



**GURU
EGCENTRIC
THINKER
SCHOLAR
NERD
GENIUS
EGGHEAD
BOOKWORM**

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The *Get Your Geek On* program is made possible through the support of *RBC Foundation* who demonstrate their commitment to early-literacy programming and the joy and power of reading – and, their belief in the potential of youth as leaders and change makers.



RBC Foundation

At *Calgary Reads* we're engaging families, leaders and passionate readers throughout our community. Together, we know reading opens minds – and futures.

Our model is proven and we are making a meaningful difference in the lives of Calgary children.

www.calgaryreads.com

calgary reads

WHY:

GET YOUR

GEEK ON

Get Your Geek On is a program youth and young adults can take – and make their own

It's about stepping up to be a movement maker! It's about being creative and taking action to make a difference. It's about energizing people around the pleasure, purpose and power of reading.

And – it's about helping children to build their essential literacy skills so they can succeed at school and in life!

It's about you too: demonstrating and building your leadership skills, being part of a team, and planning and executing activities and events big and small. You can choose to build in fundraising efforts for Calgary Reads too – and help us make an even bigger, long-term impact in the lives of children.

Why promoting early-literacy and reading is important

Literacy is a fundamental life skill. Being a competent reader is linked to:

- Positive self-esteem
- High school completion rates
- Ongoing employment
- Financial stability
- Good health
- Lower crime rates

Getting Your Geek On is fun and rewarding

Promote the joy of reading

Ignite your own reading movement

Make a difference in the lives of children

Do something good in the community

Build your leadership skills, be engaged with others and volunteer

Raise funds for Calgary Reads (and earn Geek Glasses for your team)

Development of literacy skills from an early age is critical to future success in school and in life

Twenty-eight per cent of Canadian children entering school today are already significantly behind their peers in literacy and learning skills. We know that if a student doesn't catch up by grade three, it is harder with each passing year.

Calgary Reads offers the only in-school, volunteer-based, tutor program specific to struggling readers. With early intervention in grades one and two, most below-level readers can catch up and be on course for greater life success.

Now through *Get Your Geek On* youth take the lead too. You can help struggling young readers to build their skills, bring more books into the lives of children, youth and adults and spread the joy and power of reading in the community!

The Calgary Reads' website includes numerous resources and tip sheets to help build children's literacy skills; some may be helpful to you as you implement events and activities.

Step up and *Get Your Geek On!* Do it:

With your schoolmates and friends

Through your leadership, enterprise or innovation class

For engagement in the community

As a volunteer assignment

With your sports team or youth club

Because it matters!

INSPIRING
YOUTH
LEADER-
SHIP AND
CITIZEN-
SHIP

If you are a teacher or a youth leader using this publication to motivate and empower youth, this section will be helpful in confirming: the why and how of inspiring youth to develop and demonstrate their citizenship – and build their leadership skills

Here is a snapshot of leadership skills that leaders and educators believe should be the focus of our guidance and coaching to youth:

Kindness	Humility	Truthfulness	Integrity
Honesty	Resilience	Active Listening	Empathy
Creativity	Teamwork	Communications	Compassion
Respect	Learning	Inclusiveness	Dependability
Courage	Fun	Decision-Making	Responsibility

You'll see that none of these skills require a position of power such as team captain, student council or class president. Each young person will have their own inherent qualities and skills. As a teacher or youth leader you can encourage these while planting seeds of others to nurture over time.

Six ways to inspire leadership in youth

1. Model the way

The best way to teach leadership is to model it. Pay attention to the formal and informal lessons you are teaching through your words and actions. Youth will notice how you manage (or talk about handling) challenges

or crises; how you handle stress; they will overhear how you speak to others and see how you come to decisions. You can also proactively find ways to show or discuss how you are demonstrating leadership skills.

2. Involve them

There are many ways to involve youth in everyday leadership lessons of life. Look for ways to turn ordinary activities into extraordinary leadership teachable moments. Talk about current events and engage them in debates about issues. Give them a say

in decisions and help them work through collaborative processes (listening to different viewpoints) and ways to reach consensus. Expose them to other leaders and teach the art of learning about other people. Teach them how to craft and deliver a great toast.

