



The **100** Day Pivot



Vaughan
Public Libraries

Changing our Services to Meet your Needs

On Saturday March 14th, Vaughan Public Libraries (VPL) closed its doors to the public. However, while our branches may be closed, our library has remained open to new ideas and innovation resulting in the adoption of a new service model to provide Vaughan citizens with a robust digital presence and the introduction of curbside pickup. In tandem with this, we've made operational changes to rise to the challenge of COVID-19 and lay the groundwork for a safe and gradual return to operations.



Early Pandemic Response

Throughout the week of March 9th, VPL prioritized customer and staff safety by quickly moving to increase cleaning of high touch surfaces, provision of hand sanitizers and promotion of public health measures. The CEO and Executive Management team initiated a review of library pandemic planning and attended key response meetings at the City of Vaughan, including the Emergency Management Team, ongoing meetings with the Senior Leadership Team and Vaughan's COVID-19 Task Force.

On March 12th, the World Health Organization declared a global pandemic, and the Province of Ontario responded by closing all publicly funded schools. To ensure the safety of our staff and customers, on March 13th VPL made the decision to close all branches and cancel all programming beginning March 14 at 5pm - the first major library system in Ontario to make this call.



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**ALL LIBRARIES
CLOSED**

& ALL PROGRAMS CANCELLED
**UNTIL FURTHER
NOTICE**

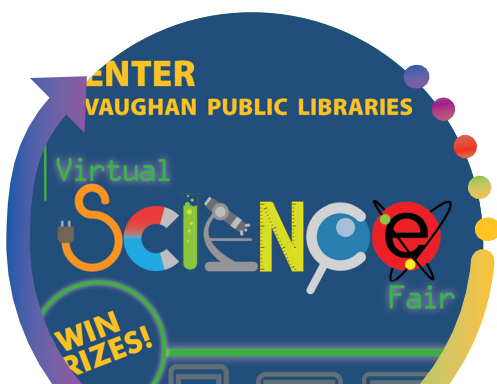


The Pivot to a Digital Service Model

Despite the challenge of a drastically altered workplace, VPL staff collaborated to develop a new digital service model that has been embraced by our customers. VPL already had a robust catalogue of online resources, including access to news publications, ebooks, eaudiobooks and databases. This has been bolstered by the addition of more than 3,900 new ebooks and eaudiobooks, the doubling of borrowing limits on Hoopla and Kanopy, which are providers of digital resources including movies, and the purchase of new tools that can be safely enjoyed from home, such as the researching family trees through Ancestry.com and the French database Cantook Station. Enhanced exterior Wi-Fi connections were also installed outside three of our resource libraries for customers to access free of charge

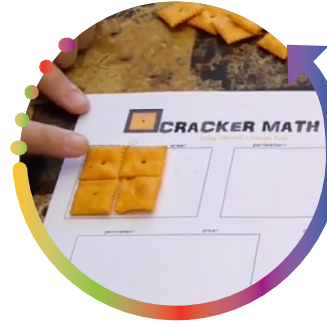
The importance of programming has never been so vital as a contributor to the mental health, wellbeing and education of our community, yet our ability to deliver has never been so challenged. Despite this, VPL staff worked tirelessly to create a dynamic calendar of programming, engaging all ages and embracing the diverse groups that make up Vaughan. Highlights include:

- Livestreamed storytimes on Instagram launched on March 23rd with 15-30 minutes of live stories, songs and activities for preschoolers. These sessions average between 30 and 50 connections per session, and average 189 views over a 24-hour period. To ensure access for all, pre-recorded storytimes have also been added to YouTube.
- New Francophone activities, including storytimes, adult socials and downloadable activities are available three times per week on VPL's social media and website.
- Bilingual Mandarin storytime is offered once per week in pre-recorded format.
- Guest speakers have informed and inspired attendees at a number of Zoom sessions, as diverse as personal finances during COVID-19, how real estate has been affected by the pandemic, and gardening with native plants.
- Adult book clubs have been hosted on Zoom, averaging 20 attendees per session.
- Similarly, children and teen book clubs have been introduced on Instagram, Youtube and Zoom engaging an average of 140 children and teens per session.
- STEAM activities for school-aged children are produced three times per week and hosted via Youtube and our social media accounts. These pre-recorded, 5-minute videos showcase quick activities that parents can do with their children.



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The Pivot to a Digital Service Model



This represents just a small selection of the programming and activities available to the community. To make all of these programs as accessible as possible, we've increased promotion across all of our communication channels and created a dedicated web portal to host them. Our social media activity has more than doubled, and the newsletters promoting our programming and resources have switched from every two weeks to twice per week. Throughout this time, newsletter distribution has remained steady at around 15,000 recipients with high levels of engagement from recipients. The new VPL at Home web portal has also experienced large numbers of visitors, with more than 20,500 page views since launch. The average visitor spends roughly 4 minutes on this page - a clear sign that they are accessing and enjoying our content.

