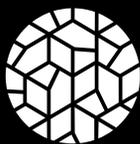


2025

A YEAR FOR **THE BOOKS**



CALGARY
PUBLIC LIBRARY
FOUNDATION

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2025
A YEAR FOR **THE BOOKS**

—
LETTER FROM THE CEO

TRACY JOHNSON

—

Last year was one for the books. But the story doesn't end there. If anything, for Calgary Public Library's members, books are where the journey begins. From newcomers to Calgary finding ways to feel at home in their surroundings to little kids discovering the magic of reading and tech-focused power users taking full advantage of the Digital Library, **everyone can find something** that sparks imagination and fosters growth.

Behind every moment of imagination and growth is the generosity of donors to Calgary Public Library Foundation, and this report puts **a spotlight on some of the most impactful** community-building achievements made possible last year. Donors touched every facet of the Library's work, shaping programs, services, and spaces that more than half the city relies on.

Donor generosity has expanded and enhanced Library collections through **The Fifth Book Campaign**, brightened Library spaces both indoors and out, and provided the capacity for vital programming to grow in step with the increasing needs of our community. Donor support is building a Library that is more accessible, more responsive, and ready to welcome more Calgarians—in more locations—than ever before.

On behalf of my colleagues at Calgary Public Library and the Library Foundation, as well as the hundreds of thousands of Calgarians who are active Library members, thank you. You helped make last year **one for the books**—and the chapters ahead are even more exciting for it.



Tracy Johnson, CEO
Calgary Public Library Foundation

—
LETTER FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

SABINA SHAH

—

As I reflect on the work of Calgary Public Library Foundation in 2025, I am in awe of the passion and commitment Calgarians continue to show for their Library. Throughout the year, the Board of Directors witnessed that commitment expressed in many ways—from new memberships and record levels of borrowing, to **the generosity of donors** who believe deeply in the Library's role in our city.

More than 17.5 million items were borrowed in 2025, and close to 10,000 new Library cards were issued each month. These numbers tell a powerful story: for more than half of all Calgarians, **the Library is woven into daily life**. They represent books being rediscovered, new resources being accessed, and ideas being explored. Every visit reflects the trust people place in the Library as a welcoming, accessible space where learning begins, curiosity is nurtured, and connection is made.

Our theme this year, *A Year for the Books*, captures the spirit of that shared experience. It was a year for the books that sparked imagination, built skills, and changed lives. It was a year for the spaces and programs that meet people where they are and bring community together. It was a year for a Library that continues **to grow alongside a changing city**.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I extend my sincere thanks to our donors, partners, and supporters. Your commitment ensures that the Library will continue **to reflect the best of Calgary** for generations to come.



Sabina Shah, Chair
Calgary Public Library Foundation Board of Directors

IMPACT

In 2025, Calgary Public Library welcomed an average of 10,000 new members every month. Continued support from donors makes it possible for the Library to realize sector-leading innovations in programs, services, and spaces, empowering Calgarians to reach their full potential and helping build a community where everybody belongs.

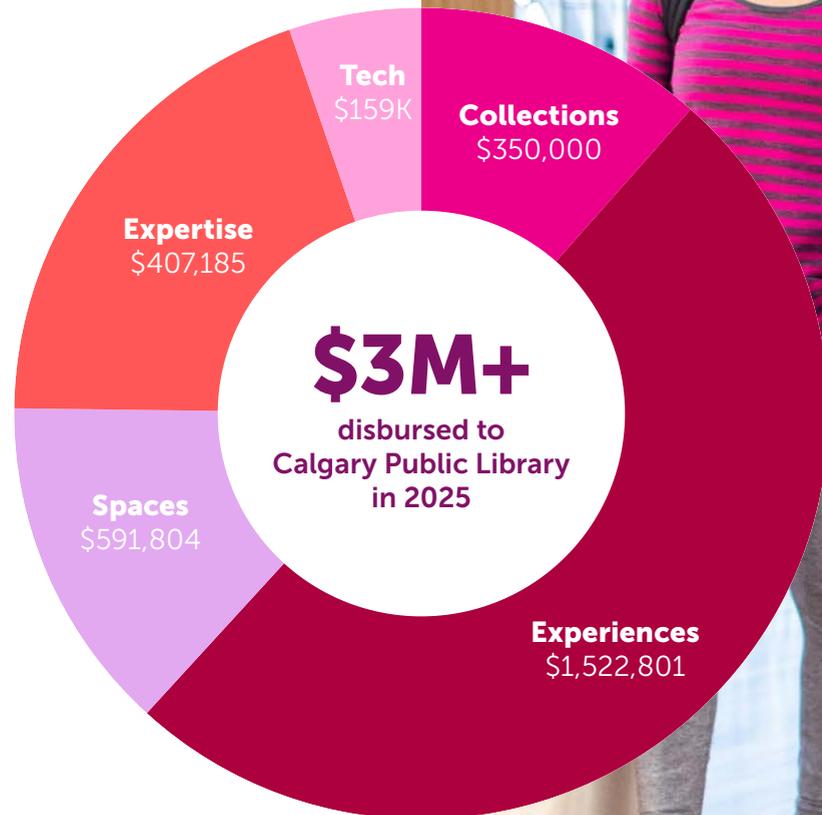
Collections: Expanded and enhanced collections items: includes funding from The Fifth Book Campaign.

