

# ***Library Month at Your Daycare***

## ***Annual Impact Report***

Prepared for:



**THE ROTARY CLUB OF CALGARY**

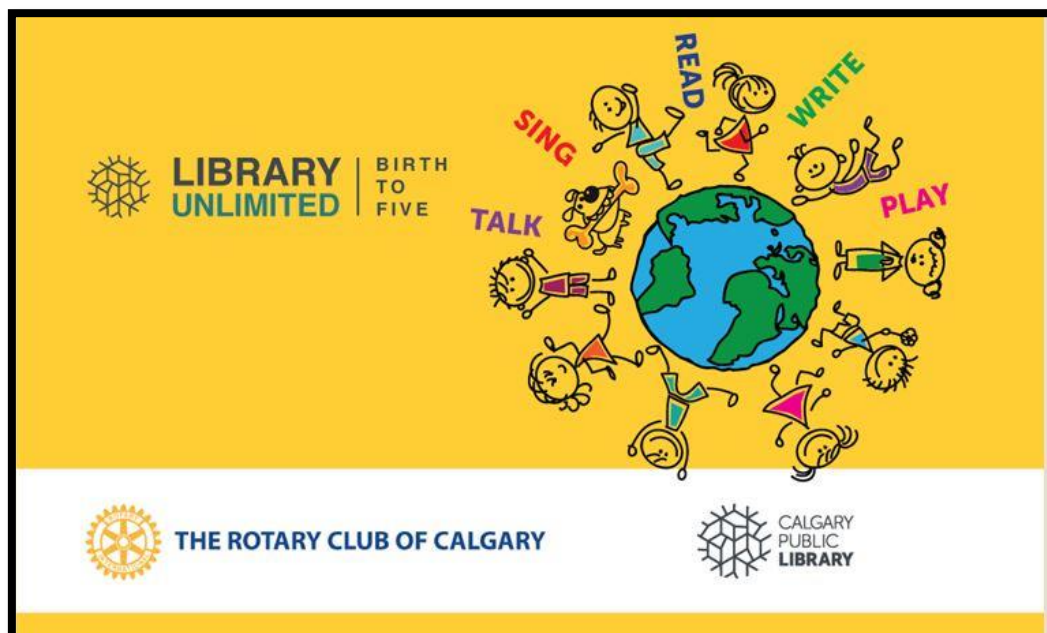
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**LIBRARY MONTH AT YOUR DAYCARE Grant Impact Report**  
**Prepared for ROTARY CLUB OF CALGARY | SEPTEMBER 1, 2016**

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Project Background	1
Activities and Impact	2 - 4
Challenges and Areas of Growth	5
Volunteer Engagement	5
Comments & Testimonials	6
Profiles, Promotion and Sharing	7
Summary and Future Vision	8



## **PROJECT BACKGROUND**

### **LIBRARY MONTH AT YOUR DAYCARE**

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**Library Month at Your Daycare** is an innovative four-week early literacy outreach program targeted to preschool aged children, daycare staff and parents. Early learning enrichment is vital to nurturing the potential of Calgary's children; this program was designed to deliver important early literacy messages and resources to parents, caregivers and daycare staff while introducing the Library as a vital educational resource. Both the children and staff participate, instilling a love of learning in the children and building knowledge of the 5 principles of early learning and literacy (Talk, Sing, Read, Write, Play) for the staff.

**Library Month at Your Daycare** aligns with the strategic direction of Calgary Public Library. First, the program supports *strengthening neighbourhoods in a growing city* by ensuring the Library has a positive presence in every Calgary neighbourhood through in-Library and mobile programs and services. **Library Month at Your Daycare** allows us to *bring the Library into more people's lives* and partner with other organizations to create joint educational experiences. The Library strives to *focus on services that make a difference* and **Library Month at Your Daycare** is an example of a sustainable model for early literacy and a way to impact children and families in the community.

**Library Month at Your Daycare** allows the Library to connect with individuals that may not be currently accessing physical Library spaces. Community outreach is an integral part of reaching priority populations and **Library Month at Your Daycare** is an engaging program that gets preschool children excited and primed for learning, building a foundation for lifelong development and growth in literacy.

To support the program, the Library planned to pull books from the existing collection for use in Daycare Centre visits. Thanks to the generosity of **Rotary Club of Calgary** over 6,800 children's picture books and board books were purchased and dedicated to support **Library Month in Your Daycare** exclusively, ensuring that there was no impact on the availability of children's books at the Community Libraries.

