

## LAKE OF BAYS LIBRARY – COVID & THE FUTURE

As we all know, Covid shut down the world in March 2020. The Lake of Bays Public Library closed its doors along with everyone else but that didn't mean that the hard-working staff stopped working.

Right away, the librarians shifted into Zoom mode delivering quality programming for children, adults and families. In fact, our children's programming was awarded the Best Children's Online Programming with the Readers' Choice awards. We initiated the collaboration of Muskoka's Libraries to bring virtual author events to the region, as well.

By May 2020, both branches of the Lake of Bays Public Library were open for curbside service. We were the first Muskoka Library to reopen to limited access when the government regulations allowed. We reimagined our services in a safe, supportive way including delivering books in-person to those who were shut in. Among other initiatives, we offered take home craft kits for children's playtime and learning at home.

Meanwhile the Library Board switched to online meetings and continued its work. The Board voted to offer "Fine Free" service thereby breaking down any financial barriers to accessing library services. As part of our commitment to the future, a space study was completed for the Dwight branch.

Thanks to the support of the Township Council, we have installed an enclosed, self-ventilating Pod in the Baysville branch offering a safe and comfortable space for anyone in the community to work, attend medical and financial appointments or connect with family and others online.

We are more than just books! We inspire creativity by providing opportunities for people to discover new skills and new ideas. We help to level the playing field in literacy, life-long learning and access to technology. We are programming, culture, technology and business support. And more!

Covid provided us with a silver lining! It made us look at the world in a different light and, in particular, our own little world, our library. We learned that we can connect even through isolation. With that in mind, the Board has initiated a new committee – the Building Strategy Committee. The goal is to re-evaluate how we can grow and expand our services to give our community the best library possible. We want to move forward and explore options with the support of all, especially YOU.

What can be included in the Library of the Future? Anything! Such as technology, STEAM (science, technology, economics, arts and math), internet services, early learning, school support, business training and support... We need to look at the present but also to the future. What does the Lake of Bays Public Library need in the future?

We are reaching out to all residents of the Township of Lake of Bays. We are looking for both business and community collaboration and support. You tell us what you need now and what you would like to see in the coming years.

LAKE OF BAYS TOWNSHIP PUBLIC LIBRARY - MOVING ON!

