

GREAT HEIGHTS

...

Uplifting

Library

Experiences

in 2023



CALGARY
PUBLIC LIBRARY
FOUNDATION



WITH GRATITUDE, MUTUAL RESPECT, AND RECIPROCITY

We acknowledge the ancestral home, culture, and oral teachings of the Treaty 7 signatories, which include the Siksika Nation, Piikani Nation, Kainai Nation, the Îethka Stoney Nakoda Nation, consisting of the Chiniki, Bearspaw, and Good Stoney Bands, and the people of the Tsuut'ina Nation. We also recognize the Métis people of Alberta Region 3 who call Treaty 7 their home.

At Calgary Public Library we celebrate stories: the stories of the community and the land that we live on. We serve the community on Wicîspa, Guts'ists'i, and Moh'kinstsis, which describes the gathering place where the Bow and Elbow rivers meet. We respect all people who share, celebrate, and care for the Treaty 7 territory of southern Alberta and we honour the original caretakers of the land who remind us of the ongoing histories that precede us. We recognize our shared responsibilities going forward to help bring everyone together on this journey of Truth and Reconciliation.

MESSAGE FROM
ROB VAN WIELINGEN

As we reflect on the accomplishments of the past year, the generous support of our community has enabled us to continue inventing the future of libraries. I am particularly thrilled to highlight the triumphant return of the Lit Gala, a signature fundraising event whose proceeds will support children's programming, services, and spaces at the Library. The enthusiasm and commitment displayed by our donors and partners during the Gala represent Calgary's generous spirit, providing children with the best possible start as they build lives filled with learning and achievement.

The generosity of our donors has empowered the Library to innovate and pivot swiftly in response to the toughest challenges facing our community. This adaptability has been especially crucial in a year marked by rising costs of living and enhanced community need, demonstrating the resilience and responsiveness of Calgary Public Library. The Library Foundation remains committed to meeting the evolving needs of Calgarians through the Library, ensuring that our resources continue to serve as stepping stones helping all members achieve their potential.

In celebrating the achievements of 2023, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to each supporter, donor, and partner who has played a role in our shared success. Your commitment to Calgary Public Library Foundation has made a lasting impact on the landscape of our city. Together, let us look forward to a future where Calgary Public Library continues to lift us up in knowledge, innovation, and community spirit.

Rob Van Wielingen
Chair, Calgary Public Library Foundation Board of Directors

MESSAGE FROM
TRACY JOHNSON

As a donor to Calgary Public Library Foundation, you lifted our community to greater heights in 2023. Many challenges face our community — and thanks to you, the Library is a place where potential can be reached, barriers torn down, and creativity encouraged.

In March 2023, I watched as Library supporter and installation artist Maria arranged a beautiful sculpture of balloons to celebrate the opening of LibraryStore+. As we chatted, I asked Maria how she found herself in the unique career of balloon art. I was amazed to hear that her love of balloons has a profound connection to what the Library provides to her and her three daughters. For Maria, balloons are more than a colourful display, just like the Library, they are also a symbol of hope, joy, and possibility:

"I have loved balloons since I was eight years old. In the Philippines, where I grew up, we go for Sunday Mass. Vendors outside the church sell food and—guess what?—balloons. On rare occasions, my father would ask me what I'd like after service, and I'd pick a bright balloon. The excitement of being asked what you really want and then receiving it has become etched in my heart."

Being asked what you want and then receiving it. Maria and I agreed that this is the Library experience in its purest form.

Whether a big, bright balloon or your very first Library card, I invite you to reflect on the hope, joy, and possibility that you felt as a child when you received exactly what you wanted. Thank you for making 2023 an uplifting year.

Tracy Johnson
CEO, Calgary Public Library Foundation



Like a balloon,
our donors bring
Calgary Public
Library to great
heights.



...
See some of the
Library Foundation's
highest achievements
from the past year,
marking where we've
been and where we're
rising to — thanks to
donors like you.

UPLIFTING MOMENT

...
Engine 23 arrived at its
new home at Fish Creek
Library — donors are
making this innovative
play and learning space
a reality!

GIVING A LADDER UP ON LITERACY

In spring 2023, our donors sounded the alarm and launched the Ladder Up on Literacy campaign to relocate Engine 23—the decommissioned fire truck-turned-Early Learning Centre that has been in storage since 2018—to Fish Creek Library.

Fish Creek Library is our city's largest community Library location and serves almost 100,000 Calgarians, especially young families and caregivers. Engine 23 will transform the Library location into a must-visit destination for families from across Calgary. The space will engage children with its unique hands-on approach to literacy, skill-building and safety education, all while providing five-alarm levels of fun.

By purchasing a vinyl brick to inscribe with their name or message, donors have been a critical part of Engine 23 Brick-Buy-Brick campaign. These vinyl bricks will be installed in the Engine 23 space at Fish Creek Library in 2024. On Library Giving Day, an international day of Library philanthropy and advocacy, supporters were asked to Stop, Drop, and Donate, with every dollar matched by a generous donor.

