

Engagement Awareness: Feeling Good About the Work We Do

Bonnie Morgan

Director of Library Operations

This article contains material from Canada Life's complimentary resource, "Workplace Strategies for Mental Health," adapted for use by NL Public Libraries.

Engagement at work means an environment where employees feel connected to their work, co-workers and their organization and are motivated to do their job well. When we hear about an employee creating an amazing display, developing and delivering a successful program, establishing a new community partnership, leading an effective staff workshop, or developing a collection that meets the needs of diverse readers, know that person is engaged with their work at NLPL.

There are different ways to experience engagement at work. Being *physically* engaged means we feel energized to complete tasks. *Emotional* engagement means we have a positive job outlook and are passionate about our work. *Cognitive* engagement is when we are absorbed in our work. How quickly time flies when we are doing a task that engages us in this way!

Working together with colleagues to meet common goals, such as mailing a requested book from your location to another location where a patron is waiting to read it, shows a shared commitment to customer service, a desire to see our system-wide holds initiative succeed, and pride in putting library materials into the hands of users. These are all signs of engagement with our work, respect for co-workers, and a willingness to contribute to a positive working environment. It shows we feel good about our workplace and the work that we do.

There are different ways to experience engagement at work. Being physically engaged means we feel energized to complete tasks. Emotional engagement means we have a positive job outlook and are passionate about our work. Cognitive engagement is when we are absorbed in our work.

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TD
Summer
Reading
Club
2022

Reading fun
for kids,
from Canada's
public libraries
Join the fun!



Self-reflection can help us understand our own level of engagement, and raise our awareness of what engagement in the workplace looks and feels like. Below is a list of engagement statements from *Guarding Minds at Work*. As you read through them, think about what would be necessary for you to agree with these statements most of the time. It may be helpful to write the statements down, leaving room to note your thoughts under each one.

- I enjoy my work.
- I am willing to give extra effort at work if needed.
- My work is an important part of who I am.
- I am committed to the success of my organization.
- I am proud of the work I do.
- I am committed to the success of my team.

Another approach to discovering what engagement means to you is brainstorming words that you associate with feeling engaged, such as “energized”, “interested”, “proud”, “dedicated” and “eager”. These can be any words that are meaningful to you; engagement feels different for different people. Once you’ve come up with a list, write down the words leaving spaces to fill in examples of times when you felt that way at work. For example, you may remember feeling energized after running an adult book club meeting, or feeling proud when someone told you they really enjoyed a book you recommended or selected.

Next, come up with actions that could help you experience that feeling more often. If you are energized by book club meetings but don’t have time to prepare for more than one each month, the action idea might be to bring together another group of adults in your library regularly for a drop-in knitting circle. Consider potential challenges to your idea (there is already a knitting circle in the community) and how you might deal with that (organize a sketching or poetry group instead). That’s not realistic either? Then your action idea to feel engaged more often might simply be to commit yourself to making the book club you run already a long-term success.

Engagement is feeling connected to our work, co-workers and organization. It contributes to a healthy work environment and positive experiences in the workplace. Becoming aware of what makes us feel engaged with our work, and developing strategies to increase our engagement, can enhance a sense of well-being in the workplace. It can benefit us, our NLPL co-workers, and our organization as a whole. Engagement helps us with our common goal: delivering excellent public library services to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Last issue’s cover story was about the new CBS Public Library. Here’s a photo update of the progress being made on that new building as they construct what will surely be a community hub in Conception Bay South and the surrounding area.