Experiences: Support for Library programming, in-location resources, and outreach services.

Expertise: Donor-supported staffing positions and professional development opportunities for Library employees.

Spaces: Creating and enhancing new and existing Library spaces, including donor-supported renovations to Early Learning Centres, meeting rooms, and gathering areas.

Technology: Support for enhanced access to computers and other technology.



SPOTLIGHT

815,886
Library members

7,016,781 visits
to Library locations

\$7.8M raised
in support of
Calgary Public Library

644 monthly donors

1.1M Wi-Fi sessions

2.5M print jobs completed

537,223 computer
and Chromebook sessions

94 meeting rooms booked
113,229 times

SPOTLIGHT

250

families attended
Family Reading
Pick launch party

4,000

children currently enrolled
in My First Bookshelf

7,472

Kindergarten Book Bags
distributed

1,114 attended

Kindergarten Family Events

\$100,000 provided for
children's collections through
The Fifth Book Campaign

*"I must say as a retired educator that this
is one terrific and worthwhile program."*

*—parent of My First Bookshelf
participant*

EARLY READERS

For many families, early learning is where their Library story begins. Library programs lay a strong foundation for a lifelong love of reading, and donors help lay that foundation through support for programs that prepare young Library users to start school full of curiosity, imagination, and possibility.

The Library distributed 7,472 **Kindergarten Book Bags** for the 2025–2026 school year, helping prepare first-time students for the kindergarten experience with school supplies, activities, and storybooks that build excitement for school. In 2025, **My First Bookshelf** marked its five-year anniversary and the delivery of its 150,000th book.

The **Family Reading Pick** for 2025 was *The Wild Robot* by Peter Brown. Families from across the city took part in this shared literary adventure, reading the book together, visiting the Library for a screening of the film adaptation, and participating in Library activities inspired by the book.

My First Bookshelf is supported by: Canada Life; Lori Egger & Steve Laut; Leah & Ernie Hagel; Kanovsky Family Foundation; Barbara Killick; the McNamara family; Moffit Charitable Foundation; Lorraine & Peter Moore; Sticks & Strings Foundation; UTILITYnet.

SPOTLIGHT

Since 2019, book prices in Canada **have gone up by an average of 20%**

This means that the fifth book doesn't make it to the Library's shelves.

Meanwhile, Calgarians are joining the Library in record numbers. Major membership growth increases demand for collections items—in 2025, Calgarians checked out 2.5 million more items than they did the year before.

In response, we launched **The Fifth Book Campaign** for Library Collections.

The Fifth Book Campaign seeks to add brand-new titles and additional copies of popular collections items for every type of reader: physical and digital, hardcover and paperback, audio and eBook.

The initial response from our community was one of overwhelming support. **We've just begun to address the need to ensure Calgarians have access to the books that help them dream and succeed.**

Close to **10,000 new Library cards** were issued each month in 2025

Your next great read should be **waiting for you**, not the other way around

Imagine if the **right book** wasn't there to change someone's life when they needed it

Book prices in Canada are **up about 20%** since 2019

SPOTLIGHT

Record-breaking circulation

In 2025, Library members checked out 6.5 million digital items. Donor support for The Fifth Book Campaign helped make this record possible—new eBooks purchased using donor funds were checked out more than 7,000 times in the first two months they were available. Users of the Library's digital borrowing app Libby checked out 500,000 more items in 2025 than the year before.

More choice, delivered faster

Thanks to donor support, the number of eBooks in the Library's "first-come, first-served" Skip the Line collection increased by almost 400%, and checkouts of eBooks in this collection more than doubled, increasing by 140% in 2025. One in five items borrowed in Libby in 2025 was a Skip the Line title.

