



2015/16

annual report

RMLBDHLV HEWFBRWFES
ENPAXPCOHFNJBBRWR
RODAOVPMFKSQU
LIEM I

KDQKN

HUQOPD

KAYXOBS

CDJYOOZ

IGIERV

KP

OLSDP

VIUTOHZ

AGPQOR

UW

LVBFBZ

HQNHQE

RIMTGR

HALIFAX PUBLIC
Libraries

RUXGUGWGYDBMA
VGFQAQXMJSZGY T
RACCNXVKKHYF ZKRT
AORRUQGIMPELLXYWST
SZMAAXEZEI EWFRNXOYU
GLABWGDQYNNWLLIDYD
PE ISMRUWVYCLF
P REA

HSI
ALIQ
SSUE
EDPZ
USQO
NLF
CFL
N

Message from the Board Chair

FULL STEAM AHEAD



For Halifax Public Libraries, the past year has exceeded our expectations. As Chair of your Library Board, I have marveled at the impact the new Halifax Central Library is having in our city and far beyond. It's become a magnet for people, attracting 1.9 million visitors in its first year of operation. The myriad of public forums, book readings, and cultural activities held at Central are raising important public issues, stimulating creativity, and encouraging reading at all ages.

With renewed and inspiring staff leadership, we continue to provide exceptional library services across our 14-branch library system. Whether we are hosting internationally-known authors, spearheading African Heritage Month, welcoming newcomers to Canada, or innovating in rural library services, our libraries are more critical than ever as active partners in community outreach and development.

Working with our Chief Librarian Åsa Kachan, the Board has launched *Let's Talk Libraries*, as the first phase in our current strategic planning process. We have asked you to imagine your public library of the near future, focusing broadly on the collection, technology, programming, and community spaces. This planning is a sign of our commitment to responding to emerging and changing needs.

While our Chief Librarian and her senior management team oversee Library operations, the system is governed by our ten-person Halifax Regional Library Board. Over the past year, your Board has begun to look at its current governance practices and how we compare with the leading library boards in Canada. I truly appreciate the support of our Executive Committee composed of Waye Mason, Tara Gault, and Matt Whitman. Our Finance and Audit Committee, chaired by Leah Hamilton, keeps an eye on our budget and does so in a most professional way.

On behalf of the Halifax Regional Library Board, I invite you to review our Annual Report, to take an active interest in our library system, and to help us to chart our future.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul W. Bennett".

Dr. Paul W. Bennett
Board Chair

Message from the CEO

TRANSFORMATIONS



It has been my pleasure to lead the extraordinary team at Halifax Public Libraries over this past year. Every day, remarkable things happen at our 14 branches. Individuals without technology are able to use the Library's computers and WiFi to access resources, apply for jobs, or connect with friends across the world. Newcomers become more confident in English, toddlers take their first

steps, teens record their first single, and customers discover something they didn't even know they were interested in through our resources and programs. These are examples of the transformational possibility of Halifax Public Libraries.

Our organization is also undergoing a transformation. With the outstanding success of our Halifax Central Library, we have become known as "the beating heart of the downtown." With new leaders in key roles, service and space improvements to better meet community needs, and the introduction of new resources including e-magazines and language-learning programs, Halifax Public Libraries is determined to be your most valued civic resource. Public consultation is currently underway to inform our next strategic plan, as we prepare ourselves to continue to wow the community for years to come.

People share with me every day how the public library has changed their lives. Our branches are community spaces of great importance. Halifax Public Libraries offers excellent resources, programs, and services at every branch – and beyond – to ensure our residents have the opportunity to become literate, digitally confident, and connected to their community. I am excited to share some of our successes with you in this Annual Report.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Åsa Kachan".

Åsa Kachan
Chief Librarian / Chief Executive Officer



table of contents

about us	5
connecting people	6
enriching communities	8
inspiring discovery	10
beyond our walls	12
revenue & expenditures	14
thank you	15

COVER: *Wanda Robson (local community educator, author, and the youngest sister of Canadian civil rights icon, Viola Desmond) greets a young library-goer.*

PHOTOS: Halifax Public Libraries unless otherwise noted.