YDF Flybrary

Natasha Wells

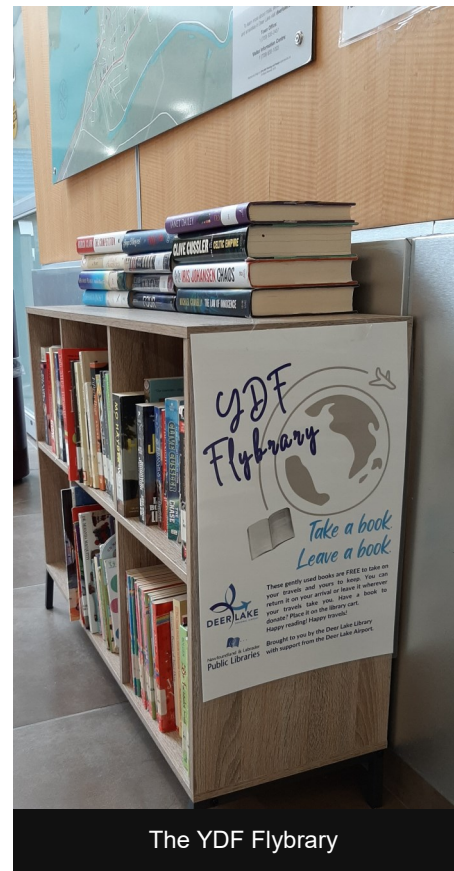
Division Manager, Western Division

Since May, residents and visitors flying in and out of Deer Lake Regional Airport have been able to access books from the newly launched YDF Flybrary!

The Deer Lake Public Library partnered with the Deer Lake Regional Airport to provide gently used books for individuals to enjoy on upcoming trips. This Western Region partnership formed due to the success of the original Flybrary at the Gander International Airport in partnership with the Gander Public Library.

Library staff from Deer Lake Public Library regularly check on the YDF Flybrary to keep it well-stocked with a wide range of genres for all ages. Passengers are welcome to take a gently used book or, on their return, leave a book for someone else to enjoy. The YDF Flybrary is housed next to the security gate and arrivals terminal.

We hope this partnership will bring the joy of reading to residents and visitors for years to come!



The YDF Flybrary

An Afternoon Tea

Jennifer Brett

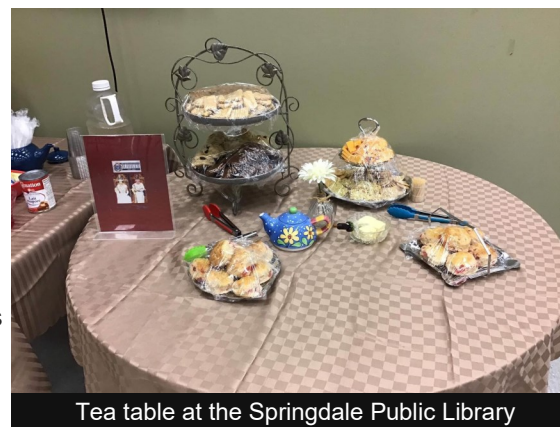
Springdale Public Library

On May 18th an afternoon tea was held at the Springdale Public Library. This multi-generational event was attended by 13 patrons of the library and 13 students of the Newfoundland Studies Class from Indian River High School.

Two traditional songs were sung by different students, one student read a section of literature from Ted Russell, and one student shared a poem she had written. The students and patrons interacted with each other making it an enjoyable and unforgettable experience.

There was a snack of cheese & crackers served as well as traditional Newfoundland raisin, cherry and molasses tea buns. These were very well received by patrons and students alike. Tetley tea was served in bone china tea cups— real tea cups added an air of authenticity to the afternoon! On each of the tables was a beautiful china tea pot and a single flower as centerpiece.

On this day we celebrated 3 noteworthy events; the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, the 77th anniversary of the opening of Springdale Public Library and the lifting of restrictions arising from Covid-19.



Tea table at the Springdale Public Library

This year, Queen's Elizabeth II celebrated her Platinum Jubilee: the 70th anniversary of her accession to the throne. Not that long ago Newfoundland was part of Great Britain. Many of us grew up in households where our parents and grandparents were born under the British influence so it is only fitting to celebrate her achievement. Imagine being the longest reigning monarch ever!

A friend of the library read a short biography highlighting some of Queen Elizabeth's many achievements. On her 21st birthday April 21, 1947, she addressed the Commonwealth and dedicated her life: "I declare before you all that my whole life whether it be long or short shall be devoted to your service and the service of our great imperial family to which we all belong." Even since, she has been steadfastly keeping her promise. Over the course of her record-breaking reign, the Queen has witnessed unprecedented social, cultural and political change. The world is a different place and leaders have come and gone. She remains constant. In Canada, there have been 13 prime ministers and, in Newfoundland, she has been monarch for all 14 premiers. Still, amid all the shifts in power and huge changes that are happening all around her, she is always there to provide guidance and wisdom to those seeking it.