*This initiative is supported by: Firehouse Subs,
Troy Life & Fire Safety, and the Walker Family*





...
Period Poverty is an issue faced by many Calgarians. Thanks to incredible community support, free menstrual products will be available at all 21 Library locations.

UPLIFTING MOMENT

DISPENSING EQUITY

In July, our team announced a \$100,000 gift from Shoppers Foundation for Women's Health™ in support of the Free. Period. initiative. This contribution enables Calgary Public Library to implement free access to menstrual products at all 21 of its locations, an initiative that is sustained by Library Foundation donors.

The Library and Shoppers Foundation for Women's Health share a commitment to address period poverty. Free. Period. is an entirely donor-funded initiative that reduces the stigma and challenges faced by people who menstruate and makes essential products more accessible across the city.

Since the Free. Period. program launched in 2021, it has provided hundreds of menstrual products through dispensers in Library washrooms.

Financial donations in support of Free. Period. continue to be gratefully accepted. Funds raised will stock washrooms at all 21 Library locations with accessible menstrual products for anyone who needs them.



...
Over 1,870 hours of access
to barrier-free mental
health support made the
difference between
despair and hope.

**UPLIFTING
MOMENT**

BARRIER-FREE ACCESS — MENTAL HEALTH & WELLNESS

In 2023, hundreds of individuals were able to access barrier-free mental health and addictions support through the Wellness Desk, an innovative, donor-funded initiative.

With registered social workers on location at Central, Crowfoot, and Shawnessy libraries, the Wellness Desk, in partnership with Wood's Homes, represents the innovation that donors make possible through the Library. The Library is a community connector providing access to the resources people need to improve their lives.

"In my time supporting Wellness Desk clients, I have learned that what they all have in common is that they are looking for connections of some kind. Whether it's connection to ideas, stories, thoughts, feelings or to people, libraries are safe spaces to grow connections and to learn."

— Ashley Davis, Wellness Desk Staff

This initiative is generously supported by the City of Calgary, Boone-Poole Family Foundation, Joanne Stalinski, Totem Charitable Foundation and Calgary Public Library Foundation donors.

LIFELONG LOVE OF READING

Since 2020, My First Bookshelf has become a hugely popular and successful early learning program. Delivering free books by mail on a monthly basis to children from birth to age five, the program creates a lifelong love of reading and puts books in their homes.

My First Bookshelf has demonstrated numerous successes in the brief period it has been offered. In a survey conducted in 2023, 87% of respondents said that the program motivates them to read with their children at least twice a week.

Program capacity has increased numerous times since the program's inception, in order to keep up with a near-insatiable community demand. In total, more than 1,100 children in Calgary have graduated from My First Bookshelf, receiving their final book the month of their fifth birthday. Graduating participants, ready to start kindergarten with a burgeoning love of reading, receive a parting gift through another donor-funded Library initiative: Kindergarten Book Bags.

My First Bookshelf is made possible through a partnership with Dolly Parton's Imagination Library and the generous support of the following contributors: Canada Life, Leah and Ernie Hagel, Hunter Family Foundation, Barbara Killick, MEG Energy, McNamara Family, Moffit Charitable Foundation, Lorraine and Peter Moore, Sticks & Strings Foundation, UTILITYnet and Sandstone Energy, The Dollywood Foundation of Canada, and Calgary Public Library Foundation donors.

UPLIFTING MOMENT

...
Donors ensured that 1,090 children came off of the waitlist in 2023 and joined the 3,478 children registered in the My First Bookshelf program.





...
Lit Gala returned triumphantly to Central Library on October 21, 2023, raising more than \$600,000 in support of the Library.

UPLIFTING MOMENT

LIT GALA RETURNS

Lit Gala 2023: GRAPHIC marked a triumphant return to honour Central Library's fifth birthday. We welcomed hundreds of guests on Saturday, October 21 to witness Central Library transform after dark and explore the world of the graphic novel, all while raising more than \$600,000 in support of children's programs, services, and spaces at the Library.

The evening included entertainment from local talent throughout the iconic building, inspired food and beverage creations, and of course, the building bathed in light that LIT not only the building but also the imaginations and passions of our guests.

Clear your calendars: Lit Gala returns on November 2, 2024 as we raise money and celebrate the Library once more.

Thank you to all sponsors, guests, and supporters. Special thanks to our Feature Space Sponsors; Heather Edwards and Viewpoint Foundation. Feature Performance Sponsor, Norrep Foundation. In-kind Sponsors; Corus Entertainment, DATA Communications Management Corp., The Globe and Mail, Hotel Arts, META Productions, OneWest Events, Orange Frog Productions, Pattison Outdoor, RedPoint Media Group, Vine Arts Wines and Spirits, and VENDO Media.