## **ACTIVITIES and IMPACT LIBRARY MONTH AT YOUR DAYCARE**

**Library Month at Your Daycare** was designed not only to develop early literacy skill in the children, but also to enhance capacities of the adults in their care. The program presents opportunities to both early childhood educators and parent participants with ways to enhance story time, new ideas on delivery of songs, rhymes, finger play and puppetry, as well as early learning tips to support holistic development of children in their care.

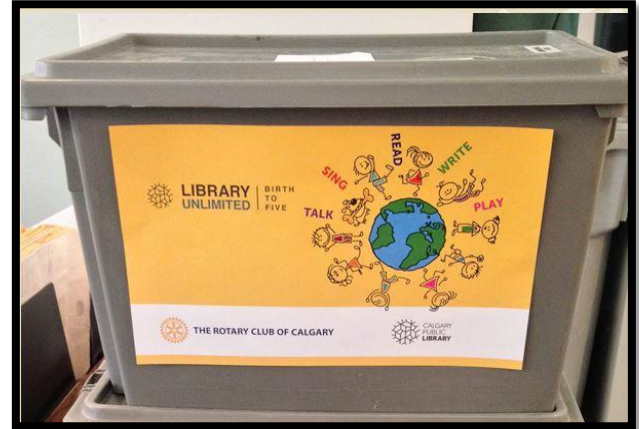
Throughout the year, Library staff made 800 visits to 185 participating daycare centres reaching 16,000 children and staff. This exceeds the initial goal of reaching 150 daycares by the end of 2015 and in 2016 expanding to 180 daycare visits became the new goal. All of the 19 Community Libraries are involved in the delivery of the program.

The program models and teaches early literacy behaviors to childcare staff in licensed daycares through rhymes, songs, finger plays and library materials appropriate for toddlers and preschoolers. The information is shared with parents to reinforce positive behaviors at home, supporting the development of reading readiness skills critical to optimal early literacy development.



Weekly visits to participating daycares include:

- A fun, interactive storytime with songs, rhymes and picture books. (Over the 4 week program, Library facilitators will repeat many of the songs and rhymes so that the children and staff will learn them.)
- Free Library cards for all children
- Free Library cards and Library resources for daycare staff on early childhood care and development
- Take-home information for parents and handouts displaying the 5 principles of early learning and literacy (Talk, Sing, Read, Write, Play)
- A leave behind Rotary branded book box containing developmentally appropriate library books for daycare staff to use with the children throughout the month



The “*Early Literacy Enhanced Storytimes*” take the traditional one step further, going beyond modeling language and book sharing activities with children to:

- Explain to parents and caregivers how the elements of the storytime support early literacy
- Explain to parents and caregivers why early literacy is important
- Demonstrate how parents and caregivers can interact with their children outside of storytime to create enjoyable experiences with books and build the child’s foundation for understanding language, and later, printed words

**Library Month at Your Daycare** offers children opportunities to participate in storytelling, songs, rhymes and even practicing sign language. The rhymes and songs involve sequencing and memory which help children prepare for school. Children who have had joyful experiences with the library often approach school with a positive attitude, ready and excited to learn.

Using books and stories to help children think of their own solutions to problems helps them develop problem-solving skills. Researchers have found that having ideas for tackling problems helps children in learning new tasks and handling social situations.

**Library Month at Your Daycare** has provided the Library with unprecedented opportunities for staff to connect with childcare providers and the early learning community. The Library has been able to share critical information on early literacy, supporting children's development and preparing them with skills to succeed as they enter school-aged years.

**Library Month at Your Daycare** results in a number of positive outcomes for participants including:

- Opportunities to introduce daycare staff to a variety of Library resources such as sound recordings and the *Grow a Reader App* that will help them to share language, rhymes, songs and literature with very young children
- The development of early and on-going positive relationship between the Library and the youngest customers, their parents and their professional caregivers
- Providing young children with a comfortable experience with Library staff through fun and motivating experiences with print
- Contributing to the child's developing intellect, language, awareness of the world around him and imagination



## **CHALLENGES & AREAS OF GROWTH** **LIBRARY MONTH AT YOUR DAYCARE**

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One of the unexpected challenges we faced at a few locations is that some families were hesitant at first to borrow books from the Library as they were worried they might be lost or damaged at home! We always try to reassure staff and parents that what is most important is that children have access to a variety of literacy materials at home and that there is contingency budget to replace materials that are “well-loved” by children when they are borrowed from their daycare.