We celebrated that a Public Library has been serving the people of Springdale and area since 1945. That is 77 years! Springdale's first librarian, Nina Smith, recorded much of the early history. Selected portions of the history were read by a local board member highlighting its humble beginnings. The library has gone through a lot of changes over the years. Like so many other organizations, Covid-19 has caused many disruptions. The library today is still open and more determined than ever. We would like to be around for another 77 years and counting!

A third reason for celebrating is that we made it through the Covid-19 pandemic. Not all organizations were as fortunate; and many people were deeply affected. This was our celebration that many of the Covid-19 restrictions were removed allowing friends to gather again freely with one another.

You may be wondering about how these three events relate to each other. Endurance is the common thread: Queen Elizabeth II, for her service and dedication to the public for 70 years. The library has endured and persevered by giving us a safe and welcoming place for over 77 years. In addition, this was also a celebration of our own endurance as Newfoundlanders who were faced with two years of restrictions. Many of us have felt the heavy burden of personal loss, but we have endured. Many of us have learned how strong we can be through the sense of community that our library provides.

Events like this one are only successful with the support of community partners and friends of the library. This celebration was held in partnership with Life Unlimited for Older Adults.



The scene at the celebratory tea at the Springdale Public Library

Reduce. Reuse. *Riddikulus!*

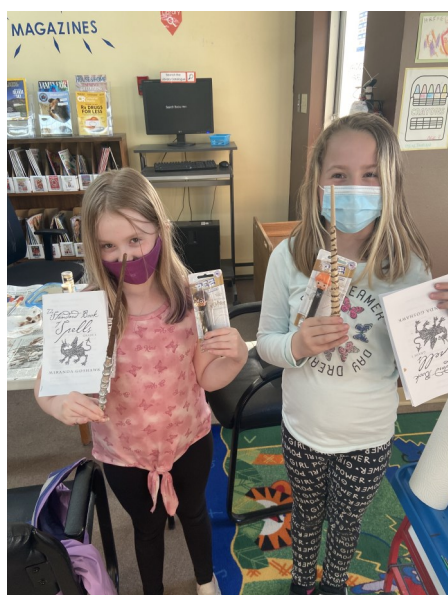
Nicole Hackett

Michael Donovan Public Library

I grew up with Harry Potter. The first book was published the year I started kindergarten, and the final movie was released my last year of high school, so naturally I had to plan a craft night for International Harry Potter Day.

I decided to host the event for kids ages 6-12 and set the limit at 10 kids (our branch is tiny!) then I advertised about the event on Facebook and on the children's program poster we post each month in the library. Next, I researched Harry Potter crafts for kids. There were so many ideas to choose from but I decided to go with something classic: wands!

The next step was figuring out how to make the wands. I searched through our craft bin to see if there was anything left over from another craft that I could use, and that's when I found an old wooden paintbrush with no bristles. Not only did it look just like a wand, but it was something that would have just been thrown away. It was perfect! I rummaged through the bin, but I could only find a few others so I made a call to the children's library and thankfully they also had some old paintbrushes that they were no longer using. After that I got to work on adding details to the wands, using a hot glue gun to add knobs and grooves to make each wand look unique. When that was done I painted a wand as an example and finished organizing the other things I would need for the craft.



Happy patrons showing off their wands!

On the night of the event I set out a paintbrush-turned-wand for each child and they were all very impressed by the repurposed paintbrushes and how much they looked like wands. I also had a station set up with different colours of paint for them to choose from, and brushes in varying sizes.

As the kids painted their wands I asked them Harry Potter trivia, and while the wands were drying we did a Horcrux scavenger hunt. I also had spell-books and wand permits printed for everyone to take home, and I did a random draw for four Harry Potter Pez candies. All the kids who came to the event were so enthusiastic and had a blast with creating their wands, and with the trivia and scavenger hunt!

