

Impact of Multiculturalism, Cultural Diversity and Changing Demographics on Richmond Public Library's Multilingual Services

The growth and development of multilingual services at Richmond Public Library is evidence of the Library's commitment to the provision of equitable library services to immigrants and ethnic communities. From a very modest beginning with no dedicated staff and only small collections of books in several languages, the Library's multilingual services has evolved into a recognized leader in the area of community-based services for immigrants, especially for the Chinese community, and winner of many local and international awards. The Chinese collection consists of over 70,000 items, which account for 22 per cent of the total circulation in 2007. The same year two hundred and twenty-three multilingual programs were offered with a total attendance of 12,108 participants.

In looking at the progress of multilingual services at Richmond Public Library, the following questions came to mind:

1. What spurred the growth in multilingual services at Richmond Public Library?
2. How does the Library approach multilingual services?
3. How do multiculturalism, cultural diversity and changing demographics impact on the Library's multilingual services?
4. What is the future of multilingual services at Richmond Public Library?

This paper will try to provide answers to the above questions. To put everything into context, it is important to provide some background information on the development of multiculturalism as a function of social and political changes that occurred in Canadian society, an overview of the City of Richmond including demographic information, and an introduction to Richmond Public Library.

The Development of Multiculturalism in Canada

The history of Canada's treatment of ethnic minorities is not spotless. It was marred by several notoriously racist cases, which happened prior to the passage of the Canadian Citizenship Act in 1947, including the Chinese Head Tax and Exclusion Act, the internment of Ukrainian Canadians, the internment of Japanese Canadians, and the Komagata Maru Incident. Slavery was legal from 1628 when the first Black slave was brought to Canada until its abolishment in 1834. These things occurred because the Canadian government at that time regarded racial and ethnic differences as detrimental to Canada's interests, character and integrity and, therefore, adopted a policy of assimilation towards immigrants and ethnic minorities.

During the idealistic 1960s, Canadians started to question whether assimilation was ethical or good for Canada. In 1969, the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism recommended the integration of non-English and non-French speaking ethnic groups into Canadian society with full citizenship rights and equal participation in Canada's institutional structure. This led to the acceptance of multiculturalism as an official Canadian policy in October 1971.

The multiculturalism policy acknowledged ethnic diversity as an *integral part of Canadian society* and committed the government to help ethnic minorities retain their identity, remove barriers to their full participation, promote creative exchanges between different cultural groups, and help them learn at least one official language. It was a start to many government initiatives, including legislation, to strengthen and promote multiculturalism.

One of the most powerful initiatives was the reference to the multicultural heritage of Canada in Section 27 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which is entrenched in the Canadian Constitution. It instructs the court to take multiculturalism into account in deciding cases. Furthermore, the Charter also guarantees equality and fairness to all under the law, "without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age, or mental or physical disability."

In July 1988, the Canadian Parliament passed the Multiculturalism Act, which acknowledged multiculturalism as a *fundamental characteristic* of Canadian society. In essence, this Act tried to ensure full participation of all Canadians in Canadian society by recognizing cultural differences and removing discriminatory barriers.

Since the passage of the Multiculturalism Act, the Canadian government has renewed its multicultural program with a focus on social justice, civic participation and identity; established the Canadian Race Relations Foundation; set June 27 of each year as Canadian Multiculturalism Day; released *A Canada for All: Canada's action Plan Against Racism*; accepted the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions; and announced the Community Historical Recognition Program, which funds projects that recognize the historical experiences and contributions of ethno-cultural communities during the darker periods in history. In addition, action has been taken to redress or officially apologize for the historical injustices suffered by several ethnic groups.

In British Columbia the provincial government passed the Multiculturalism Act in 1993 to recognize the diversity of the province, encourage respect for our multicultural heritage, promote racial harmony, and foster full and free participation of everyone in this province. This Act requires the government to conduct its services and programs in a way that is sensitive and responsive to the multicultural reality of the province. The Minister Responsible for Multiculturalism must table an annual report in the Legislature on progress made by ministries and crown corporations in promoting multiculturalism.

The Richmond City Council adopted a Multicultural Policy in 1991 to ensure that the City would be free of cultural and racial discrimination and that everyone would have equal opportunity to participate in civic and community affairs. They also encouraged community groups to adopt similar policies for their organizations.

