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Shelburne Public Library measuring its economic impact on the community

Public libraries are essential community spaces that support the people they serve.

? They help people learn, grow, start businesses, and connect with others by providing access to information, programs, and community activities.

? Libraries are welcoming places where people of all ages and abilities can gather, learn throughout their lives, and explore local and global resources.

? By bringing people together, libraries help build connections, encourage the sharing of ideas, and support informed decision-making.

? Libraries provide free and fair access to resources and create opportunities for people from all backgrounds to learn, connect, and participate in their communities.

?Where other spaces force us into defined roles of consumer, client, employee, or student, public libraries are spaces for unqualified humanity, where nothing is expected of us other than our respect for one another. In serving this holistic role, public libraries are the backbone of our communities,? said the Ontario Library Service.

Those who use and love their public library know the many benefits a library brings to the community, but how do we demonstrate the extent of our impact? How do we tangibly value an inherently intangible, human-based service? Well, the Ontario Library Service, in partnership with Algoma University and the Nordik Institute have found a way.

Together, they created the Valuing Ontario Libraries Toolkit (VOLT) to help public libraries demonstrate their economic benefit. Using information and data the library already collects, the toolkit provides a Social Return on Investment (SROI): an approximate dollar value of benefit that is created for each dollar that is invested in the library by local councils.

The framework provides the economic benefit libraries provide across seven key domains: Education, Culture, Inclusion and Wellbeing, Entertainment and Leisure, Economic Development, Civic Engagement, and Space.

The Shelburne Public Library team is currently working on completing the toolkit and looks forward to sharing the results with the community. By the end of this summer, residents will know the economic benefit and the SROI for every dollar invested in the Shelburne Public Library.

Stay tuned!

Recommended Read of the Week

Molly picked the library's staff pick this week: Slow Gods by Claire North.

?Here is a book I had to read twice, in order to truly grasp all of the story, as it unfolds over a century. I know, that might be a deterrent for some of you looking for quick recommendation, but even if you're not a sci-fi fan, in general, this story has it all. Action, love, adventure, murder, thrills, cool animals and a lovely garden on an island,? Molly writes.

?If you're a flying buff, there is a cadre of pilots who carve their way through the skies of many varieties of space. If you're trying to figure out the expanding definitions of gender and self, there is a comprehensive yet brief explanation for all kinds of people ? and robots ? from all kinds of places. This is one of those stories which has the potential to capture the imagination of a generation, such as Lilith's Brood, or Neuromancer. In short: a winner.?

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-This weekly article is written by the team at the Shelburne Public Library