Not only was this craft a great way to celebrate International Harry Potter Day, it was also a great way to reuse items instead of tossing them in the garbage.

So, the next time you find old paintbrushes or even cracked crayons, don't throw them out because they could very well be that perfect, *magical* item you need for your next craft.

Canadian Children's Book Week at Harmsworth Public Library

Nancy Barker

Harmsworth Public Library

This past May Harmsworth Public Library participated in a digital event to celebrate Canadian Children's Book Week. The invitation was put forward by Children's Librarian Emily Blackmore with some extra encouragement by Central Regional Librarian Courtney Crocker; the fee associated with the event was paid for by an enthusiastic and supportive local library board.

The process and execution of the event was straight forward and simple to navigate. Each year, through the Canadian Children's Book Centre, a selection of authors is available to schools and libraries for author talks and visits. This year, with COVID-19 restrictions still in place, a digital platform was provided for students and patrons to attend. The list of authors from which to select was provided by Emily Blackmore and I was happy to have input from the library board Secretary, Joanne Hamlyn, who is also a school teacher. Our Regional Librarian was also helpful with direction on some of the authors with whom I was not familiar. We decided that grades 7-9 were a group we'd like to see more of in the library so we requested author Anita Daher who has published Young Adult Fiction.

The next step was reaching out to potential attendees! Joanne, from the board, works at Avoca in Badger so students from there received an invitation. I called Exploits Valley Junior High in Grand Falls-Windsor. Teachers were eager to have students participate and once the Web Ex meeting was set up teacher contacts were emailed the link to join the event. The day of the event Courtney was on hand at Harmsworth to troubleshoot any issues and to introduce our guest (I prefer the silent roles!). Anita took over after that and gave an excellent presentation; interaction with students at question time demonstrated they were active listeners and fully engaged. I think we can call it a great success with 138 students participating in the event.

Participation in Book Week was an excellent opportunity to promote the library and was not time consuming for staff. The digital presentation also meant student and class time was not imposed upon by travel to the library. If the pandemic has given us something positive it's got to be some tech savvy skills! That being said we would love to have an in-person visit next year to see the bright faces of students in the library. I would like to thank Emily and Courtney for their help, guidance and encouragement. A thank you is also extended to the Harmsworth Library Board for their support – we look forward to participating next year!

Afterschool Club Program Idea

Jen Brown

Mount Pearl Public Library

I'd like to share an afterschool club idea (for children ages 5-12 years) that I facilitated with success. As an Early Childhood Educator, it's important to me to allow children as much freedom and choice as possible when planning experiences for them. One of the challenges we faced with the afterschool program was that children would arrive for the program at various times so it was difficult to start the session with an adult-led experience or

group activity because children would be arriving sporadically and would miss out on information or instructions. I thought if I was able to have a number of stations that the children could move freely between, this would accommodate various arrival times and most importantly, allow the children greater choice and creativity with open-ended materials (no pre-determined product in mind).

I set up four tables in the corners of the room. Each was labelled with a different sign - create, build, draw and write. If I were to do it again, I'd include a little picture on the label to accompany the word for children who are learning to read. The materials on each table were as follows:

Table 1 (Create): Homemade playdough, sculpting tools (you could use plastic cutlery, or child-safe clay tools), popsicle sticks, pipe cleaners, etc. The children at this table could explore a 3D medium and engage in sensory play as they sculpted and molded their creation.

Table 2 (Draw): A variety of blank paper, markers, leads, and crayons. This experience allowed children of a variety of ages and skill levels to draw anything they wanted.

Table 3 (Build): A variety of "beautiful junk" (recyclable food containers, cardboard boxes and tubes – *free of allergy warnings) with tape, glue sticks, scissors and yarn. The children at this table were able to use their imagination to make something new. Some children also combined the items they had made at the "Create" table with their built creations.

Table 4 (Write): Clipboards with some lined paper as well as half-blank/half-lined paper and pencils/pens.