3. Let them teach you

A great way to foster leadership confidence and competence is to turn the tables and become the student. Find out what they are involved in and you may be surprised to learn that they are building their sense of citizenship and leadership – for example through video games where they are creating other worlds. They are demonstrating vision as they create

interconnecting communities with great detail and complexity. You'll likely find the youth also demonstrate their competent communication skills too as they share the story of the 'why' for their decisions and actions. They are being creative and learning the value of focus; and they 'try' and 'fail' as some of their 'builds' flop.

4. Let them lead

The best way to learn anything is to do it; whether playing the piano (by practicing) or a flip turn in the pool with lots of water up your nose. The best way to learn leadership is by leading. If we trust, are engaged and show that we care – we can bring the same behaviours forth in the youth we are seeking

to inspire. Find opportunities for them to take the reins, figure it out, and 'do it their way'. We must let go of micromanaging and accept there can be various ways to lead and implement a project or plan. Through the opportunity to lead, youth will expand and refine their skills.

5. Help them start a business

An entrepreneurial experience and a focused conversation can lead to lots of leadership skill building exploration and development. What will they do with the money? (Will they see only short-term personal riches now or do they see and plan for the long term building possibilities?) What else will they do with the money? (Are they thinking broadly? Do

they recognize what might go wrong in the business or what new opportunities they may have? Will they save for a rainy day?) Is there anything else to do with the money? (Will they consider the possibility of social change? Are they considering how some of the money might be used to better others' lives?)

6. Encourage them

In life, we know you can't be great at everything, but as a young person there is pressure for good grades or to be the star of a sports team. While as teachers and youth leaders we share encouragement – this sometimes doesn't resonate. As we say "You've got this!" – youth can sometimes feel it's yet another bar they cannot reach. The biggest lesson we can help young people learn is that all they can ever do is their best. As they step into the leader they are becoming, this lesson will serve them well, despite often being painful to learn.

Acknowledgment: Adapted in part from the work of Karin Hurt and Alli Polin.

HOW TO USE THIS HAND- BOOK

There are almost limitless ways you and your group, team or class can make a difference

This handbook and online resources have ideas that you can take and make your own.

Or implement your own ideas to enhance the pre-reading and reading skills of young children – and let us know.

1. Establish your team or group (or decide what you'll do as an individual). Maybe your 'Geeks' group has a unique name
2. Involve a teacher, a coach or other adult if that fits with how and why you're getting involved. Using this handbook may align well to school leadership programs or those that require your involvement in the community
3. Make a plan about which groups (such as an elementary school class or perhaps residents in a certain geographic area) you want to influence or impact. What do you want to achieve or see happen through your efforts?
4. Consider if you want (or need) to collaborate with another group: a business partner, a community association or a school or class. Decide the purpose and role of any partnership and be sure to communicate clearly and consistently with each other
5. Decide on the activity or event (or several) that you'll plan and implement and the time frame you'll be active (several weeks or months; a school semester – or a onetime event?). See the next section for ideas
6. Determine if you'll include any fundraising targets. They can: spur on your team and participants' enthusiasm, earn your team fun buttons and 'Geek Glasses' from Calgary Reads, and – funds you raise will help support Calgary Reads programs in schools and the community
7. Register your *Get Your Geek On* group, team, class or yourself with Calgary Reads. Let us know what you're doing and how it's going. Record your stories, photos, achievements and fundraising successes. Visit www.calgaryreads.com and follow the links to share feedback
8. Promote what your group, team or class is doing: think about using social media, flyers, posters and word of mouth
9. We'll share your stories too. We'll highlight how you are stepping up and making a difference to children, families and the community

Got questions? Ask us: info@calgaryreads.com or 403.777.8254

Here's a simple planning template to get you started

Group Name:	Team members:
Why do we want to do this?	
What is distinct about our group?	
What are the Top 3 ideas we like?	
What's our best idea that we all agree we can implement?	
What are the first steps?	
What does success look like for us?	

iDEAS

IDEAS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

ORGANIZE A BOOK DRIVE

A book drive helps to address the issue of book access and can be a great way to provide books to a community or group. *(This is just like a bottle drive so you might have similar experience!)*

Consider these two different types of book drives:

A Central Collection Point: place a banner or poster and collection bin at a central location where people can drop off books. The Central Collection Point can be at a school, office, club, sporting or community event, and this can be sponsored by individuals, youth groups, businesses or classrooms at school, or any type of organization that has a desire to help kids who have only a few books receive more.

