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It's a Crime Not to Read

Program Report – August 2015

Prepared for:

Rotary Clubs and Donors

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INTRODUCTION

The Calgary Public Library Foundation's vision is to create the best public library in the world for Calgarians. By *Building Readers for Life* and helping people access the skills and support they need to improve their lives – the Library creates a powerful, positive long-term impact on individuals and betterment of our community at large. Foundational literacy skills are essential to succeed today and that is at the heart of the public library's service to all who live here.

During the 2014/2015 school year the Calgary Public Library's ***It's A Crime Not to Read*** program was expanded to 21 public and separate elementary schools across the city thanks to the generous financial support received from:

Burnswest Corporation

CIBC World Markets Children's Foundation

Rotary Club of Calgary East, Rotary Club of Calgary Olympic

Rotary Club of Calgary

Rotary Club of Heritage Park

Calgary South Rotary Partners

Rotary Club of Calgary West

Rotary Club of Calgary Sarcee

Canadian Oil Sands

Nexen Energy

and individual donors

Local police officers shared the best of Calgary Public Library's children's collection with over 1400 grade 2 – 4 students.

PROGRAM GOALS

This uniquely "Made in Calgary" initiative links Library staff and members of the Calgary Police Service with students in Grades 2 – 4. This connection gives children the literacy tools they need to achieve better school performance and higher employment and earning levels, and creates strong positive relationships between communities, their public library and local police.

There are two interconnected goals of "It's a Crime Not to Read":

1. Supporting the development of literacy and reading skills in young Calgarians, including those most at risk of low literacy levels
2. Strengthening community/police service ties, resulting in safer Calgary communities

Program coordinators strive to make interesting books accessible to everyone with a variety of high interest picture books, easy readers, chapter books, fiction and non-fiction. The students are given the opportunity to interact with positive, prominent figures in their community who are excited about books and reading.

In addition to encouraging kids to get excited about books and reading, the program creates lasting community relationships by increasing awareness of the resources of the Calgary Public Library and the Calgary Police Service. It's a Crime Not to Read reinforces the positive role of police in our society and highlight that its members are approachable and friendly.

We are pleased to report that both goals were achieved in 2014- 15 school year.

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2015 PROGRAM OVERVIEW

- Once a month during the school year Library staff and a police officer from the community visited Grade 2-4 students in participating schools
- The police officer reads to the children from books selected by Library staff—illustrating the importance of developing strong literacy skills—and answers questions about the police force
- Library staff bring a selection of books and students are encouraged to use their Library cards to borrow items of their choice to read at home
- In the fall, students participate in a field trip to their local Library to explore all of the things the Library has to offer and families are introduced to both collections and programming
- In the spring, students and their families are invited to join Library, school and police staff at a Family Pizza Night to share stories and pizza, connecting families with their communities and fostering longer term relationships
- A local children's author visited each school in the spring where students learn about writing and creating stories
- At the end of the year, students receive a free book with a name plate to take home — **for many children this may be the first book they have ever owned**

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PROGRAM IMPACT and LONG TERM OUTCOMES

PROGRAM IMPACT

- Over 1,400 students from 21 elementary schools across the city participated in the program in the 2014-2015 school year
- 17,500 library books were borrowed and student self-reports of "I think reading is good" increased by almost 10%
- Students and their families were supported by increasing their reading andliteracy levels and by becoming more familiar with the free diverse materials and programming available at the Calgary Public Library
- Participating students report visiting the library with their families and positive image of libraries in general improved
- The police officers became role models and mentors for the students, building positive community/police relations and reinforcing the positive role of police in society
- Parents report children sharing interesting books they get to borrow as well as taking home positive messaging that reading is fun and police officers are approachable and helpful

LONG TERM OUTCOMES

- Stronger literacy skills improved school performance, self-esteem leads to higher future employment and earning potential
- Key connections are made between children, their families, neighbourhood police and their local library—lasting beyond the end of the school year

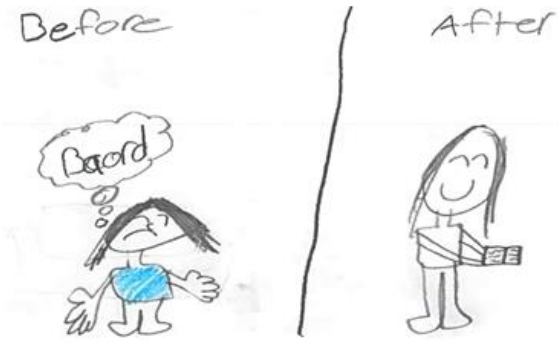
COMMENTS AND TESTIMONIALS

It's a Crime Not to Read touches students and their families across the city. It has become a most beloved program by with the unique partnership between Calgary Public Library and Calgary Police Service.