LIBRARY BOARD 2015-16

His Worship Mayor Mike Savage, ex officio

Dr. Paul W. Bennett, Chair

Councillor Wayne Mason, Vice-Chair

Ms. Stephanie Clark

Ms. Tara Gault

Ms. Lorraine Glendenning

Ms. Leah Hamilton

Mr. Rany Ibrahim

Ms. Janet Newton

Mr. Doug Vaisey

Councillor Matt Whitman



"The first thing I did when I moved to Halifax nearly three years ago was to get my library card. I have enjoyed computer classes, university lectures, a knitting group, and movies as well as borrowing books. But, the best use for me is to be able to go with my one year old grandson to play and get books in the wonderful children's area." — Janet Newton



"Growing up in Egypt, I learned firsthand the important role of the Ancient Library of Alexandria. Despite the change of time and place, the Halifax Public Libraries plays the same role in our region as major centres for people to gather and learn." — Rany Ibrahim



Our libraries are vibrant and vital community hubs

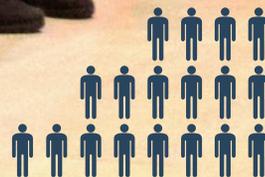
We are here for everyone, inviting you to spend time in our spaces, enjoy our programs, engage with others, share ideas, or savour a moment of solace.

Halifax Public Libraries is a place for everyone

Our 14 branches belong to all the citizens of Halifax. We are welcoming, safe places where people of all backgrounds, young and old, can feel connected to each other and their city.

Halifax Public Libraries is a centre for learning, inspiration, and exploration

Curiosity is alive and well in our libraries, where inquisitive minds of all ages explore literature, information, and new technology.



↑ +24.7% over 2014-15

3.6 million

TOTAL VISITS, 2015-16

INSTANT WIFI CONNECTIONS

The natural bustle of today's library includes customers searching and sharing on their mobile devices. Providing unfettered public access to the Internet is a must, and at all Halifax Public Libraries' branches, getting online is now as simple as walking through the doors. We're Halifax's largest provider of free WiFi.



+40.5% ↑
ADULT PROGRAM
ATTENDANCE



+24% ↑
COMPUTER
BOOKINGS



+27.6% ↑
MEETING
ROOM BOOKINGS



A HUB FOR NEWCOMERS

Transitioning to a new home requires many helping hands—and a community hub for making connections to people and to information. As newcomers arrive, we offer a range of specialized services, including language learning, technology support, and introductions to Halifax. Working with partners, we co-present community events. This year, for new Canadians from Syria, we are providing tailored family programs, conversation groups, Homework Club, and many other services.

Today's library is less about what we have for people and more about what we do for (and with) people.

connecting people

SHARED EXPERIENCES

The *Creighton Street Painting Project*, a Pop-Up Park by TD Friends of Environment Foundation, African Heritage Month's *Lift Every Voice* music showcase by African Nova Scotian Music Association—these are examples of the extraordinary community programming we make happen by partnering with local organizations and businesses. As hosts for a variety of special events, the Library sets the stage for people gathering together and connecting with each other.



Photo: TJ Maguire, Creighton Street Painting Project

EXPANDED RELATIONSHIPS

Many organizations do exceptional work for our communities. As the Library listens to their needs and seeks ways to support their efforts, new and richer collaborations emerge. Autism Nova Scotia now houses its resources at Halifax Public Libraries and provides our information desks with new visual information aids. ISANS' addition of *Networking in Motion* to our *Small Business Week* activities adds another dimension to what we can provide for our customers.



Thundermaker, Alan Syliboy

MOBILE PRINTING

The Library is always on the lookout for technology to meet modern demands. PrinterOn mobile printing is the latest acquisition. Now, anyone can use their mobile device or personal computer to remotely send a file to print for pick-up at most branches.