A Door-to-Door Book Drive: hang a bag and flyer on doors in a chosen area. The flyer shares details about the drive and the date that someone will be back to collect books. The homeowner puts the books they wish to donate in the bag and places them on their front step the day of the drive. This type of drive works well when you have a group including volunteer drivers who can cover a large area at one time.

1. Things to consider when organizing your book drive:

- a. Do you want to collect books through a central collection point or door to door? If you would like to use collection bins at several different locations (schools, libraries, etc.), information on collection bins is detailed below. You will need lots of boxes. You might consider contacting an organization or a local business to provide the boxes you need in exchange for displaying their logo on the box
- b. Whom do you want the book drive to benefit? Do you want to collect and donate to the *CBC Calgary Reads* annual Big Book Sale? Or, will you donate the books to a local school or library? Calgary Reads partners with the Calgary Food Bank and we provide donated (and sorted by age) books to their clients who need emergency food hampers. It is a way to complement the Food Bank's role of providing 'nourishment' so that families 'read every day that they eat'. Or ask a social services agency serving families if they would pass the collected books to children who would benefit
- c. When and where do you want to hold the book drive? Local schools or libraries may be willing to partner with you, especially if they are to be the beneficiary
- d. What types of books do you want to collect and which age groups do you want to target? You might specify, for example, that you are seeking books suitable for children aged newborn to age eight. Calgary Reads has lists you can share detailing appropriate books – *especially if you feel some participants might buy and donate new books to your drive*
- e. How long will the book drive last?

**DID YOU KNOW?
SOME CHILDREN HAVE
NEVER OWNED THEIR
VERY OWN BOOK.**

-
2. Advertise your book drive. Consider, flyers, posters, social media outreach, news releases or Public Service Announcements (PSAs)
 3. Set up your collection point
 - a. For a Central Collection Point, bins or boxes may be appropriate for collection if you have team members available to monitor them
 - b. For a Door-to-Door Book Drive, decide when to distribute your bags (on front door handles) and include a flyer about your book drive and say when the books will be collected
 4. Collect books; sort as necessary – (perhaps) by suitability to age or by topic
 5. Deliver to the people or groups receiving the books
 6. Have a plan for recycling or throwing out damaged or over-used books

This sample timeline will help in your planning

8 weeks to distribution	Begin planning book drive. Decide the type, beneficiaries, location, book types and duration of the book drive.
7 weeks to distribution	Begin advertising the book drive through flyers, posters, news releases or PSAs, social media and phone calls. Ask your family, friends and neighbours to donate.
6 weeks to distribution	Begin distribution of collection bins or boxes and/or bags with flyers.
4 weeks to distribution	Produce a second round of advertising through flyers, news releases or PSAs, social media and phone calls.
3 weeks to distribution	Check in with collection sites.
2 weeks to distribution	Produce a third round of advertising through flyers, update stickers on your posters, news releases or PSAs, social media and phone calls.
1 week to distribution	Have your final check in with collection sites.
Distribution day	Collect books, have team sort if needed and distribute to the groups or people you intend receive them.
1 week following	Send thank you notes. Conduct evaluation. Share successes.

HOST A READING PARTY

Reading parties can offer families and friends the opportunity to read together in a fun environment. A reading party can be appropriate for children (and adults) of all ages, and serve as a way to get children interested in reading. You may wish to host a party for your group, team or class, for younger students and their parents, or for the local community.

Themes you may want to consider for your reading party:

- Character parties where everyone comes dressed up as a character from their favourite book
- Book-exchange parties where everyone brings books they have already finished reading to trade with each other and take home to read
- Read-ins where families bring books and/or have access to other books to borrow during the party and read together
- A 'PJ' themed party complete with bedtime stories
- A fund-raising Read-A-Thon where the party kicks-offs or celebrates the completion of a sponsored reading period. Children are sponsored by family and friends for the number of books they read in one month, for example. Parents verify the number of books read by the child or together as a family. Funds raised can help support Calgary Reads programs in the community
- Use a Sponsor Sheet (see below) to list the name of each person that is sponsoring, the amount pledged (either a fixed amount or an amount per book read) and whether the pledged money has been collected

1. Decide on a theme for your reading party
2. Decide on a date and a location for a reading party and if necessary, obtain permission to use the location
3. Invite participants/families
4. Even if families are bringing books, you may still wish to have a few books on hand to provide to children and their families if they finish the books they brought

MY SPONSORS:

Name	Contact Details	Amount Pledged <i>per book/or one time</i>	Collected

This sample timeline will help in your planning

6 weeks to go

Determine a date/time, theme, venue, budget and guests for your party.