VPL at Home



www.vaughanpl.info/vpl_at_home



Use of digital resources has skyrocketed during the closure as the public look for materials that can be enjoyed without leaving the house. The largest increases in database use have been seen in the following:

- Tumblebooks (digital children's picture books): 350%
- Press Reader (newspapers in 60 languages) 215%
- Lynda.com (education and training programs): 212%
- NY Times: 203%
- Zinio (digital magazines): 149%

Use of VPL ebooks eaudiobooks and digital movies has also increased significantly during the closure. Increases in use of these digital resources has increased as follows:

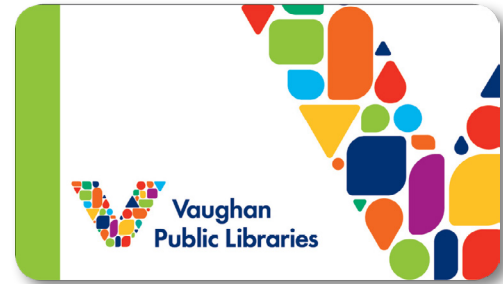
- Overdrive (ebooks and eaudiobooks): 202%
- Hoopla and Kanopy (digital movies, plus ebooks and eaudiobooks on Hoopla): 149%



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The Pivot to a Digital Service Model

All of these resources can be accessed with a VPL library card, and we've moved to make registration for temporary digital versions of this widely available during the closure. Thanks to our own internal promotion as well as that of our partners in the City and Council, we have issued more than five times the number of digital memberships as the same period last year, since branches closed their doors. Anyone who lives, works, owns property, or attends an educational institution in the City of Vaughan qualifies for free library membership and can apply online.



Digital Library Card



www.vaughanpl.info/online_registration

Community Outreach and the Introduction of Ask Us

VPL continued to be an active member of the community and has engaged its partners to nurture relationships and drive awareness of the resources available. An email and phone reach out was made to all of our partners to see how we can support the needs of their members and we have seen significant pick up of our resources, including inclusion of programming in school newsletters.

A personal customer care program was created to provide updates to over 6,000 customers with active hold requests and to promote knowledge of online resources. Staff demonstrated great compassion through the 1,524 telephone calls made to regular customers and vulnerable members of the community. These calls provided people with reassurance, advice on services available as well as social and mental support. The remaining customer care contacts were through email and were equally well received. Feedback from customers has been overwhelmingly positive.

The Ask Us virtual information desk opened to field questions about library services, as well as to assist customers in research. Ask Us has proven to be a valuable resource in assisting customers as they navigate our digital collection, often for the first time. This service is available on the VPL website, as well as by phone and through live chat on Instagram, Facebook and Twitter and monitored citizen social media posts.



Ask Us



www.vaughanpl.info/ask_us



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Community Outreach

Additionally, two of VPL's 3D printers have been loaned to a local health care provider who are using our machines to produce 3D printed pieces for face shields for frontline workers.



Staffing

The resiliency, adaptability and creativity of our staff has been a great source of pride to VPL and has been reflected in the outstanding work they have produced in what are new and uncharted waters. Staff have performed enthusiastically and continue to develop and present innovative approaches to digital service delivery.



Collaboration with the City of Vaughan

Vaughan Public Libraries continues to be an active participant on City of Vaughan teams and task forces. In addition to senior management participation, three VPL librarians are participating on the City's Data Analytics Task Force researching and analyzing information regarding such topics as government involvement and actions such as restrictions and regulations for various levels of government which have impacted Canada and internationally and grassroots community initiatives both at home and abroad being implemented and heralded. Two other VPL librarians are working with the City's Economic Development team researching business trends and long-term impacts of COVID-19 on all types of businesses among other topics.

Vaughan Public Libraries and the City's Recreation Services department have initiated and are co-leading a Community Wellness Task Force, which has resulted in the creation of the TogetherVaughan portal - a site and social media campaign aiming to share uplifting stories and connect people with help and volunteers with organizations in needs of assistance.

Curbside Pickup



Place your request online



Book a time & branch location



Pick up your items curbside



VPL became the first library in the province to begin receiving customer requests for curbside pickup which launched on May 14th and has been wildly successful. Over 3,000 customer requests have been received and 14,420 items have been loaned. To maintain physical distancing and the wellbeing of staff and customers, pickups are being timed and we have added extra pickup days in response to the high demand. Information about curbside pickup on the VPL website has been viewed over 17,500 times since launch. This service is currently being offered at our three resource libraries to provide easy access throughout Vaughan.



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The Future

A deep cleaning of all VPL locations has been conducted, and safety protocols remain top of mind. Our curbside locations have been inspected and directional lanes have been added, along with plexiglass shields in certain areas. Safety of staff and customers is one of the key focus areas for our taskforce on reopening and we are currently investigating how social distancing can be maintained while still offering core services, and how staffing arrangements will need to be amended to meet recommended requirements.

It has become clear that to protect the health of our community, programming should remain online only for the foreseeable future, and we have announced the suspension of all in-branch programs for the remainder of 2020. We will continue to offer our online activities and have expanded this through the recent addition of our inaugural Virtual Science Fair, as well as the popular Teen Summer Reading Challenge and the TD Summer Reading Club.

There are currently over 130,000 items on loan to our customers, which we will begin encouraging customers to return June 24th as we now have processes and staffing in place to address this. Although all overdue or late fines have been eliminated and loan periods extended, as curbside pickup continues to grow and is extended to all VPL locations, reintegrating these items back into our accessible collection will become more pressing.

We will continue to monitor the situation in Vaughan and will adapt accordingly. We look forward to reopening our doors fully to the public, but until that time, our system will reopen in phases. You will see more services in more locations with more of our collection becoming available. In the meantime, you can enjoy great resources and programs on our website. Stay tuned to www.vaughanpl.info for more details.

 facebook.com/vaughanpl

 twitter.com/vaughanpl

 instagram.com/vaughanpubliclibraries/



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