As we look back at the evolution of multiculturalism since the implementation of the multiculturalism policy, the period of the 1970s started with a focus on celebrating differences, confronting prejudice, and encouraging cultural sensitivity. Canadian society was described as a "mosaic." The 1980s was a time of institutional accommodation. The focus shifted to managing diversity and fighting systemic discrimination with employment equity to provide a level playing field. In the 1990s, Canadian society advanced to the inclusion stage with constructive engagement of ethnic minorities in society building. Inclusiveness was used to fight exclusion and promote a sense of belonging. In the new millennium, our focus is on full participation to build a two-way street. While globalization has raised questions regarding identity, support for ethnic diversity and immigration among Canadians continues to be strong and ranks the highest in the world.

The Demographics of Richmond

Located on Canada's West Coast about 25 minutes from the United States border, the City of Richmond is a culturally diverse community in Metro Vancouver. It is a unique island city, comprised of more than a dozen islands nested in the mouth of the Fraser River. The Vancouver International Airport (YVR) is located in Richmond on Sea Island. The estimated population of Richmond was 185,400 in January 2007.

A dynamic, multi-ethnic community, Richmond has seen significant population growth in the early 1990s with a large influx of immigrants from Hong Kong. Today, it continues to be a popular place for new immigrants because of its convenient location, favorable weather conditions, public amenities, and healthy lifestyle. One noteworthy statistics is that the residents of Richmond have the greatest life expectancy in all of Canada at 83.4 years, almost four years higher than the national average of 79.5 year.

According to the 2006 Census, Richmond has the highest proportion of foreign-born residents of any city in Canada at 57 per cent. 36.6 per cent of the City's population immigrated since 1991. More than half of the immigrants who arrived in the past five years were Chinese, followed by people from the Philippines and India. Chinese is the most common ethnic origin, making up 45 per cent of the population.

In the Employment Equity Act, the federal government defined visible minorities as "persons, other than Aboriginal persons, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour." Paradoxically, 65.15 per cent of the population in Richmond is visible minorities; thus, making them a majority.

The proportion of people in Richmond who speak English and/or French at home has dropped from 65.9 per cent in 1996 to 56.6 per cent in 2006, while the percentage of people whose mother tongue is neither English nor French rose from 46.3 per cent in 1996 to 58.7% in 2006, the highest of any Canadian City. Although English continues to be the most represented mother tongue at 40.6 per cent, a significant 37.6 per cent of the population speaks Chinese (16.4 per cent Cantonese, 7.7 per cent Mandarin and 13.4 per cent unspecified Chinese), followed by 3.9 per cent for Punjabi and 3.5 per cent for Tagalog.

Introduction to the Richmond Public Library

Richmond Public Library is the public library for the City of Richmond. We provide free library services to the local residents and people around the province seven days a week. With four branch libraries and an outreach service to a small, but growing community in the eastern most part of the city, Richmond Public Library offers a collection of over 466,000 items, including books in print and audio formats, newspapers, magazines, DVDs, CD music, CD-Roms, e-books, computer software, ESL and multilingual materials.

Richmond Public Library is a firm believer in providing community-based services to its users. In 2007, over 60 per cent of the population in Richmond had a library card. We work in partnership with many community organizations to offer a wide variety of programs and services to meet the information needs of the community.

The Library's "Customer Convenience is the First Priority" approach to library services has made it the most popular public facility in Richmond and the library with the highest per capita circulation in Canada for the last several years. We function as a living room for the community with something for everyone. Besides providing a comfortable and friendly environment, quiet study space and seminar rooms for groups, attractive PowerWall book displays, user friendly computers for public use, a language lab for learners of English and other languages, increasingly popular programs for children and adults, and effective PR techniques, the Library's Chinese language collections and services have attracted many new residents as well as people from other municipalities to the library.

The Growth of Multilingual Services at RPL

Like many other public libraries, Richmond Public Library's multilingual services began with small collections of books in several languages. Some of them were rotating collections from the National Library of Canada's Multilingual Biblioservice (MBS).

During the early 1990s, a large influx of immigrant from Hong Kong arrived in Richmond to escape the imminent return of their island colony to China in 1997. They chose to settle in Richmond because of its proximity to the international airport and effective overseas marketing by local realtors who gave this City an auspicious Chinese name *Fugui Men*, which means *Entrance to Wealth and Honor*. Unlike previous generations of Chinese immigrants, these immigrants typically were well-educated professionals and business

people who could speak English fluently and were not shy to demand services in their native language, Cantonese.

