to the Community 2020/2021

A YEAR OF CHALLENGE.
A YEAR INSPIRED BY NEED.
A YEAR OF IMPACT.



“Thank you so much for having these programs. This is the first time I’ve seen people outside my bubble. I didn’t realize how much I missed connecting with people.”



2020 has been an exceptional year, one like no other. As the doors of Innisfil ideaLAB & Library closed in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, library staff found new ways to continue serving our communities. From shifting how we provide “traditional”, core services to reimagining ways to connect with residents, it has been a year where we have demonstrated our resilience. The Innisfil ideaLAB & Library continued to serve our communities during the pandemic, finding unique ways to respond to both the new struggles and social changes—all while taking action to survive, adapt and grow as a vital local institu-

tion now and for the years to come. We were immediately able to shift our services to provide materials and resources in a variety of formats, including limited physical hours, curbside pickup, access to a robust online collection and virtual programs – staffed behind the scenes by a highly adaptable group of people. In these times, it is more important than ever that we, as a community, find ways to stay connected and engaged with each other and the broader world. COVID-19 has revealed that Innisfil ideaLAB & Library plays a key role in providing information services and fosters an informed, connected community essential to democratic society.

Community Needs Assessment

The COVID-19 pandemic is a global crisis the likes of which hasn't been seen in a century. Consequently, our community is experiencing a range of challenges including anxiety, social isolation, disrupted employment and family routines, and economic instability. Fear, uncertainty, and anxiety due to social isolation and disrupted have become all too common in our everyday lives. These impacts have been extraordinarily uneven, amplifying inequalities across the community and disproportionately affecting those who are already experiencing vulnerability as a result of systemic inequalities. There is no doubt we need to strengthen relationships and provide support for the community. The Community Needs Assessment (CNA) took a community-led approach to begin rebuilding from COVID-19, to strengthen our relationships, inspire change from the bottom-up, and establish a more resilient Innisfil. By collaborating and sharing responsibility, the Library continues to play a key role in helping our community adapt, rebound, and recover.

Collaboratively, residents identified 5 priority areas of community concern:

1. **Mental Health**
2. **Access to Information (Connectivity, Digital Literacy, and Access to Technology)**
3. **Economic Security**
4. **Employment**
5. **Community Building with Safety Guidelines**



COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

5 Priority Areas based on our residents



MENTAL HEALTH

The loss of control resulting from the pandemic is contributing to increased fear and anxiety. Our community's collective mental health is suffering.



ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Connectivity, digital literacy and access to technology are challenges faced by many in the community at a time when access to accurate information is critical.



ECONOMIC SECURITY

Economic stress is a major issue for our community members as they try to navigate the evolving financial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.



EMPLOYMENT

Community members are experiencing unprecedented challenges. Job security was named as a top concern for residents over the long term of the COVID-19 pandemic.



COMMUNITY BUILDING

COVID-19 has amplified the importance of social and community connections. While being enormously disruptive and painful, crises are also catalysts for the development of a more resilient community!



Helping the Helpers

hackLAB technology essential in creating PPE for local frontline workers

In order to assist frontline workers and vulnerable community members with Personal Protective Equipment (P.P.E.), the Innisfil ideaLAB & Library's hackLAB technology was put into action to manufacture essential components in partnership with other organizations. We collaborated by 3D printing and delivering headbands and chin pieces to complete face shields for medical staff, as well as ear guards to protect those wearing masks for prolonged periods of time. Multiple requests were received for ear guards from local senior care home workers and frontline workers.

Non-medical face coverings were also required and made mandatory in indoor public places.

The Creative Making and Discovery Team created custom videos to highlight various ways to create P.P.E. products at home. Staff produced three different instructional videos, including D.I.Y. Olson Masks, D.I.Y. No Sew Masks and Cricut Ear Protectors, providing step-by-step, easy to follow directions.

A community-wide thank you was sent to frontline workers who were actively supporting seniors in Innisfil through purchased meals from local businesses. It was possible due to changes in the guidelines for New Horizons for Seniors federal grant program, which enabled communities to repurpose funding to support seniors during the pandemic.