The format worked well, as the children arrived I briefly explained the four stations. They chose their own activity and could spend as much time as they wanted at any station. Some children visited every station, others visited two or three, and some stayed at one table for the entire hour. Some children chose to work together on a project and others chose to be on their own. The open-ended experiences worked especially well for a child who spoke a language other than English. They could observe the other children at play and join in. The activities allowed children of a variety of abilities and strengths to create in meaningful ways. This type of format allowed me to move around the room and engage in conversation and positive interactions with the children. In these times when children have very structured schedules and activities, it was great to offer them time to play, create and imagine.



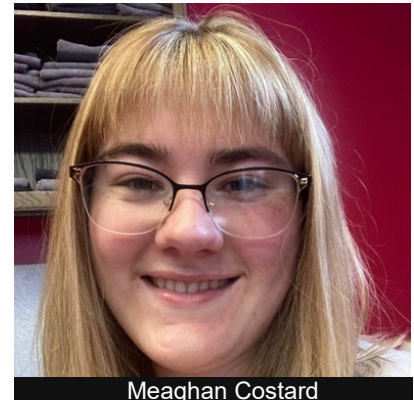
Three 20 years of service certificates were awarded at HQ during Public Service Week to Donita Hann (left), Andrew Hunt (centre), and Wanda Martin (right). Congratulations to you all on your years of dedicated service with the NLPL.

Rock Painting at the Kindale Public Library

Alicia Drake

Kindale Public Library

Western Regional Manager Natasha Wells, and Bonnie Morgan, Director of Library Operations, asked Alicia Drake, Library Technician at the Kindale Library, if she would supervise a College of the North Atlantic Community Leadership Development student, on her final field placement. Meaghan Costard's field placement required her to complete 35 hours per week for five weeks. During Meaghan's Field Placement she was required to learn about the library services and potentially develop a program at the Kindale Library. Meaghan met with Alicia and Alex Taylor, Western Regional Librarian, to discuss her student learning contract which included program development.



Meaghan Costard

Meaghan then brainstormed several program ideas for her supervisor to review. A Rock Painting program was chosen because the rock and art supplies were readily available, she had prior experience painting rocks and she felt that this program may be of interest to the general public. Additionally, the Kindale Library Board funded the other supplies Meaghan needed to deliver her program. Meaghan and her supervisor chose dates and times to offer the program and restricted the number of participants to 10 persons. Meaghan developed posters and they were reviewed by her supervisor and the Kindale Library Supervisor, Jaime Bourgeois, before they were distributed. The participants included children, adults and senior adults. The program was such a success that Meaghan, Alicia and Jaime determined that three Rock Painting programs could be offered throughout the duration of Meaghan's field placement.

Furthermore, due to an overwhelming response to Meaghan's first Rock Painting program, Natasha Wells suggested increasing registration limits to 14 persons. Meaghan's supervisor Alicia and the Kindale Library Supervisor, Jaime, also decided to offer the Rock Painting Program for the duration of this summer. Meaghan also generously offered to volunteer to assist Alicia in running the program even after her field placement was completed.

Congratulations to Meaghan who has recently graduated from her program. It is worthy to note that Meaghan has since obtained summer employment with the Qalipu Cultural Foundation in Stephenville, as a Program Coordinator! A big thank you to Meaghan from the Kindale Public Library staff and everyone who participated in her successful field placement!



L-R: Rock painting program happy participants with their finished rocks, supplies laid out, and a patron painting their rock.

Gander Public Library: Goin' Geeky

Jennifer Lane

Gander Public Library

The Gander Public Library was invited by Gander Recreation to organize an activity for *Gander Geekfest*. It was held this spring at the Steele Community Centre on May 14 and 15. Thanks to some great planning by our own Desiree Hopkins, we entertained and guided geeks old and new in making LED light bugs.

We also brought along materials for those looking for a bigger challenge. Several tech-rockers made flashlights without instructions!

Thanks to well-placed chart papers at the event, *Geekfest* attendees shared personal interests by scrawling their answer to “What’s YOUR Geek?”. They enjoyed a small self-promo and thanks to their responses we now have some new programming ideas! Our time at *Geekfest* was fun, with lots of conversations that will contribute to the Library’s interaction with the community’s needs and interests.