Modern libraries play an important role in fostering community growth. So—we must plan to be amazing over simply acceptable.

enriching communities

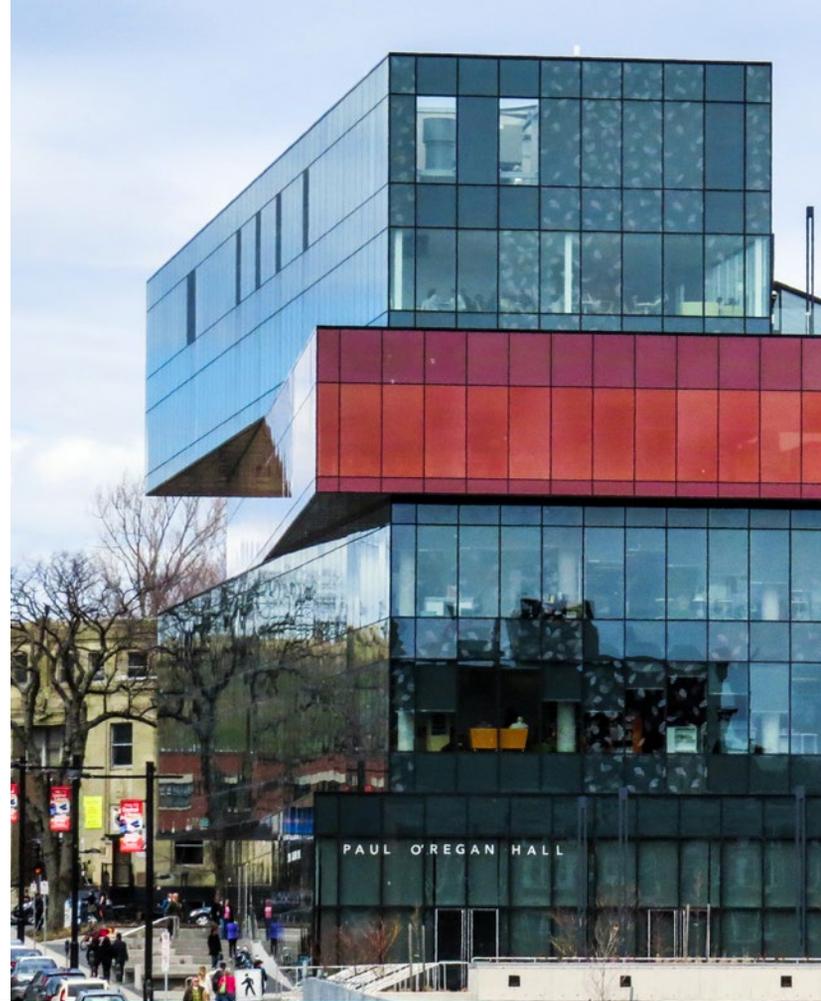
REIMAGINED SPACES

To better serve our communities, we are adapting our spaces to address the needs of the day and to create places of inspiration. Removing a wall in the Halifax North Memorial Public Library resulted in better access to technology, a dedicated teen area, and more space for everyone. At Keshen Goodman, a simple exchange of floor spaces turned a computer room into a quiet retreat.



WHAT A YEAR, CENTRAL LIBRARY!

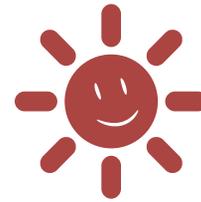
Halifax Central Library has become a glowing example of what happens when a community plans together. We had estimated 900,000 visits in the first year. We reached 1.9 million. Many citizens praise Central Library as a brilliantly designed and highly functional space that has become an essential community hub. Others call it “the beating heart of the downtown,” and the Governor General awarded Central Library the 2016 Governor General’s Medal in Architecture. Central Library has had an outstanding first year and our positive impact on the community promises to be long lasting.