From Lakeside Residence:

"Thank you so much for the delicious baked goods from Bruno's! It was a wonderful treat for the staff and very much enjoyed! I think the only thing left is crumbs! Take care and be safe!"

~ Toni Imtiaz,
Director of Community Relations

From LifeLabs at the Rizzardo Health and Wellness Centre:

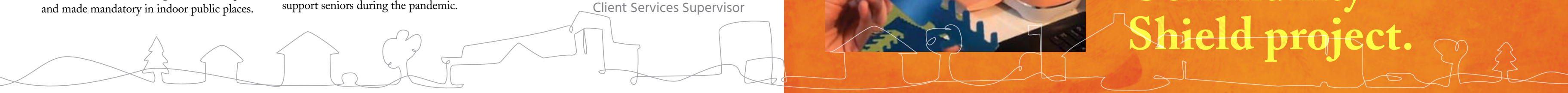
"The staff loved their lunch!

We would recommend A Taste of Europe! They were extremely happy and send thanks and appreciation for thinking of them."

~ Cathy Speers,
Client Services Supervisor



Together, Library and Town staff contributed by printing and donating 1,286 pieces to the Community Shield project.



Going Fine Free

Adoption of the Fine Free Policy is a historic change for the Library and community.

All residents should have full access to their Library and its resources. Overdue fines present a barrier for citizens who most need access to resources; especially in a post-COVID world when training and reskilling is critical to ensuring employment and economic security. In addition, research has proven that fines don't result in faster return rates, they can damage the relationship and trust with our community and interfere with the lives and success of our most vulnerable.

The removal of overdue fines reflects the values of the Library as an organization and its mandate to support literacy and lifelong learning for everyone. Library Board and Staff are committed to an ongoing process to examine and eliminate barriers in order to ensure all Innisfil residents have equitable access to services.

285
DIGITAL
MEMBERSHIPS
CREATED DURING
THE PANDEMIC

Keeping Innisfil Reading

2020

DIGITAL LIBRARY USAGE

SERVICE	USE
E-BOOKS	47,179
E-AUDIOBOOKS	17,363
FLIPSTER	4,915
TV/MOVIES/ DOCUMENTARIES	3,997
ONLINE COURSES	314

2020

% INCREASE OVER 2019

E-BOOKS	118%
E-AUDIO	48%
E-VIDEO	168%
E-MAGAZINE	73%

"I think it's wonderful and I thought I might phone CBC and tell them what we've done. I think this is something else that more book clubs should do and leave it to Innisfil ideaLAB & Library to think it up."

The pandemic has brought significant changes to how libraries get materials into the hands of residents. Our main goal was to provide increased access to digital content, bringing the physical Innisfil ideaLAB & Library experience to residents virtually. A Digital Membership was created enabling card registration remotely and ensuring residents could have full access to the hundreds of thousands of resources, from eBooks, eAudiobooks, movies, magazines, music, and learning tools available through the Library's numerous online subscription services.

Book Club quickly shifted and members met in a virtual environment, using Google Meet, which allowed members to participate in 'live' video meetings. Along with sharing thoughts on different genres, members were able to connect to share their feelings during the pandemic.

We rebranded our Homebound Service to Home Library Service, offering a monthly delivery of Library items to people who are unable to personally visit our branches. Clients share their reading preferences with us and books are then delivered right to their door. This service is available to anyone who is confined to their home or care institution due to chronic or temporary disability or those who are without transportation and unable to visit the Library Branches. A COVID-19 procedure was in place to protect the drivers and clients.

Home Library Service was identified as an important service in the Town's CNA, and serves those in isolation. It was used to provide activities to encourage clients to remain mentally active. Using hackLAB expertise, all Home Library clients received multiple Seniors Craft Kits through the service.



470
Care Calls
made
in 2020

“You guys are doing the right thing calling people. There might be someone who really needs your help. Keep up the good work.”

Supporting Seniors

Libraries are serving our communities in new ways as a result of the pandemic.