This sudden surge in population created an unprecedented demand for books and services in Chinese. However, in 1994, even though about 25 per cent of the population had Chinese as their mother tongue, less than 2 per cent of the Library's books were in Chinese and many of them were old and outdated. Furthermore, the only way to look for Chinese books was to consult a binder with photocopies of the book covers. No catalogue access was available because the Chinese books weren't catalogued. Members of the Chinese community started writing to the media to criticize the Library and demand equitable services in the language of their choice that they as taxpayers deserved. The CBC Radio did a commentary on this problem.

In response to this criticism the Library met with its critics and offered to work with them to build a Chinese collection and develop library programs. The Richmond Public Library Services Promotion Group was formed with representatives from the Chinese community as an affiliate group of the United Chinese Community Enrichment Services Society (S.U.C.C.E.S.S.), a local immigrant service agency from the Chinese community. In June 1994, the Library worked with S.U.C.C.E.S.S. to hold the **Chinese Book Donation Campaign**. This one-month campaign generated over 1,800 Chinese books and some cash donations for Richmond Public Library. The Library matched the donation by purchasing 2,100 new Chinese books for the collection. The cash donations were also used to buy Chinese books. Although the campaign officially ended at the end of June, donations of books and cash continued to come in. This successful Chinese Book Donation Campaign eventually won the Public Library Association National Achievement Citation in 1998.

To increase organization and facilitate access to this new collection of Chinese books, Richmond Public Library purchased its first stand alone Chinese language catalogue and contracted a couple of Chinese librarians to sort and catalogue these books. A simplified Dewey classification was used to expedite the cataloguing process and ensure that books went on shelf as quickly as possible. The Chinese community responded to the new books with enthusiasm. In 1995, the circulation of Chinese books for adults shot up by 125 per cent over the previous year to 144,944 circulations and these statistics continued to climb every year.

In December 1995, the Library hired its first Chinese-speaking Multilingual Services Librarian to manage the multilingual and ESL collections, provide Chinese language services to customers, and develop programs and library tours in Cantonese and Mandarin. The following year, the Chinese catalogue was upgraded to a locally developed MARC compatible system that offered both traditional Chinese character and Pinyin access. The Multilingual Services Department was formed in April 2000 with two Chinese-speaking librarians and one Chinese-speaking clerk.

Richmond Public Library's determination to improve services to the Chinese community is a story of success and community collaboration. The Library's Chinese collection is considered one of the best among public libraries in Canada. It is used not only by Richmond residents, but by people from other municipalities and as far as the United States. Programming in Chinese has increased due to strong attendance figures.

Besides Chinese services, Richmond Public Library has also expanded collections in other languages. In response to requests from our Indo-Canadian customers, the Library has added new collections of Indian movies DVDs and music CDs. In addition, an Arabic language collection was started in the Cambie Branch Library to meet the demand for homework help by students from the nearby Arabic language school.

Richmond Public Library's Approach to Multilingual Services

Richmond Public Library takes a multi-faceted approach to multilingual library services. Besides books and other library materials, the Library also offers a wide variety of programs, ranging from library tours, book clubs and computer training to weekly seminars for new immigrants, health talks, and celebrations of ethnic festivals. Other services include an online Chinese language catalogue, Chinese reference collection, the Special Art collection, basic reference services in Chinese, a language learning lab, PowerWall book displays, signage in English and Chinese, web based information for the Asian community and new Canadians as well as web pages in Chinese, the Chinese Service Phone Line, the online Citizenship Practice Test, the online BC Practice Driving Test, Chinese DVD dispenser, My Picks, Lists of New Chinese Books, a column in the *World Journal* (a local Chinese daily newspaper), a monthly program on Fairchild Radio, etc. The Library works in partnership with community organizations to offer programs that address the different needs of the Richmond residents.

Collections:

Besides English and French, Richmond Public Library offers books in eight languages, including Arabic, Chinese, Gujarati, Hindi, Japanese, Punjabi, Spanish and Urdu. The largest collection is Chinese with about 70,000 items and the smallest are Arabic, Gujarati, Hindi, Spanish and Urdu with only a couple of hundreds books in each collection.