UPLIFTING MOMENT

...
In 2023, the award-winning Central Library surpassed 4.5 million visitors since its opening five years ago.

CENTRAL LIBRARY'S 5TH BIRTHDAY

On November 1, we celebrated five years of community, literature, and learning at Central Library. The award-winning building has captured hearts and minds both here at home and internationally since opening its doors in 2018.

The milestone anniversary was marked with a birthday event filled with music, games, crafts, and treats. The location has welcomed more than 4.5 million visitors and has become a central part of Calgary's fabric as a place of connection, learning, and inspiration.

At the Library Foundation, we are especially pleased to celebrate the contribution of our community of donors. Over the past five years, their generosity has created a legacy of knowledge and inspiration, transforming Central Library into a beacon of knowledge and community support for all Calgarians. These donors have led the way towards enhancing library philanthropy in our community. We are so grateful to them for believing in the vision of how Central Library would enhance Calgary's status as a world-class city.

UPLIFTING MOMENT

...
More than 80
guests joined us
bright and early at
Central Library for
the second annual
Breakfast Fundraiser
on Giving Tuesday.

ENDING THE YEAR ON A HIGH NOTE

As guests enjoyed a light breakfast, their hearts were filled with amazing stories of Library impact. Guest speakers detailed the positive difference that donor-funded Library programs and services have made in their lives. Despite the chilly morning, this event warmed our hearts and kicked off our holiday giving season.

The breakfast also marked the launch of our Charitable Gift Guide, which allows donors to support the area of the Library's work that is most meaningful to them through gift-giving.

We are thankful to a generous group of donors for matching donations during our year-end campaign. Our community raised an astounding \$437,507 in support of the Library during the final weeks of the year.

*Supported by: Mark Suchan and Barbara Gilmurray,
Deirdre and Ian Harris, Joanne Stalinski, Judith Umbach, Anonymous (6)*





EVEN MORE UPLIFTING MOMENTS

LIBRARYSTORE+

Between March and September, the Library Foundation operated LibraryStore+, a pop-up at Central Library. This temporary physical storefront project was a completely volunteer-run initiative, selling simple snacks, hot beverages, and LibraryStore.ca's most popular products. As always, 100% of proceeds were donated to Calgary Public Library.

LibraryStore+ was very popular with Library members and staff alike. It provided a wonderful lift to engage our community of volunteers (1,654 volunteer hours logged!) and to share the impact that Library Foundation donors provide. The pop-up raised more than \$23,000 —this is the equivalent of 749 brand-new books for the Library's collection!

HUMAN RIGHTS AND HOLOCAUST EDUCATION

The Human Rights and Holocaust Education initiative raises awareness and engages Albertans in critical dialogue through impactful programs, events, and speakers. A joint initiative of Calgary and Edmonton's public libraries, Human Rights and Holocaust Education programming is supported generously by a group of Library Foundation donors. In 2023, these donors supported 17 different events, reaching 5,397 people.

This program is supported by the Isadore and Florence Burstyn Memorial Fund, KSW Calgary Holocaust Education & Commemoration Endowment Fund, and donors to the Human Rights and Holocaust Education Fund at the Calgary Public Library Foundation. Holocaust programming is delivered in partnership with the Calgary Jewish Federation.

EPILOGUE SOCIETY

We celebrated a generous group of donors and shared more about leaving a legacy for the Library at our inaugural Epilogue Society Tea, which took place at Central Library in the spring.

The Epilogue Society is comprised of forward-thinking donors who have pledged a legacy gift to Calgary Public Library in their estate planning. The group continued to grow in 2023 with gift commitments and interest from both new and longtime donors.

2023 BY THE NUMBERS

RECORD-BREAKING HEIGHTS



13,577
GIFTS

\$7 MILLION

RAISED FOR THE LIBRARY
FOR TODAY AND THE FUTURE

524 DONORS

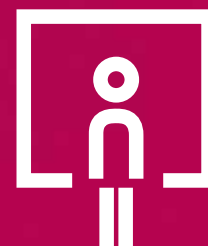
SUPPORTED THE
LIBRARY EVERY MONTH



750,000+
MEMBERS. THAT IS
56% OF CALGARIANS!



6,775,398
VISITS TO LIBRARY
LOCATIONS



90 MEETING
ROOMS BOOKED
84,608
TIMES IN 2023



THANK YOU

**Together, we've uplifted our community,
helping our neighbours reach new heights.**

Not only are these achievements worthy of their own moments of celebration, but they also mark our progress towards a stronger community.

The demand for high-quality programs, services, and spaces is at an all-time high and we welcome you to join us in 2024 to ensure Calgary Public Library continues to be a beacon of connection, innovation and literacy.

Donors help the Library reach even greater heights every day! Together, we will invent the future of libraries.

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Let's

RISE
HIGHER

together
in 2024.

DONATE TODAY!

LibraryFoundation.ca