In order to support our most vulnerable, Library staff connected directly with seniors to check on their well-being, break social isolation and to connect them to other social services in the community as needed. Care Calls were an overwhelmingly positive service to check on a population who may be isolated and alone during the pandemic. Staff were able to provide residents with information about grocery and pharmacy delivery services, the Town's Essential Trips Assistance program, and mental health



“I really appreciate hearing from you. This is worse than living through the War. At least then we could spend it with family” *(91 year old living alone)*

resources. If they were in need of reading material, they were informed about the Library's eBooks and eAudiobooks, as well as other online resources. Calls ranged from twice a week to monthly, with the majority requesting a weekly call. One woman told us she was in a great deal of distress, working in health care while trying to care for her elderly parents and look after her teenaged daughter, who's living with a medical condition. Our staff member was able to refer her to a number of medical, mental health, and job-related resources, going above and beyond to help.



Warm Wishes Make Warm Hearts card creation initiative encouraged youth to send to

seniors in Innisfil. Cards were created by an art class at Nantyr Shores Secondary School. Lakeside Retirement accepted 90 cards for their residents, 10 were sent to Matthews House Hospice, 14 were given out through Home Library Service, 25 were sent out with hackLAB Senior Kits, with a total of over 100 were mailed. This initiative provided a helpful way for youth to earn community service hours, while supporting the Community Needs Assessment in multiple ways by both fostering a sense of positive community and bolstering the mental health of those who may be feeling isolated.

The Library heard that social isolation hit this demographic hard and that seniors were looking for safe ways to be creative and stay active. Thanks to funding from the New Horizons for Seniors grant, the Library launched **hackLAB @ Home Kits for Seniors**. These kits were designed to bring the hackLAB into the homes of seniors, who are generally more vulnerable and continue to be isolated. The kits were free and to could be adapted to the unique needs of individuals. One resident wrote in with the following:

“I picked up the craft kits with the books I had on hold this afternoon. I look forward to getting creative with the kits. I can't remember who sponsored these kits at no charge for seniors but I hope you will pass along my appreciation for their kindness. The curbside pickup of library items helps to lessen the feelings of isolation during covid19 especially for seniors. I eagerly await the time when personal visits to the library are possible. I miss chatting with the staff & browsing for books. Thanks to all for working during this difficult time. Take care.”

Digital Literacy

Virtual Computer Classes provide residents with opportunities for social engagement and ongoing technology learning, which supports the development of digital literacy skills. In 2020, they Virtual Computer Classes were offered on a variety of computer-related topics, taking into account customers' changing needs and desire to access digital resources. Classes highlighted how to access the Library's wide range of online e-Books, movies, and education resources. Classes were also offered on video call apps, such as WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger to better connect residents with family and friends.

One participant commented,
"Thank you so much for having these programs. This is the first time I've seen people outside my bubble. I didn't realize how much I missed connecting with people. I've signed up for more programs! I'm so excited".

connections and develop relationships with others in the local community which improved mental health and wellbeing. Online options were available to support those who recently acquired a new skill and to prevent them from losing it. Through group get-togethers and one-on-one sessions, interest was maintained and it created an appetite for future programming, growing an audience more likely to participate in programs and build on newly acquired digital literacy skills.

Virtual Tinkershop programming was a successful outlet for people to explore their creative making skills, as well as connect with others in the community to design projects for the laser cutter, vinyl cutter, 3D printer and embroidery machine. Staff continued to see a wide range of residents participating in these programs, especially seniors, as they look for new and safe ways to engage with the community during the pandemic.

Staff not only focused on skill building during Tinkershops, but also focused on helping people make Tinkershop social

ideaSHOP

In order to promote the library as a hub for discovery and experience, the ideaSHOP was launched in late 2020.

It allows residents to purchase items created by our hackLAB team and reinforces the connection between the community and the Library.

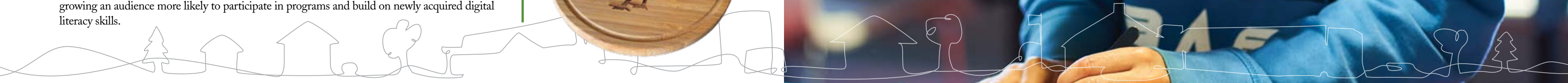
In addition to giving the community a way of accessing locally-made items, the ideaSHOP is a new way to invoke curiosity about our services and stimulate the residents' imagination to acquire the skills to create their own items.