The Chinese collection consists of fiction and non-fiction books for adults and children, newspapers, magazines, movie and non-fiction DVDs and VCDs, karaoke DVDs, and music CDs. The book collection contains popular novels and non-fiction books in traditional and simplified Chinese characters on practically every subject. Most of the books and music CDs are catalogued and searchable online. There is a small collection of uncatalogued paperbacks.

To maintain the currency of this collection, the Library has a standing order with our vendors for about 700 new novels and comic books each month. The multilingual services librarian regularly visits the local bookstores to select new non-fiction. The bulk of the Chinese collection is at Brighthouse (Main) Library, with smaller numbers of books at each branch library. Due to the size and depth of this collection, it has attracted many people to the Brighthouse (Main) Library to borrow Chinese books. There are books to meet the needs of every Chinese customer, whether it is a parent looking for books to teach their child Chinese language, history or culture; or an adult looking for popular reads or information on a certain subject. To make it easier for customers to find the books they want, the Library has set up displays of New & Hot Chinese books on a kiosk as well as ten PowerWall displays of popular non-fiction subjects.

In addition, Richmond Public Library has a Chinese reference collection with over 500 books and a special Chinese art collection with over 600 valuable art albums, catalogues, and encyclopedic dictionaries on Chinese paintings, calligraphy, seal carving and sculptures. There are works by famous artists and calligraphers from different dynasties; in different art styles or scripts, e.g. realistic, abstract, official, cursive, etc.; on different subjects, e.g. portraits, landscapes, flowers, animals, etc.; and for different purposes, e.g. for fans, homes, temples, tombstones, etc. Most of the books in the art collection are donated by Mr. Kwok-Chu Lee (pseudonym Master Lam Chun), a good friend and strong supporter of the Library. Due to the value of these books, a special circulation procedure has been adopted for this collection.

The Chinese DVDs are also a very well stocked and popular collection, containing thousands of movies from China, Hong Kong and Taiwan in different genres, such as Action & Adventure, Classical Operas, Comedy, Drama, Martial Arts and Supernatural. Besides movies, there are also non-fiction, musical concerts, TV series and children's DVDs. Due to the fact that the number of Chinese movies available in the NTSC system is insufficient to meet the demand of our customers, the Library has started collecting movies in the PAL system. In 2007, the Library has acquired a special self-serve DVD dispenser to facilitate the management and circulation of multi-disk Chinese TV series.

Other popular multilingual collections besides Chinese are French books for kids, Hindi movie DVDs and movie soundtracks, and Punjabi Bhangra music. Many French immersion students come to the library to get books for their assignments and projects. The local Indo-Canadian community prefers audiovisual materials to books in their native languages.

Richmond Public Library has recently launched the online Chinese catalogue to enable customers to look for and place holds on catalogued Chinese materials. This catalogue is searchable using traditional Chinese characters or Pinyin Romanization. For customers who cannot input Chinese characters and do not know Pinyin Romanization, the Library offers a point and click catalogue using icons for fiction and subject headings in Chinese characters for non-fiction.

Due to the large population of recent immigrants, ESL materials are also in high demand. Our ESL collection contains books and kits to support learning. Preference is given to kits containing books and CD or DVD. Most of the materials are sorted by genres; such as grammar, vocabulary, composition, idioms, spelling, and pronunciation; with colour dots to indicate the levels: beginner, intermediate, or advanced. Dewey decimal classification is used for non-fiction materials that do not fit into the genres.

Programs:

Richmond Public Library considers programs an essential library service and a good complement to the library collections. We offer a large variety of programs to meet the needs of our diverse community. These needs are identified through talking to library customers, communication with other community organizations, and monitoring the media.

We found that programs are an effective tool for attracting new customers to the Library. Besides Richmond residents, people from all over Metro Vancouver regularly attend our programs.

The programs offered by the Multilingual Services department vary in sizes and types. Every program is designed to achieve a certain goal in addition to supplementing the information found in library books. Besides traditional library programs, such as library tours, reading clubs, book talks, and storytimes for children, there are informational seminars, computer training, and large celebrations. Most of the programs are developed in partnership with other community organizations and are conducted by guest speakers who are experts on the topics. Other programs are organized and implemented by the Chinese librarians with assistance from other departments.