We offer a sampling of comments from the 2014 – 2015 school year that attest to the reach and impact of this important program.

From the students:





before I hated reading but now I love it because it's very interesting

crime not to Read Made me like reading a bit more

ever Sike crime not to read came to our School Reading has been much more fun

I really liked reading and crime not to read helped me realise how important reading is

I like reading now because of your books.

I like the police because you get to ask them Questions.

I feel safe around the Police, not scared.



***From parents*:**

She loved to have more opportunities to get more books to read and to meet more entertaining people reading and talking about books

She said: "Mom do you know that even police officers love to read books.

He was able to find books related to his interests which helped encourage further reading (voluntarily).

likes to be able to take home books since not always able to get to Library.

Last time i go with my Son in Library Crime to read programme then he explain my about police officer he said mom they are safe for us. She told me Police are not Scary any more

He said that the officers are so nice and he realize now that they are normal people just like us! :)

They enjoy the reading and the friendship they get from the police officers

Always the morning of the visit he would excitidly exclaim that CPS was coming to his school.

They love having the offic come and read to them! "Very Cool"

From police:

This program builds positive relationships between the police officers and the children. They love being able to say hi outside of the school using our names. Due to the positive interactions within the program the children are more likely to go to the police for help if needed. Each positive interaction is witnessed by others which further builds on community relations. As the children age the positive interactions and feelings will last and hopefully continue to influence those around them who have not had the benefit of the program.

I believe participating in the program allows police to have a positive impact on the students through interactions and building relationships. At the end of the day, as police officer you want to make a difference in someone's life. I believe, in a small way, we achieve that with ICNR.

Without a doubt, it [my favorite part of the program] was getting to know the kids over the course of the school year... the kids were always enthusiastic and willing to share. The relationships fostered here, between young people and the police, are of incredible value.

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From Teachers:

Kids are able to get out books from the Public Library at school because I think a lot of kids don't have the opportunity to visit the public library.

ICNR has always been a positive experience for the students. Students have discovered books we don't have at the school library. I feel reading habits and level increased because of participation in ICNR!

The library staff was so passionate about books and established excellent rapport with our students. I liked the wide selection of books that they brought each month.

Wow! Our kids get SO excited about the extra literacy time. It has really boosted their interest in reading and they look forward to it every month. I love that you bring high interest books appropriate to their age level.

In the days following an ICNR visit my students were much more engaged in reading, and I saw public library books on their desks often. They shared them with each other and made recommendations to their friends.



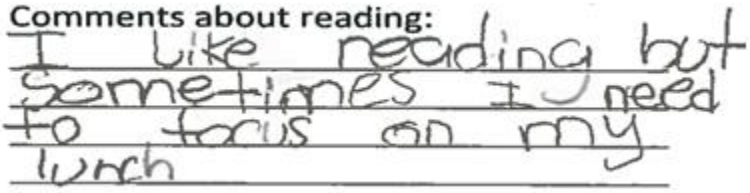
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SUMMARY

The students who participate in ***It's a Crime Not to Read*** come to understand that reading is important. At the end of the program, a students commented that reading is "like an adventure in your mind. It lets you use your imagination, it lets you learn new words and how to spell them, it increases your knowledge and can teach you new facts to make you smart. It can help you calm down, it's something fun to do when you're bored, and it can make you happy when you're sad."

The students have a positive experience with local police, library staff and reading that will impact their future success.

But as important as reading is ... one student reminds us to keep it all in perspective:



The Calgary Public Library Foundation's goal is to create the best public library system in the world and we are truly grateful for your support.