In 2025, the number of Libby users increased, while the number of holds placed through Libby remained relatively constant, indicating that users are able to borrow more titles without waiting.



"A strong library is built on its collection. As a librarian, nothing is more important to me than open and free access to stories, information, and inspiration."

—Sarah Meilleur, CEO, Calgary Public Library

Immediate impact

The Fifth Book Campaign launched last spring, and in the summer, donor funds had already enabled the Library to add thousands more titles and additional copies of popular books to the Library's collections. By September, those new books had already circulated close to 10,000 times.

Close to **10,000 new Library cards** were issued each month in 2025

Your next great read should be **waiting for you**, not the other way around

Imagine if the **right book** wasn't there to change someone's life when they needed it

Book prices in Canada are **up about 20%** since 2019

4,000+ books added!

"I'm grateful to each Fifth Book donor for helping make sure the Library can put the right book in the right hands, at the right time. As demand rises, we know there's still more to do to ensure Calgarians have access to the books that matter to them."

—Tracy Johnson, CEO, Calgary Public Library Foundation



You read the books, we'll do the math.

Borrowing adds up! Use our calculator tool at libraryfoundation.ca/calculator to see how much you've saved with your Library card!

By the Numbers

\$650,000

in donor funds sent to the Library to support collections through The Fifth Book... so far!

4,000+

items added to Library collections thanks to donor support for The Fifth Book

17.5M

total circulation of collections materials in 2025, a new record

6.5M

circulation of digital materials, including eBooks and audiobooks

21%

increase in physical collection circulation in 2025

SPOTLIGHT

24 classes participated in Readers and Leaders last year

76 first responders volunteered to read and lead

214,279 reading days logged citywide during Ultimate Summer Challenge 2025

11 days: average reading streak for Ultimate Summer Challenge 2025 participants

13,368 students took part in LitCon programming

"[The Readers and Leaders] program works—I've seen an uptake in interest to read when there's high-quality reading materials, promotion of reading as a source of learning, and just plain old fun!"

—teacher



SCHOOL-AGE KIDS

Calgary Public Library is one of the most equitable and most-used education resources outside of the classroom. Donor support fuels programs for students, teachers, parents, and caregivers, connecting curricular activities to life during and outside of the school year and fostering a sense of curiosity that leads to a lifelong love of learning.

During the 2024–2025 school year, the **Readers and Leaders** program brought first responders to 24 elementary school classrooms, familiarizing students about the role first responders play in our community to build excitement around reading. At **LitCon 2025**, thousands of students from kindergarten to Grade 9 participated in the virtual literary arts festival's author talks, workshops, and hands-on learning experiences. For **Media Literacy Week**, donor support introduced students to concepts that strengthen their media and digital literacy, including tools to suss out misinformation and identify credible sources online.

Over the summer, students kept their minds—and Library cards—busy with **Ultimate Summer Challenge 2025**. The Library's largest annual program gets participants in the habit of reading every day—with parents and caregivers, friends and siblings, or on their own.

TEENS

Teens use the Library and its variety of free resources and exclusive spaces at higher rates than any other demographic group. The Library offers a safe, welcoming, and inclusive place for teens to explore their interests and build confidence—without feeling pressure from peers or judgment from adults.

Teen Tech Labs enable teens to explore their curiosity using tech that most teens wouldn't have at home or at school. Here, teens have free access to 3D printers and advanced robotics kits usually found only in makerspaces or STEM labs.

Teens who spend time volunteering at the Library are eligible to apply for the **Bright Futures Scholarship**, which is awarded annually to support the post-secondary careers of three hardworking youth volunteers. The Bright Futures Scholarship has been awarded since 2019 thanks to Library Foundation donor Barbara Killick.

The Library's **Wellness Desk** provides mental health help to anyone who needs it, and the resource continues to evolve with donor support. The reach-out team provides proactive wellness counselling and resources to teen Library visitors, framing mental health support in a welcoming, approachable, non-intrusive way.

SPOTLIGHT

3

Bright Futures Scholarships awarded in 2025

8 Library locations with Teen Tech Labs

80% of Teen Tech Lab users will consider a career in a STEM field

8,300 teens participated in Ultimate Summer Challenge 2025

561 youth Library volunteers onboarded in 2025

"I think that what Teen Tech Labs offer teens more than anything is safe community. I am honoured to be a part of it."
—Teen Tech Lab volunteer

SPOTLIGHT

56

Rozsa Arts
at the Library
performances in 2025

10

Library locations with
Indigenous Placemaking
installations by
Treaty 7 artists

8

expert-in-residence
positions at the Library

7,444

attendees
and participants of
Human Rights and Holocaust
Education programming for
2024–2025 season

10,000 new Library members
joined per month in 2025



"I'm always honored to walk into Calgary Public Library, a space that is intentionally open for everybody to enjoy, without barriers."