The system at Richmond Public Library is conducive to program planning. Once a program idea is approved, several departments work together to move the planning process along. For instance, the communications officer writes the press release, the web librarian adds it to the online program list and designs a feature box to promote it on the web site. An online system is available for booking the room and the equipment, the computer staff check the computer equipment to make sure that everything is ready, the desktop publisher designs the flyer (a Multilingual Services staff designs flyers for multilingual programs), a clerk copies and distributes the flyer, the building service worker sets up the room, etc. Support and cooperation of the various departments help make the process smooth and efficient like an assembly line.

The following are samples of Multilingual programs offered by Richmond Public Library:

Reading Clubs:

Richmond Public Library has five Chinese reading clubs, including the **Cantonese Reading Club**, two **Mandarin Reading Clubs**, the **Classical Chinese Reading Club** in Cantonese, and the **Yi Jing (Book of Changes) Study Club** in Cantonese. These clubs meet monthly at the Library to discuss a novel, a certain classical work, or a hexagram in the Yi Jing. The Cantonese Reading Club, which was started in 1996, is the oldest of all our Chinese Reading Clubs. In addition to promoting reading and learning, these clubs provide an opportunity for people with similar interests to meet and befriend each other. Many new immigrants have made new friends in these clubs.

ESL Programs:

Richmond Public Library works with S.U.C.C.E.S.S.'s Richmond Youth Group to offer the **Reading for Success : ESL Book Club**. This annual program is developed and implemented by the youths with support from the Library. Six book clubs hold eleven biweekly meetings to discuss ten progressively more difficult ESL readers. The number of participants is limited to ten per club. These clubs provide opportunities for the participants to practice listening and speaking English and for the youths to develop program planning, fundraising, promotion, and teaching skills. To raise funds for an ESL Book Club collection, the youths offered computer classes in Chinese at the Library. This program won the 2005 BC Library Association Merit Award and the 2005 Public Library Association / Highsmith Library Innovation Award for a creative library program.

In addition, the Library offers **ESL Conversation Circles** to give an opportunity for ESL learners to practice their English conversation skills and learn new vocabularies.

New Immigrant Orientation Program:

Richmond Public Library has worked with S.U.C.C.E.S.S. since October 1999 to offer the New Immigrant Orientation Program, a series of weekly informational seminars for new immigrants designed to help them integrate successfully. Because in our experience very few Chinese books contain useful information that helps new immigrants settle into the community, these seminars are designed to provide much needed local information on such topics as landlord and tenancy, low income and seniors housing, rental tips, Medicare and community health care services, the Canadian education system, job search skills, Employment Standards, Employment Insurance, government sponsored training for EI recipients, how to start a small business, public transit, childcare subsidy, understanding Canadian culture and etiquette, how to buy a used or new car, how to get a driver's license, auto insurance, personal safety, banking, ESL training, Canadian citizenship, Canadian immigration: family sponsorship, Permanent Residents Card, introduction to the library, personal income tax, First Aid, Canada Customs, etc. They are presented in either Cantonese or Mandarin or in English with Mandarin interpretation. Immigrants found this series informative and practical. As they are held on the same day, at the same time, and in the same room each week, very little promotion is needed to attract a reasonably large group. Attendance to these seminars ranges from about 25 to 144 (full house)

depending on the topic.

Job Fair:

When people immigrate to a new place, one of their most urgent needs is to find a job. A good job is essential for successful settlement. Without it, many immigrants may return to their place of origin or, worse yet, leave their families here while one or both parents return to work in their motherland. Although in recent years, the economy in British Columbia has been booming and jobs are abundant, many new immigrants don't know where to look for them. Job Fairs are an effective way to connect job seekers with employers. Richmond Public Library worked with S.U.C.C.E.S.S. to offer the first job fair in 2004. Thousands of job seekers came in business suits carrying their resumes to meet potential employers. Many jobs were filled at this event to the pleasure of everyone.

Health Programs:

In the spirit of promoting wellness and increasing our customers' understanding of health and medicine, Richmond Public Library has offered regular health programs in Cantonese and Mandarin since 2004. (Although the Library has offered health seminars prior to 2004, they were not regular programs.) Some of the health programs offered are diabetes series with the Canadian Diabetes Association; Healthy Living Series, Diabetes Fundamentals, and the Diabetes Prevention Day with the Chinese Community Health Society and the Chinese Health Support Group; and Research on Chinese Medicine series with Dr. Lawrence Dai. The Healthy Living Series won the B.C. Library Association's Merit Award in 2006.