Some of the daycares we currently serve are French Immersion focused. In order to meet community needs, French picture books will be considered as we continue to enhance the resources provided to participating daycares.

**Library Month at Your Daycare** has become an extremely sought after program by daycares across the city and some daycares have reported that they would be keen to have the Library return for more visits to their centres. One facilitator suggested that the program itself be extended and that instead of one weekly visit over four weeks, a more effective schedule might be to visit every two weeks for 3-6 months.

## **VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT**

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There is a letter and library card package for the parents and Library volunteers were engaged to assemble the packages. We had a very enthusiastic volunteer group over the spring and summer who were so keen and excited about the work they did together for this project that they exchanged business cards to stay in contact and formed a job club!



## COMMENTS and TESTIMONIALS LIBRARY MONTH AT YOUR DAYCARE

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Feedback from daycare staff, parents and library staff participants has been consistently positive:

“The children were all very excited to have us there to read stories. Both groups enjoyed singing along to “Pete the Cat I love my white shoes”, as a lot of them know the story already. One boy was very thrilled to hear that I had brought library cards for all of them. When I was leaving he said “Can I have my library card now?” The teachers were very happy to learn of the Library Month at Your Daycare program and they were happy to find out that all library cards are free and have no expiry date.”

“The program should run all year! Library **YEAR** at Your Daycare!”

“The children are very happy when the Librarian comes and they even know the time and day of the week. Parents are also happy. They borrowed books for their children”

“I love that the children have been practicing “making spiders” with their fingers for our song. They also were very attentive during our rhymes and insisted that I do the “correct” actions for my songs, no deviating from the introduced patterns.”

**Library Month in Your Daycare** is making a difference in the community. Last visits are often reported as bittersweet as they make connections with children and staff at centres.

Notably, Library staff report being able to connect with a larger audience of new and emerging readers and that we are part of building a city of readers and life-long Library users.

“One Saturday afternoon at work, after I had completed my last visit to the daycare, I heard a small girl calling, “Julie, Julie” as she ran over to me. Her mother was right behind her. I was puzzled for a moment until the mother said, “Oh, I’m so glad you are here, she wanted to come to the library to see you!” I, then, recognized her from the daycare and we had a nice chat about her and the library and the books she had found. It is fulfilling to know that we do make a difference.”



## **PROFILES, PROMOTION and SHARING LIBRARY MONTH AT YOUR DAYCARE**

Rotary Club of Calgary continues to be recognized for their generous support of **Library Month at Your Daycare**. The leave behind book bins that are used to transport materials for the program proudly display the Rotary Logo and Library Unlimited brand. The letter and card package distributed to parents acknowledges Rotary Club of Calgary's generous support of the program, and Library staff recognize Rotary when introducing the program to daycare centres.

The Calgary Public Library and Calgary Public Library Foundation thanked Rotary Club of Calgary through social media including Facebook and Twitter.



If there are any interested Rotary members who would like to see Library Month at Your Daycare in action, we would be happy to arrange for you to join library staff at an upcoming daycare centre visit.

## **SUMMARY AND FUTURE VISION** **LIBRARY MONTH AT YOUR DAYCARE**

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The success of Library Month at Your Daycare has expanded how the Library envisions delivery of services to the early learning community. Having visited 185 daycares over the past year, we will look to include additional centres. In cooperation with The Davar Child Care Society and Churchill Park Family Care Society, we are exploring how to expand the program to dayhome providers.

The Calgary Public Library's strategy to enhance early learning spaces and programs for the birth to five populations, their families and caregivers continues to develop with new connections and expanded resources in the community. An informal community of best practice has been formed with members of Telus Spark and the National Music Centre to share information on new programs and spaces emerging for each organization.

The Library is also looking to develop its continuum of services for adults, and enhance the suite of professional and personal development opportunities focused on holistic child development for staff and patrons in the future. As the Library builds new programs and services to support early learning engagement with child care professionals, envisioning new services to support adults in the field will be explored.

Great cities are defined by the ability of all who live there to access information, knowledge and support to enrich their lives. The greatest investment our society can make is in people's opportunity to grow, learn and prosper.

At the heart of every great city is a great library. Thank you to Rotary Club of Calgary for helping us to transform a great library system into the best library system in the world for Calgarians.