Programs that develop digital literacy skills:

404
programs

2277
participants



Creating Connections

The Board and Staff of the Innisfil IdeaLAB & Library are committed to fair and equal access for everyone, driving us to actively connect the community with ideas, knowledge, culture, services, content, media, technologies and each other.

The Library's programming teams have been diligently working to keep Innisfil residents

connected to the Library, to resources, and to each other. Through virtual programming, residents continue to participate in the programming they care about. With children out of school, and routines disrupted, video programming is able to add continuity and consistency in families' familiar routines. Programmers encourage families to interact



online by sharing comments, pictures, and their own videos to create a dialogue and sense of community.

Early literacy development begins from birth and the Library has continued to seek ways to share early literacy skills and strategies with parents during the pandemic.

We printed rhyme booklets with early literacy information for parents. The booklets, which had previously been used to guide the in-person circle time for babies, were made available in branches. In addition, a new Baby Bookworms webpage was also launched. The website features early literacy tips and links to videos of programmers sharing each of the songs and rhymes used in the booklet.

Crafting for Humanity, a program for teens and adults, was launched to combat social isolation and reinforce positive mental health. Participants learned various crafts and skills to create items that were donated to community members in need. Participants have learned basic crochet and sewing techniques, picking up supply kits from the library in advance of the virtual programs. Utilizing the skills they have learned, participants crocheted scarves and sewed fabric face masks. The face masks were donated to local organizations in need. The crocheted scarves were placed in outdoor locations during the winter and included a note inviting those who need a warm hug to take a scarf with them.



We developed a new way to engage and inspire the local community in the hackLAB. The **Creative Making and Discovery Team** assembled kits for people to purchase. These kits, created on site by Library Staff,

showcased the abilities of the laser cutter and vinyl cutter and encouraged people to explore their creative making skills at home. The demand for these kits and the response from the community has been overwhelmingly positive.



"We are so happy they have these available to the public! It was exciting to find something for the entire family to do. Thank you, thank you, thank you!"

Future crafting projects will include a community blanket, plastic bag water-resistant mats, chemo caps, and twiddlemuffs for those living with Alzheimer's and dementia.

The crafting projects provide community members with a sense of purpose, allowing them to give back to those who need it most during these challenging times. The programming has also provided a supportive learning environment for attendees to learn new creative skills and socialize with fellow group members, enhancing mental health and community building.





Employment

As jobless rates soared, libraries are pivoting to meet their communities' employment-support needs. The Innisfil ideaLAB & Library offered residents the opportunity to advance their computer and digital literacy skills in a supportive learning environment. Class topics have a heightened focus on employment, including classes on resume optimization, professional writing for the web, job searching, and an information session on Ontario's Second Career grant program.

In addition, the Library offered a new database: *Brainfuse's HelpNow* and *JobNow* online services, both of which meet goals set out in the CNA – Access to Information and Employment.

"I've never been confident with computers but I want to thank the hackLAB team for helping me. Your patience, understanding and careful instructions have allowed me to stay busy while being stuck at home. I don't know what I would have done without you! I look forward to many more programs and learning more skills."

HelpNow provides on-demand, anytime, anywhere e-learning for all ages. It offers personalized homework help in core subjects from Kindergarten to post-graduate studies. Students communicate with live, online tutors using an interactive, virtual whiteboard to chat, write, draw, copy/paste text or images of homework problems. It also offers a writing lab, where students can receive detailed feedback on their work within 24 hours of submission. Other features are available, including collaborative tools, where students can meet around a virtual whiteboard and share ideas.

JobNow is an online service designed to support job seekers. *JobNow* features live online coaches who can assist in resume/cover letter preparation and help residents prepare for job interviews. It also offers a resume lab, career resources, and some test preparation tools.



Communications

Innisfil ideaLAB & Library is dedicated to connecting Innisfil residents with timely, reliable information and resources they need to help stay informed and connected, during both ordinary and extraordinary times. Levels of communication between the Library, the community and media have increased in order to better share accurate pandemic information, as well as library specific information related to services and programming.