4 weeks to go

Mail or email invitations with an overview of the event; include an RSVP so you'll know the number of guests to expect.

3 weeks to go

Purchase party supplies, including menu items, if food will be served. Determine activities. Do you need a Master of Ceremonies (MC) to lead your party?

2 weeks to go

Contact guests who have not confirmed their attendance. Acquire extra books to bring to the party.

1 week to go

Finalize agenda and ensure that all supplies are on hand.

Day of the party

Enjoy your literacy party!

1 week following

Send thank you notes. Conduct evaluation. Share success.



REMEMBER
UPDATE CALGARY READS
ON YOUR ACTIVITIES!

START A BOOK CLUB

A book club can be appropriate for all age groups. Parents can read to younger children and children can discuss the book with help from their parents. Or, older students could lead a book club for younger students. In addition to creating community book clubs you might decide on ways to help families and child care providers to access literacy support for young children; for example, by referring them to Calgary Reads' website for resources and tools.

You may want to start a book club within your group, class or team, via your school or at a local library.

1. Determine what kind of book club you want to start

- a. Do you want it to include your Geek group, team or class? Or, younger students at your school, or another school? If a book club with younger students, will your group, team or class lead or be involved in the book club once it's running? Or will you orchestrate a community initiative with several book clubs?

2. Work out a schedule and answer these questions:

- a. How frequently should the book club(s) meet?
- b. When and where should the book club meet? If you'd like to meet at a local library or school – you'll need to get their permission to start the club and confirm logistics

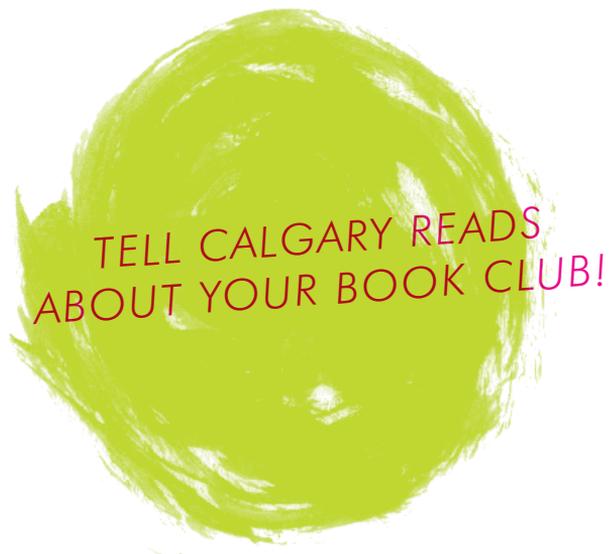
3. Decide if you will provide incentives or snacks to book club members

4. Determine what types of books will be read and how the books will be selected

- a. Will it be a book club with your friends or family or one open to the public?
- b. Will parents select the book or will the children in the group select it? If your book club is for younger children consider Calgary Reads' list of '50 Books to Read Before You Are Eight'
- c. Is there a price range for the books you might select?
- d. If the book club is held at a local school or library, are there multiple copies of the book available to be borrowed/checked out?

5. Determine how book club members will get to and from meetings

- a. If the book club is held at a school after school hours, is there a late bus that students can take?
- b. Can members walk in groups or carpool?
- c. If the book club is for children with parents at a local church, school or library, families can likely drive or bus



HOST A BOOK SWAP

You can host a Book Swap just about anywhere, including:

- At home
- At school
- At your next Book Club meeting
- At a local independent book store

Once you have picked a venue, decide how you want to run your event. The basic Book Swap formula works like this (but you may have your own ideas too!):

1. **Guests pay a small entry fee** to attend the Book Swap, which is used by you or your team to purchase books for children who otherwise would not have them or can be donated to Calgary Reads to support our work
2. **Each person brings a favourite book.** At the Book Swap they are provided with an index card to put inside the front cover explaining why they love the book they brought
3. **Guests chat and enjoy refreshments,** while they look through the selection of books to be swapped
4. **Each person chooses a book** to take home with them

TAKE A BOOK. LEAVE A BOOK. MAKE A DIFFERENCE. EXCHANGE A FAVOURITE BOOK FOR ANOTHER AND HELP PROMOTE THE JOY OF READING TO OTHERS!

This sample timeline will help in your planning

6 weeks to event

Make your plan as described here
Select your venue and time and cost to participate.