BORROWING TECHNOLOGY

The Library is committed to helping customers become comfortable with new technology. All branches are now equipped with Chromebooks and iPads that can be borrowed for in-branch use. We're even offering a suite of iMacs at Keshen Goodman. Need training? We provide that too.



6,580 ↑

SUMMER READING
CLUB READERS
107,290 BOOKS AND
LITERACY PROGRAMS



eLIBRARY EXPANSION

The Library's collection of electronic resources is growing. Rocket Languages, an online language-learning program, and Zinio e-magazines, are two of the latest and most popular services in our eLibrary. With easy-to-use interfaces for desktop and mobile, customers can choose the style and place for their learning and entertainment experience.



inspiring discovery

A COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY

Our communities are rich in diversity and we want to make sure customers see themselves reflected in the Library's collection and programs. Increasing titles in Arabic and French languages; African heritage, First Nations, and LGBTQ subjects; and braille format has been a focus this year. We also introduced PENpal, the talking pen that helps customers read books in duo-languages.



CAMPAIGNS FOR READING

While we continue to become more expansive in our services, books and reading remain a pleasure. We enjoy inspiring residents of Halifax to read more and discover new authors. In association with Atlantic publishers, we enthusiastically re-introduced communities to local writers through a new eBooks collection, *Read Local*. Teens were encouraged to think about reading and its importance in their lives through a NS Teen Read Week contest on social media.



*While you've been busy
Googling, there's been a
revolution in libraries
—and it's noisy.*

Beyond Our Walls

ABILITY TO BORROW

The Library asked, what barriers do customers face? And, how do we remove these obstacles? As a result, we had a great year exploring new service improvements and undertaking a comprehensive review of our borrowing procedures. Easing restrictions, streamlining processes, and empowering our staff to provide excellent service is good for everyone.





WHAT IS A COMMUNITY LIBRARIAN?

Our commitment to serving all residents of Halifax is unwavering. We now have an office in Musquodoboit Valley, as a home base for our Community Librarian. Our Community Library Assistant at Cole Harbour branch is working with the North Preston, East Preston, Cherry Brook, and Lake Loon communities to develop valuable programs together. Where there is a need, we will find innovative solutions and build meaningful relationships.