Some of our youngest participants made LED bugs and even a fancy hair clip!

Gander Public Library: Making Fresh Use of Tired Space

Our intrepid and creative supervisor, Michelle Stuckless re-vamped our welcome space at the library. Check out our *Bird Backpacks* (an NLPL partnership with Nature Newfoundland & Labrador, NL Hydro, and The Outfitters Adventure Gear and Apparel). Each pack contains binoculars, bird info sheets, and bird books. The packs were created specifically for children or adults, but there are family packs and French language packs too!

The Grab n’ Go Bags on the opposite wall are great for families on the move as the clip-on barcode list makes for fast check-outs. Our library bags have a surprise pack of reading materials selected for specific age groups. Patrons can have a cosy place to sit a-spell too, as seen by our lovely GGR models.



L-R: Grab n’ Go bags and Birdwatching Backpacks in their new space.

New in the eLibrary for patrons who love Libby!



May Readings at the Carbonear Public Library

Tracey L. Vaughan-Evans

Carbonear Public Library

Carbonear Public Library was contacted by Oriana Duniker, Executive Director of *Hackmatack Children's Choice Book Award* to partner for an author presentation. Charis Cotter's book, 'Screech! Ghost Stories of Old Newfoundland' was shortlisted for this year's award. Charis's presentation was completely interactive and spellbinding, loved by both children and adults-- it was rather spine tingling and spooky! After reading and acting out several of the ghostly stories, Charis held a Q & A, which really made for some interesting conversations on ghosts, and strange phenomenon in our local area.

'the birds come back in the spring', a debut collection of poetry by Hannah Jenkins, is a wonderful narrative of a woman's journey in life. It is a spell-binding must have. Engen Books partnered with us to host a reading with Hannah, where she impressed everyone with her words and insights: "wise beyond her years" was said more than once. The library was alive with poetry yet again, the readings held everyone in a very atmospherically charged time.

Matthew LeDrew of Engen Books gave free copies of the book to everyone in attendance, which was extremely generous, and made for an impactful journey – following along with Hannah's reading. Simply a wonderful afternoon. *'the birds come home in the spring'*, is a must have for all poetry lovers, and an incredible debut collection.



Top-bottom: Charis Cotter reading; Matthew LeDrew of Engen Books handing out free copies of *'the birds come home in the spring'*.

The Mitten Tree

Sandra Harnum

Winterton Public Library

During the month of December, Winterton Public Library hosted a mitten tree (see side photos) to support those struggling or homeless during the holiday season. An idea inspired by the children's book of the same name, library staff hosted a kick-off night on Wednesday December 2nd, 2021 with a reading of "The Mitten Tree" by Candace Christiansen. After the reading, patrons placed their donations on a white tree in the library, along with an attached "made with love" autographed sticker. Over the course of December, additional items were placed on the tree by the many talented knitters in the community of Winterton and its surrounding communities. All donated items, either hand-made or store bought, was then presented to The Gathering Place on Wednesday, December 22nd, 2021 by Winterton Public Library Board Chair, Mrs. Wanda Coombs Pinhorn. Wanda is an avid baker and carried along some of her delicious baked goods too. Mr. Paul Davis, Executive Director, and his team were overjoyed with the generous project and expressed sincere thanks to the Winterton Public Library community. Winterton Public Library would like to thank everyone who helped make the program such a charming success. Special thanks to our friends at the Twillingate Public Library for the loan of "The Mitten Tree" to us.



The Mitten Tree at Winterton Public Library

You Can Contribute to Insights, Too!

Do you have an interesting program or initiative at your branch you want to share with other staff? Is there something you would like to learn more about? No matter what time of the year it is, or whether we've made a call for articles yet, we want to hear from you! Reach out to your Regional Librarian and they will be sure to bring all ideas for future Insights to the editing team!

Your contributions to Insights are greatly valued and appreciated, please let us know what you have going on at your location.

Submissions for the next Insights Newsletter can be sent to:

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Newfoundland & Labrador
Public Libraries