5 weeks to event

Spread the word. People need to know about your event. Use a variety of ways to promote your Book Swap. Consider emailing friends and family. Use social media. Create and hang posters or distribute flyers.

1 week to event

Do another round of promotion to remind people the event is coming soon.

Day of the event

Set up tables, boxes or shelves to hold the books that will arrive to be swapped. Set out your refreshments too – likely in an area away from the books. Have fun. Tweet about it or send Calgary Reads an Instagram. If you take photos at the event, Calgary Reads would be thrilled to see them. Also, if you are fundraising for Calgary Reads you might want to have some information about us available. Call us and we will give you some free bookmarks.

ORGANIZE A SPELLING BEE

Spelling bees can serve as a fun competitive way to increase a child's spelling and vocabulary levels while helping to further develop the child's mastery of the English language. Your group, team or class might choose whether you want to host a small spelling bee for a defined group of students or a larger spelling bee that is part of a partnership within your community or local school(s).

1. Decide who is eligible to participate in the bee

2. Decide on word lists and rules. It is suggested that you include the pronunciation of each word on the word list

- a. Sample word lists and planning ideas can be found online, including:
 - i. www2.canada.com/national/features/canspell/howtohost.html
 - ii. www.spelling-words-well.com/spelling-bee-word-list.html
 - iii. www2.sharonherald.com/herald/nie/spellb/spelllist1.html

Sample rules can be found at:

www.spellingbeeofcanada.ca/rules

www.spellingbee.com/contest-rules

- b. Make sure to distribute both the word list and the rules to the contestants

3. Select a pronouncer and judges

4. Ensure you have supplies

- a. These may include a podium, microphone, name tags, dictionaries, pencils and a recording chart (there are samples online) for the judges
- b. If you are providing prizes, determine what the prizes will be and order them

5. After registration is complete, randomly select the order of contestants

6. During the spelling bee:

- a. Explain the rules. It is suggested that you provide emphasis on rules such as:
 - i. Remind participants that before they spell a word, they may ask to have it repeated, defined and used in a sentence
 - ii. Remind participants they have one chance to spell the word and provide instructions on where contestants should go once they are eliminated
- b. Line participants up on stage or seat them in the order in which they will be competing
- c. Have each participant step forward when it's his or her turn. Read the assigned word clearly. Repeat, define or use the word in a sentence if asked
 - i. When a speller gets a word right, tell her it was correct
 - ii. If a speller gets a word wrong, be kind in your response. Simply say "I'm sorry, that's incorrect." If he needs a gentle reminder to leave the stage, remind him that he can take his seat offstage now
 - iii. At the end of the spelling bee, congratulate the winner and thank all the participants

This sample timeline will help in your planning

8 weeks
to spelling bee

Determine date, potential contestants, word lists, and rules. Compile a list of potential locations and contact them for permission to use the venue and to coordinate schedules. Contact potential sponsors.

6 weeks
to spelling bee

Invite potential contestants and distribute word lists. Order awards. Begin advertising and contacting media to publicize your event (and maybe to invite them to attend). Make and distribute posters, if appropriate, to publicize your event.

5 weeks
to spelling bee

Confirm contestant lists. Select judges and pronouncers.

2 weeks
to spelling bee

Acquire all necessary supplies. Make name tags for contestants. Contact media personnel again.

1 week
to spelling bee

Print word lists for judges and pronouncers. Determine speller order and seating arrangement.

Day of spelling bee

Check supplies and sound system. Thank sponsors, spellers, teachers, parents, staff and media. Hand out prizes at the end of the event.

1 week following spelling bee

Send thank you notes. Conduct evaluation. Share success.



REMEMBER
TO PROMOTE YOUR
GREAT WORK TO OTHERS
THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA
– SO THEY GET INSPIRED
TOO!