Big Celebrations:

Celebrations provide great opportunities for people to learn different things in a fun way and for the Library to develop partnerships with other organizations. Richmond Public Library organized the first **Chinese New Year Celebration** in 1998 with the Oriental Arts Club to promote intercultural understanding. Other groups and individuals were invited to do demonstrations, teach arts and crafts and give cultural performances. This Celebration grew to become one of the most anticipated events in the Library. Attendance went as high as 4,000, but leveled off at about 2,500 to 2,700 people because of competition from an increased number of Chinese New Year celebrations happening in Richmond.

Many new immigrants do not have a good understanding of Canadian culture, but dry talks on this subject do not appeal to them. The ***Celebrate Canada Fair*** offers a fun environment for both adults and children to learn about different aspects of Canada, from history and culture to industries and recreation. It also enhances new immigrants' identification with their new country. Richmond Public Library held the first *Celebrate Canada Fair* in 2007. This year, we offered this event in partnership with the Richmond Chinese Community Society with involvement from more than a dozen other groups and individuals and sponsorship from Canadian Heritage, Sunrise Soya Foods and the staff union, CUPE 3966. The Mayor, several Councillors and School Board Trustees officiated the opening ceremony. Attendance to this Fair was over 2,300 people.

Many interesting scientific research and technological developments are happening within the various science departments in the federal government and universities, but few people know about them. In October 2007, during the Science and Technology Week, they worked with our Library to hold the ***Brighthouse Science Bash*** to showcase their works and use interactive activities and experiments to expose students to different topics in science, including genome, DNA, astrology, scales, radio frequencies, hydrogen and fuel cells, ultimate HDTV, wildlife and cultural history, natural resources and the environment, etc. Over 1,600 people attended this event.

Asian Heritage Month Celebration:

May is Asian Heritage Month in Canada. Richmond Public Library works with various community organizations and the Royal Thai Consulate to offer programs to promote understanding of different Asian cultures, including general overviews of the Asian countries and their foods, history, arts and crafts, music, dances, clothing and attractions.

Chinese Computer Classes:

Recognizing the fact that digital technology in general and the Internet in particular are radically transforming our world, Richmond Public Library has taken a leadership role in offering computer training in Cantonese and Mandarin. The courses offered are Introduction to Computers and Introduction to the Internet.

The Library works with the S.U.C.C.E.S.S Richmond Youth Group to offer more extensive computer classes in Cantonese on Microsoft Windows, MS Word, MS Excel, MS PowerPoint and Cangjie Chinese Input Method.

Anti-bullying Program for Kids:

This program helps kids and families deal with bullying in positive, empowering ways. It utilizes a puppet show, role play and other interactive activities to help kids understand what is bullying, how to identify bullies and how to respond to them. It is offered in English and Cantonese and is organized by the Tetrad Youth Group from S.U.C.C.E.S.S.

Winter Warm Wave Storytime:

Every December, Fairchild Radio sends its young DJs and winners of their Sunshine Nation Competition to Brighthouse (Main) Library to play games and tell stories in Cantonese, Mandarin and English to the kids as part of their Winter Warm Wave Charitable Program. The kids are especially happy to listen to their favorite DJs tell stories to them in person.

My Library, Your Library, Everybody's Library : a Campaign on Proper Use of the Library:

In recent years, there has been significant media attention focused on the issues of vandalism of library materials and inappropriate behaviour in the library. As one of the busiest and most popular libraries in Canada, Richmond Public Library has seen an increase in these problems. Although they are not new problems facing public libraries, they signal the need for public education to prevent their further escalation. Starting in 2007, Richmond Public Library has worked with S.U.C.C.E.S.S.'s Richmond Youths to conduct a public education campaign, entitled My Library, Your Library, Everybody's Library: a Campaign on Proper Use of the Library. This campaign is designed to be done in three stages: educating the public, involving the public, and building a concern group. Although there is no definite end to these stages, the youths have already developed a variety of educational materials, including a pamphlet, comics, PowerPoint presentation, a model book, video and board game, for educating the public. They have used these materials in promotional booths in malls, at the Richmond Night Market, and in local celebrations as well as at workshops they've conducted in elementary schools. They are now ready to start Stage 2 of the Campaign. The first project they plan to do is to organize a competition

to involve the public.