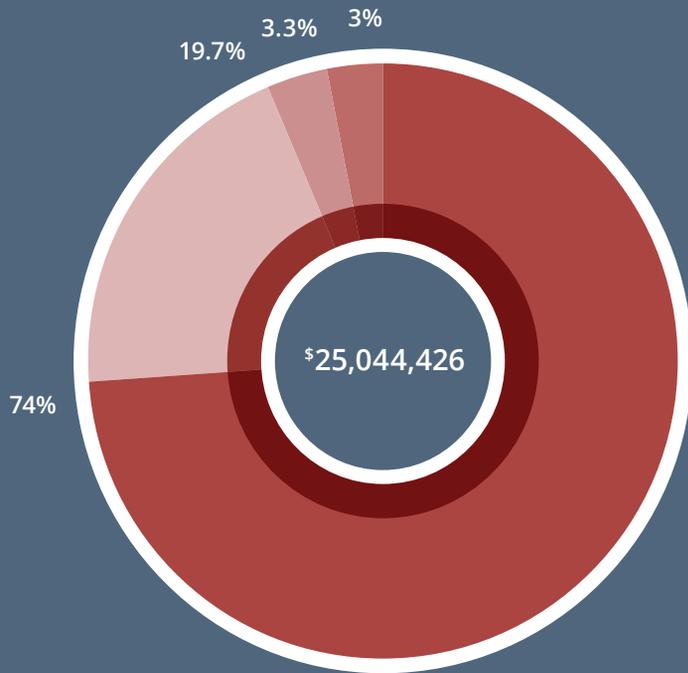


MOBILE CIRCULATION KITS

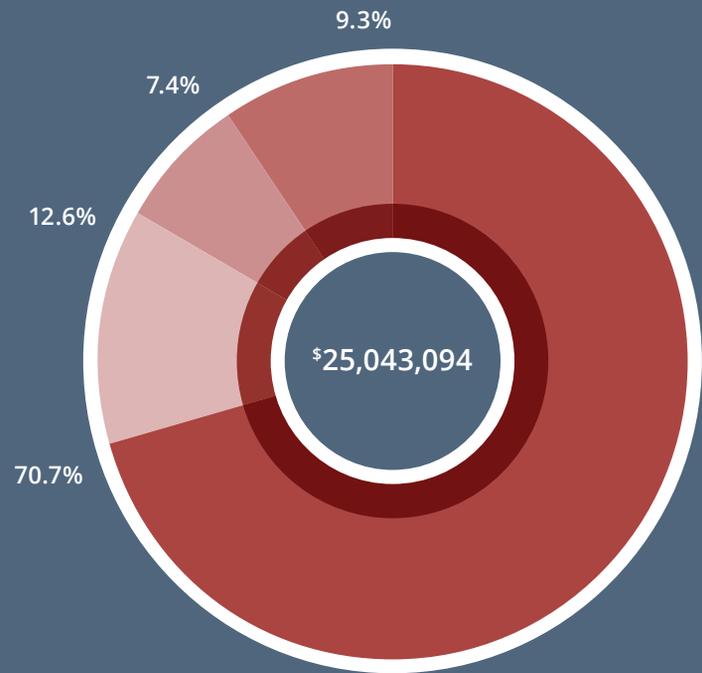
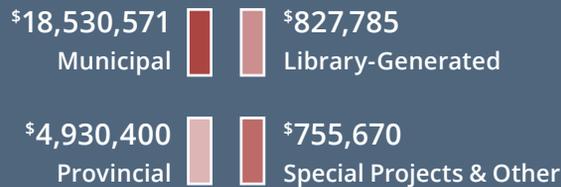
Getting out and working in the community is a growing part of what the Library does. Pop-up libraries are a great way to serve neighbourhoods, and now we have the technology to loan Library materials and issue Library cards on the spot.

revenue & expenditures

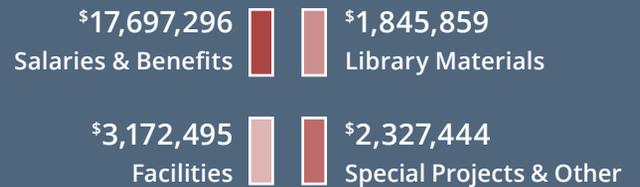
Halifax Public Libraries is grateful to be primarily funded by the Halifax Regional Municipality and the Province of Nova Scotia. Additional funding is received to support special activities including English language learning for newcomers and literacy support. The Library also generates revenue through fines, meeting room rentals, and fundraising.

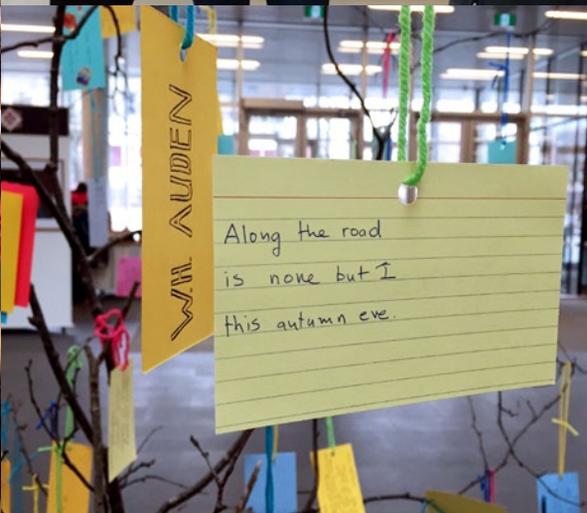


REVENUE



EXPENDITURES





*"One of the deep secrets of life is that all that is really worth the doing is what we do for others."
—Lewis Carroll*

Thank you, donors and partners for doing for others by investing in your public library.





Photo: David Fraser



HALIFAX PUBLIC
Libraries