ORGANIZE A FIELD TRIP TO THE PUBLIC LIBRARY

A library field trip can help provide families with access to literacy support for children – and a library tour is appropriate for all ages. Consider who you might partner with to reach families who might be unfamiliar with the library system such as new immigrants. A local school or agency serving families may like to partner with you and promote to families who are utilizing their services; the agency may also be able to provide the families with transportation to the library venue. *To make it even easier, just take a new student in your school to the school library and give them a tour.*

1. Explore and determine potential collaborator organization(s)
2. Confirm how many groups or families will participate in the library tour
3. Determine if you will need any translators for families whose first language is not English; the agency you are partnering with may be able to help you find interpreters who can attend the library tour
4. Contact your local library to set up the visit. Public library information for your area will be found online
 - Librarians may be available upon request to provide children or youth with a tour, showing them age-appropriate books and signing them up for library cards
5. Determine the role your group, team or class will take during the tour – as ‘hosts’ and perhaps as leaders of Read Aloud small sessions within the library during the visit
6. With help from the librarian, provide your guests with information about summer book programs at the local library and events the library may be hosting. These events often serve as a great way to keep children interested in reading through a fun, social setting

This sample timeline will help in your planning

4 weeks to go

Explore and confirm potential collaboration to reach your target tour participants. Find information on local libraries, select a library and contact the library to set up a visit.

3 weeks to go

Provide tour details to your collaborating partner(s) and confirm numbers of attendees and how transportation will be handled.

2 weeks to go

Ask your collaborating partner to send a reminder to participating families.

1 week to go

Confirm visit with library including your role and the flow and activities that will occur.

Day of the library field trip

Enjoy your field trip to the library! Make sure your participants have good books to check out and have ways to return them to the library. Remember to take book bags to hold all the books people will be reading.

1 week following

Send thank you notes. Conduct evaluation. Share success.

MAKE AND SELL A PRODUCT TO RAISE FUNDS

Brainstorm products you (and your team) might make and sell. Think about your arts and crafts skills. Perhaps you can design, make and sell bookmarks. One side can be a great design and the reverse side can speak about how the funds raised will be used to inspire the joy of reading. Or, you might make bead bracelets that have a tag that tells about your work and your goals. *Check on Calgary Reads' web store for Reader Beader bracelet kits.*

You may need family members or friends to donate or lend initial 'seed' money to help you buy supplies. Once you start to sell your products you can repay anyone who gave you money for supplies (if they want repaying) and then your profits can be used to buy books to donate (perhaps to children who otherwise may not have their own books) or the funds can be provided to Calgary Reads for literacy-building programs. This is called a 'social enterprise' business, where profits are generated and used to support nonprofit or charitable work.

If you plan to make and sell a product:

- Decide what product you will make and what materials you will use
- Determine how much each item will cost to make and what the highest sale price can be. Think about how much people will be willing to pay knowing they will enjoy your product – and are supporting a good cause
- Make a decision about how you will obtain or purchase the raw materials. Will a store donate supplies to you? Will family members or friends provide seed funding? And, if they do – do they want their investment money back before you use profits for your cause?
- Consider how you will market and sell your product. Will you ask friends and family to buy? Perhaps a local grocery store will let you have a table outside on the weekend. Can you sell your product at school during lunch break? Can you promote through posters and social media?
- Decide if you will make the products in a production line – where each team member does a certain part of the process; or, if you will each make distinct versions of the product
- Set up a working session to produce your products
- Decide how many products you will create and sell and, if successful, you may create a second batch

This sample timeline will help in your planning

4 weeks to go

Decide on the product, the design and the raw supplies needed. Decide how you will purchase your supplies and source the funds.

3 weeks to go

Buy the supplies and set the date(s) for production.

2 weeks to go

Have your product making day(s) and start advertising when and where your products will be for sale.

1 week to go

Do more promotion and plan your sales event and/or how people can contact you to purchase.

Day of the sale

Ensure you have enough people to serve your customers. Have a float of money so you can provide change. Ensure your customers know how the money will be used to inspire the joy of reading. Thank everyone for their support.

1 week following

Purchase and distribute books or arrange to bring your donation to Calgary Reads. Send any needed thank you notes. Evaluate how well the project went (you may have products left over and decide on a new plan to continue to sell them). Share success.



REMEMBER
SHARE YOUR STORIES AND PHOTOS WITH
CALGARY READS SO WE CAN SHARE YOUR
GOOD IDEAS FOR ACTIVITIES!

ORGANIZE A LITERACY CARNIVAL IN YOUR COMMUNITY

A literacy carnival is a series of literacy themed events, designed to make reading and learning fun for students. Activities may address reading, speaking, rhyming, upper/lowercase letter matching, writing, listening, sight words, homonyms, sequencing, and spelling. Literacy carnivals can be a great way to encourage a focus on literacy among families and provide ideas for further literacy development. You may find ideas and resources for your activities online and through teachers. Bookmarks detailing age-appropriate reading lists and other helpful handouts are available from Calgary Reads; you may want to share these with your participants, particularly if parents are attending too.