Partnerships:

Due to limitations in skills, resources, and time, no one organization would be able to offer everything that the community wants and needs. There are many benefits to working with partners in programming. It provides a bigger pool of resources, skills and knowledge; increases the number and variety of services that the library can offer; expands the customer base of the partner organizations; helps reach non-users; and broadens support for the library. Overall, it's a win-win situation for everyone.

As with most relationships, it takes time and effort to build a good rapport. In the beginning, it might seem faster and easier to plan and execute the program alone than with a partner, but as the partnership matures and the partners become more familiar with each other, the time and effort involved is greatly reduced while the benefits increase.

Richmond Public Library has worked with partners for more than a decade to offer a broad range of programs, from big events and seminars to fundraising activities. Many programs require special skills and knowledge from outside experts. Today, the Library has over one hundred programming partners. Some of them are groups that we have worked with since the mid-1990s while others are newly established contacts.

S.U.C.C.E.S.S. is our oldest partner. Since 1994 when we first worked together on the Chinese Book Donation Campaign, our relationship has become closer and the number of joint programs has increased. We now work with three, soon to be four, of its departments and affiliated groups, including the Settlement Services Department in Richmond to offer the New Immigrant Orientation Program; the Richmond Youth Group to offer Reading for Success: ESL Book Club, computer classes in Chinese, the antibullying workshops, My Library, Your Library, Everybody's Library Campaign; and the Richmond Women's Group in special events. Starting in September 2008, we will work with the Richmond Chinese Parents Association to offer weekly seminars for parents.

Other Services:

The Library offers a variety of innovative and practical services to make customers feel at ease using the Library and helps them learn new skills and knowledge.

Media Programs:

Richmond Public Library has a biweekly book review column in the *World Journal*, a local Chinese newspaper. The books reviewed are predominantly Chinese works for adults, including fiction, non-fiction and translated works. At times, some children's books and popular English novels are included. This column offers an effective way to promote the Library and our book collection. Customers often bring the column along to make their requests.

In response to an invitation from a radio programmer, we started doing a monthly Cantonese program at Fairchild Radio in 2007. The program, which airs on the first Saturday morning on each month, gives us opportunities to update the public on new developments and events at the Library and to review two books, one in English and one in Chinese. Due to the popularity of this program, both the Library and a local Chinese bookstore have seen an increase in demand for the reviewed books.

The Chinese Service Phone Line:

This phone line enables non-English speaking Chinese customers to access the services offered by the Library. The caller leaves a voice mail message or question in Mandarin and Cantonese and a staff from the Multilingual Services Department will call them back with the answer.

Computers for Public Use:

Richmond Public Library offers over one hundred computers for public use. People can use a computer free of charge for up to two hours per day to search the Library's online resources, surf the Internet, check their emails, do their homework, prepare their resumes and letters, scan pictures and photographs, or practice their computer skills. These CJK compatible computers allow users to view and write documents in Chinese, Japanese and Korean. For customers who bring their own laptops to the Library, we offer free wired and wireless access to the Internet.

Learning E.S.L. and Other Languages:

Our TD Canada Trust Language Learning Centre helps customers practice their language skills and learn new languages. We offer programs such as Reading for Success and the ESL Conversation Circle to give new Canadians opportunity to practice English. Students can join Le Club Francais to get help from French speaking teens.

Canadian Citizenship Practice Test:

In order to help new immigrants prepare for the Canadian Citizenship Test, Richmond Public Library created the online Canadian Citizenship Practice Test. The practice test, which has proven extremely popular, consists of over one hundred multiple choice questions and the customer chooses the number of questions they want to be asked. Once they finish, their score and the correct answers are displayed. The web page also has links to our online Preparation Booklet and Appendix for questions and answers pertaining to Richmond.

Signage in the Library:

To give customers a sense of independence and ease when using the Library, most of the instructions for machines and signage at Richmond Public Library are in Chinese and English. Some of the signs at Cambie and Ironwood Branch Libraries are also in Punjabi for the benefit of the Indo-Canadian customers.

Web Site:

Richmond Public Library is continually working to improve its award-winning web site in order to offer relevant, in-demand, community-based information.

