

## **Memorial Park Library: Library, Arts and Culture Hub in the Beltline**

*by Stephanie Nemcsok, Design Lead, Calgary Public Library*

Calgary Public Library is excited to be transforming programs and services at Memorial Park Library to better meet the needs of the Beltline community. In 2015, we engaged in extensive public consultations with local residents, businesses, and stakeholders and we analyzed the changing demographics of the community. Our internal statistics show Memorial Park Library has the lowest use pattern among our 18 community libraries, despite a densely-populated service area. The message we heard loud and clear was that Memorial Park Library needed to change, and we saw that as an opportunity to pilot test new concepts for the library system in anticipation of the opening of New Central Library. In this article, we'll highlight three key areas where you will experience enhanced and more relevant service from your community library.

### **1. Library responding to its community today**

Over the last ten years, the demographics in the area have shifted. Now over 63% of Beltline residents are between the ages of 25 and 44 and fewer than 10% of residents have children. In response, we have strategically reduced the Memorial Park Library collection by removing formats either not well-used by the community (e.g. children's materials) or collections too small to provide a rich selection (e.g. music CDs), and left a considerable adult fiction and non-fiction browsing collection. Expect to see resources displayed in new ways, providing more opportunities to discover titles that resonate with members. With the Central Library so close, our robust collection of electronic resources, and our very convenient 'holds' system, we are still able to provide something for everyone. We have recently extended our open hours and added more staff to support and accommodate the active culture of Calgary's most urban community.

### **2. Library as community hub**

We have right-sized the collection at Memorial Park in response to fewer people browsing the shelves –primarily because they have already ' browsed' online and placed holds for what they need. As a result, we've reclaimed space that was occupied by rarely used library materials to give you, the community, more space to work, socialize, collaborate, meet, play music - you name it! Expect new, flexible furniture to arrive soon to allow you to more effectively collaborate in the spaces, some of which you can book online and use free of charge. We also introduced Chromebook laptops to offer greater convenience for working and connecting anywhere in the library. Stay tuned for new programs and opportunities to engage in dialogue around issues facing the community.

### **3. Library as arts and culture space**

During our consultations, we heard that people want library services, as well as a vibrant arts and culture hub at Memorial Park Library. We've partnered with Wordfest to activate the top floor of Memorial Park, bringing exciting events and programs to the space, even when the library itself is closed. We have exhibits coming into the main floor lobby space, beginning with Humainologie's *Under an Umbrella We Met: Indigenous Youth Voices*. Join us for the exhibit

launch on June 5 at 5:00 pm to meet the youth featured. Have you tried out the new Create Space yet? Every two months this space will feature a new participatory community experience for you to play and connect with other community members. Memorial Park Library will also be home to the Sun Life Financial Musical Instrument Lending Library, which launches on June 1, along with a suite of new musical programs and services.

We are always looking to connect more with our communities and hear their perspectives. Please join us at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, June 13 at Memorial Park Library for a discussion with Calgary Public Library's CEO Bill Ptacek about the recent and upcoming changes. In the meantime, if you have questions or feedback about service at Memorial Park Library, please contact Service Delivery Manager Donna Bedry, at 403-260-2600.