Library Communications & I.T. Staff worked closely with Programming, Collections, and Customer Experience teams to overhaul the Library website landing page.

Residents now have quick, easy access to new virtual offerings. Key free resources for our community members in the areas of Mental Health, Employment, Finances, Newcomer Services, and COVID-19 updates are available along with crisis hotline information available for those in need of immediate assistance.

Building Community



We can't do it alone. Our community partners make us better.

As sustainability and food security continues to be a concern during the pandemic, Library Staff and the Innisfil Seed Library sought to fulfil the community need to grow nutritious food at home. Staff worked with Innisfil Seed Library's founder, Bridget Indelicato to develop a plan to continue to provide seeds for community members. The Innisfil Seed Library created an online form available for Innisfil residents to request seeds to be delivered to their home. The Innisfil ideaLAB & Library supported this project by providing envelopes and stamps for the seed deliveries. With a total of 1,165 seed packets available and customers requesting up to 12 seed packets each, this initiative will support up to 100 seed mail outs to the community.

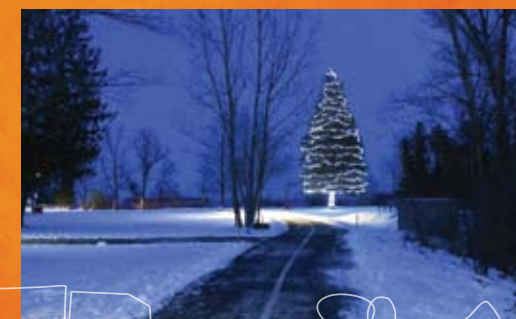
Community members are encouraged to harvest and donate seeds back to the Innisfil

Seed Library at the end of the season to help replenish the seed stock for future years.

The Innisfil Hope Tree

The Library, in partnership with the Town, lit up the Innisfil Hope Tree in Innisfil Beach Park. Adorned with bright white lights, this tree is unlike any other—a symbol of resilience, perseverance, and hope to focus the conversation on positivity within the community. A mailbox was placed near the Hope Tree and residents were invited to drop off letters expressing their hopes for the future as an antidote to the unprecedented levels of stress and uncertainty that have prevailed during the pandemic. Creating opportunities for shared experience and moments of delight and surprise will be part of the solution in supporting residents during the pandemic and beyond.

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MR
15

March 15
ideaLAB & Library closes, Staff work from home; Website & Digital Library reorganized, Online content added, Digital Memberships, Drop boxes closed, Fines turned off, Wifi extended 24/7, Production of face shields

March 27
Virtual programs begin, Care Calls for Seniors, Meals for frontline Workers, Virtual tech help

Spring

June 8
Limited staff return to work in branch, Processing of new materials backlog begins, Programming staff return to run virtual programs

June 16
Curbside service for borrowing, hackLAB & program kits, Fine free, Returns accepted, Processing of Materials backlog complete



Summer



July 21
Patio service starts (iPads, printing, faxing) Seniors Craft Kits, Free Mask program, COVID-19 Reliable Resources & Supports webpage, Seniors Emergency Kits, Spaces & Collections Prepared

JL
21

Aug 11
3 Branches open to public (reduced hours, time limits), Seniors Who Sew Kits, Senior/Youth Pen Pals, Adult Social Club, Crafting for Humanity

Fall



SE
29

Sept 29
Employment Related Computer Classes, Preschool Craft Kits, Digital Literacy Tech Tips Videos, Digital Innisfil Project Starts (grant)

Nov 12
Home Library Service, Meeting Rooms Open for Limited Use, Brainfuse (Online Tutoring & Job Support), Hope Tree, ideaSHOP opens, Baby Bookworms Self-Directed Storytime, Holiday cards for Seniors & health care workers



Doing More.



Winter



Dec 26
Second lockdown begins, Care Calls resume, Curbside service: Borrowing, hackLAB Printing, faxing

DE
26



“I am just so impressed with your library, I brag about it all the time.
Really you’re offering us the moon, I’m just so happy that I am
a patron of the library. It’s fabulous, it really is!”