If your group, team or class decides to hold a literacy carnival:

- Determine what age groups you want to include in the event. Will you cater to younger students in your school, another local school or in your community?
- Decide on the venue for your literacy carnival. Contact the venue for permission and to coordinate schedules. It could happen in your own back yard
- Decide what activities you wish to include, what age groups they are appropriate for, and whether or not incentives will be provided. Do you want to include a theme?

- Determine who will staff the literacy carnival. If your group, team or class is putting on the carnival for younger students, you may wish to have your group staff the events. If it is to be held in the community, you may need to recruit and train other volunteers to help too
- Advertise your literacy carnival

GAME IDEAS

A Read Aloud Station

Tongue Twister Tent

Rhyming Contest

Readers' Theatre

Charades
(teams compete and act out book titles and characters)

Memory Game
(based on matching words to pictures)

Skipping Songs

Check out commercial literacy skill-building games too and see if they can become part of your carnival when played in teams. We have a few in our web store at calgaryreads.com

This sample timeline will help in your planning

10 weeks to go

Determine venue and audience. Establish a budget. If you need to fundraise, establish a fundraising plan to begin immediately. Set a date and begin contacting potential locations.

8 weeks to go

If your carnival will have a concession stand, begin planning the menu and decide how food will be acquired (e.g. parent/community donations, catering, etc.).

7 weeks to go

Begin planning activity stations and sign up volunteers.

6 weeks to go

Begin advertising for your literacy carnival.

5 weeks to go

Finalize activity stations.

3 weeks to go

Gather all supplies for the event.

2 weeks to go

Finalize volunteer lists. Make an advertising push. Prepare volunteer assignments.

1 week to go

Distribute volunteer assignments.

Day of the carnival

Set up and enjoy your literacy carnival!

1 week following

Send thank you notes. Conduct evaluation. Share success. Do it again!

ESTABLISH A BACKPACK OR BOOK BAG PROGRAM

A backpack program is a way to gift books to children in need at Food Banks, pre-school programs, schools, and family resource centers. The children you will reach often lack access to books, limiting their ability to acquire literacy skills. Have your group, team or class:

- Decide on how they wish to acquire backpacks or book bags and gently used books for the program. You may choose to host a book drive or fundraiser to purchase books
 - Determine the location where you will distribute the backpacks. Will it be a location where the children are all of a similar age (e.g. a school class) or will the children be a variety of ages (e.g. through a Food Bank or family resource centre)? This is essential to determining the reading level of the books you are acquiring and how you distribute them
- Put several age-appropriate books in the backpacks – at least three to five. Make sure to establish guidelines for backpack stuffing for your group and other volunteers who may be assisting in the process. Calgary Reads has book lists of suitable books by age range; as will your local library
 - If you are distributing the backpacks or book bags at a location where the ages of the children may vary, make sure to sort the books into age groups to reduce the risk of distributing books that may be too simple or too difficult for the child. For example: babies; preschool; kindergarten to Grade 3; Grade 4 to 6
 - Perhaps label each backpack or book bag with an age range to ease the distribution process
 - If you plan to distribute the backpacks or book bags at a Food Bank, family resource centre, or a public venue, make sure to advertise when you will be distributing the backpacks so families in need of books can bring their children to acquire them
 - If time allows, read aloud a book or two to the child receiving the backpack or book bag

**REMEMBER
UPDATE CALGARY READS
ON YOUR ACTIVITIES!**

This sample timeline will help in your planning

Before beginning

Determine how you are acquiring books and bags or backpacks. If you are doing a book drive – review the book drive section of this handbook for a timeline on planning a book drive. Then align the completion date of the drive with the start of your backpack stuffing week. If you are fundraising to purchase the backpacks and/or books, establish the plan and timelines for this aspect first.

10 weeks to distribution

If you are purchasing backpacks and books, begin researching companies and ordering. If you are doing your backpack program as a part of a partnership with a school or school program contact potential partners.

8 weeks to distribution

Confirm orders and ensure your method of book acquisition is on track.

5 weeks to distribution

Recruit volunteers to stuff backpacks.

3 weeks to distribution

Ensure all supplies, including backpacks and books are on hand.

2 weeks to distribution

Have volunteers stuff the backpacks with books.

1 week to distribution

Ensure all backpacks are ready to be distributed.