—Rozsa Arts performer

COMMUNITY

Donor support makes it possible for the Library to provide enhanced experiences that illuminate the cultural and historical makeup of our community, bringing us closer to each other by fostering shared understanding.

Sponsored by the Rozsa Foundation, **Rozsa Arts at the Library** brings musicians and singers to Library locations for candid, informal concerts, helping local acts grow their audiences and putting their talent on display for Librarygoers. Similarly, the **Experts-in-Residence** program makes creatives and scholars available to consult with Library users, while giving them time and space to further their study or artistic practice. The **Indigenous Artist-in-Residence, Newcomer Artist-in-Residence,** and **Elder-in-Residence** positions are supported generously by TD.

Many donors emphasize the importance of the Library as a venue for historical and cultural reflection. The donor-funded **Human Rights and Holocaust Education** program provides opportunities for Calgarians to engage in critical dialogue about our fundamental freedoms. **Indigenous Placemaking** installations offer visual and place-based storytelling to promote understanding of Indigenous peoples and cultures within Treaty 7 territory.

The Human Rights and Holocaust Education program is supported by the Balaban Family, the Krell Family, Viewpoint Foundation, and donors to Calgary Public Library Foundation.

SPOTLIGHT

4
new Library
locations in active
development
(Belmont, Skyview Ranch,
Symons Valley, Walden)

10,000
square feet: Walden and
Belmont libraries

15,000
square feet:
Symons Valley Library

2027 expected opening
of Belmont Library

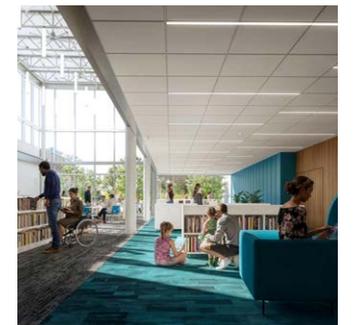
2028 expected opening
of Walden and
Symons Valley libraries

WHAT'S NEXT

Calgary Public Library's history stretches back more than a century, and donors have been vital partners throughout. Continued generosity from our community will help ensure the Library thrives well into the future, bringing innovative programs, services, and spaces to all corners of Calgary.

For the Library to keep pace with Calgary's growth, **the Library will open new locations in Calgary's newest neighbourhoods.** Ground broke last year on Belmont Library in Calgary's southwest, with an anticipated opening in 2027. Belmont Library will be followed by new locations in Walden and Symons Valley. Also in development is a Library location for the neighbourhood of Skyview Ranch.

Each of these new Library locations is designed to meet the needs of their communities. Donor support will enable these new locations to open with **cutting-edge Library amenities** like accessible technology, solo and group meeting spaces, and Early Learning Centres both in-Library and outdoors.



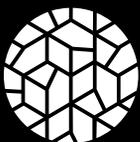
Design renderings for Walden and Belmont libraries. (Above, from left: Walden Library interior; Belmont Library interior and exterior. Opposite: Walden Library exterior.)

WHAT OTHERS ARE SAYING ABOUT CALGARY PUBLIC LIBRARY

"Since my family and I arrived in Canada, the Library has played a very important role in helping us feel welcome and comfortable in our new environment. Beyond its resources, the Library is a welcoming and peaceful space where we feel included and supported as newcomers. It contributes greatly to our sense of belonging in Canada. Calgary Public Library is much more than a place to borrow books—it is a pillar of integration, learning, and community for families like mine. This is what inspires me to support and value it deeply." —Guy T.

"When I had my first child, everything was overwhelming. I had no experience with children, let alone newborns! Baby Rhyme Time gave me some ideas and made me actually feel like a parent with nursery rhymes to sing. Now that she is older, the Library is still one of her favourite places in bad weather—how can you beat a real fire truck?" —Eryn H.

"I think the Library is one of the most incredible places in the world. It gives you a space to be safe, to be yourself, to learn, and it does all of this while being completely free to access. It's so important to have these public spaces in our community, for kids to have access to knowledge and fun for free, and for adults as well. The Library matters because it's free, because it's accessible, and because of the amazing services it provides. I love the Library and all that it offers." —Sofia G.



CALGARY
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