Community Support:

Although Richmond Public Library faces many challenges in providing equitable Chinese language services, we have received strong support from the Chinese community as an indication of their appreciation. Each year, the Library receives many significant donations of cash and books from library users and other supporters, including several thousand books each year from local artist, writer and Feng Shui Master Mr. Kwok-Chu Lee. His generosity and commitment to the Library has inspired many other donors. The Richmond Chinese School Foundation also donates money to the Library every year. In 2004, the Richmond Chinese Community Society held a fundraising dinner to raise over \$6,000 for our new Cambie Branch. Many other groups and individuals have supported Richmond Public Library in a variety of different ways.

The Impact of Multiculturalism, Cultural Diversity and Changing Demographics on Multilingual Services at Richmond Public Library

Multiculturalism has transformed the Canadian society and has compelled us to find ways to ensure that new immigrants and ethnic communities become full participants in the Canadian society. While this lofty ideal is desirable, it is difficult for Richmond Public Library, with its limited resources and physical space, to provide books and library services to every ethnic group that is represented in the City of Richmond. Therefore, we have elected to focus our resources and efforts on developing collections and services for the major ethnic groups in our community. Interlibrary loans are used to fulfill requests for books in languages that the Library does not carry.

In Richmond, Chinese is the single largest ethnic group at 45 per cent of the population, followed by English, Scottish, Canadian, East Indian, Irish, etc. Among the top six ethnic groups, only the Chinese and East Indians do not have English as their mother tongue. These two groups also rank among the top groups of immigrants to Richmond. Therefore, it is logical that Richmond Public Library offers services for them.

Some people may think that with such high concentration of Chinese people, the City of Richmond is not a very diverse city. Most people recognize the diversity within the Indo-Canadian community, but few of them, other than the Chinese themselves, would consider the Chinese community as diverse. The fact is the Chinese community is very diverse.

Other than Canadian born Chinese who are fluent in English and might also be able speak a Chinese dialect and read some Chinese, the Chinese immigrants come from many different places, such as China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, Vietnam, Malaysia, other Southeast Asian countries and different continents. They speak different Chinese dialects, including Cantonese, Mandarin, Hakka, Min Nan, etc., that might not be understood by each other. (If they belong to an ethnic minority group from China, then they might speak a different language altogether.) They are accustomed to different Chinese writings, i.e., traditional vs. simplified Chinese characters. Their political beliefs would vary depending on where they came from. They have different cuisines, religions, lifestyles, customs and traditions. Even their physical features are different. Therefore, Chinese people are as diverse as can be.

In collection development and program planning, we have to be mindful of the diversity within the Chinese community. Nowadays, not only do we have to ensure subject balance and currency of information in the Chinese collection, we also have to make sure that the collection includes publications from China, Hong Kong and Taiwan and that there are books in both traditional and simplified Chinese characters. This is made more complicated by the recent slowdown of the publishing industry in Hong Kong and Taiwan and the small number of fiction items, with the exception of romance novels, available.

Ten years ago, the demand for books in simplified Chinese characters at Richmond Public Library was negligible. The few books that the Library had in simplified Chinese could always be found on the shelf. During the past few years, due to increased immigration from China, the Library has had to increase the order for books in simplified Chinese characters many times in order to meet the demand for them.

In the 1990s, most of the Chinese programs that we offered were conducted in Cantonese. This situation has changed during the last few years. In order to cater to the new immigrants from China, more than half of our Chinese programs, including the New Immigrant Orientation seminars, are now conducted in Mandarin or in English with Mandarin interpretation.

Future of Multilingual Services at Richmond Public Library

It is anticipated that the population of Richmond will continue to grow at a fast pace because of immigration. Therefore, multilingual and ESL services will continue to be in high demand. We will need to closely monitor the population demographics to ensure that our services stay relevant for the people in our community.

Partnership programs will remain a priority as we try to connect to the different ethnic communities and develop services for them. Partners also help us identify new and emerging needs in the community.

The Library will support the Settlement Workers in Libraries program and will work with local settlement service agencies to develop this service.

Celebrations and large events are effective ways to attract people, including many new users, to the library and to make them feel at ease.

We will continue to work on making our Library an appealing destination for everyone and a place that our customers can take ownership and be proud of.

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