Day of distribution

Hand out backpacks at distribution center.

1 week following

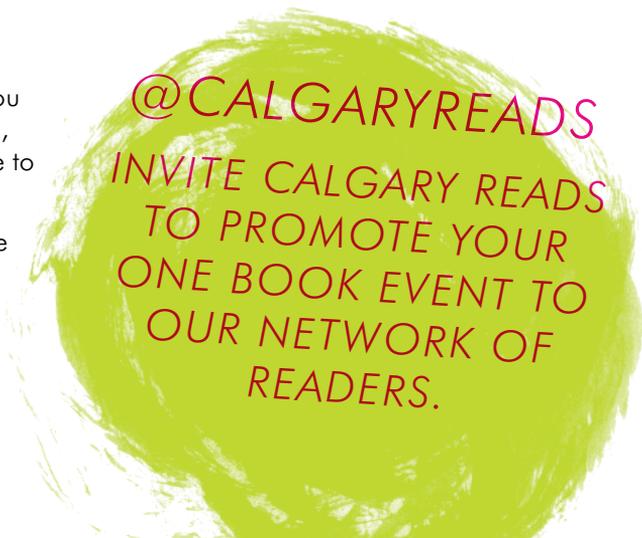
Send out thank you cards. Conduct evaluation. Share success and celebrate making a difference.

If you choose to establish a backpack or book bag program at a pre-school program, school or other location where you have established a partnership – and where the same children will be returning on a regular basis – you may wish to help design a loaner-style program that has one backpack for each student with different books inside. The students could receive a backpack for a one-week period (e.g. receive a backpack on Monday and return it the following Monday), and then switch backpacks with another student. The backpacks can also be organized by themes: poetry; dinosaurs; non-fiction books, etc. This provides children with a wide variety of books.

ESTABLISH A ONE BOOK PROGRAM

One Book programs are events in which communities of various sizes and backgrounds read the same book and later gather to celebrate the book. Some One Book celebrations include activities similar to that of a book club but may include games or a meeting with the author.

- Determine a book nomination process
 - You may wish to create a small committee made up of interested people who each propose a book along with a synopsis and then have a secret vote
- Determine how the book will be acquired by the program and participants. Is the book available in the local library or does it need to be purchased? Or can it also be acquired and read on an e-reader? If it is to be purchased in hard copy, is there a way to get a discount with a large order? You may want to directly contact the publisher. Perhaps your school has a class set of the chosen title
- Select a book
 - The book should be accessible and affordable for the entire program
 - Keep length and reading levels in mind. For an older program level you may wish to seek books with a social, moral, political, and/or cultural issue to promote critical thinking skills
- Determine the date and location for the One Book celebration
 - If necessary, contact the venue to reserve space
- Determine who and how many people will be participating in the program
- Determine what activities will take place at your One Book celebration event. Activities may include a reading of pages or part of the book (if it is short), themed games, or a book discussion
 - Some One Book programs include a visit from the author. While it may be difficult with a limited budget and small audience, you might want to try and contact the author. Be enthusiastic and you never know – they may be thrilled to help you out
- Determine what kind of snacks if any, will be provided. You may want to pair snacks with the book
- Purchase/order any necessary supplies and snacks
- Set up your venue
- Consider if you want to build in any fundraising aspect to the event



@CALGARYREADS
INVITE CALGARY READS
TO PROMOTE YOUR
ONE BOOK EVENT TO
OUR NETWORK OF
READERS.

This sample timeline will help in your planning

Before beginning

Determine book nomination process.

4 months to One Book celebration

Determine a date for the One Book celebration. Determine which book will be read. If you plan to attempt to secure an author visit, contact the author immediately. Begin securing books for those participating.

3 months to celebration

Contact potential venues to reserve space.

2 months to celebration

Distribute books or book information along with event information to participants.

4 weeks to celebration

Determine schedule of events for the One Book celebration. Plan your menu, if there will be one.

3 weeks to celebration

Begin ordering/purchasing supplies. Remind your One Book celebration participants of event information through advertising or word of mouth depending on the size of the program.

1 week to celebration

Finalize the agenda and ensure all supplies are on hand.

Day of celebration

Set up venue and enjoy your One Book celebration!

1 week following

Send thank you notes. Conduct evaluation. Share success.

D.E.A.R. DROP EVERYTHING AND READ

Establish a number of activities to encourage planned and random acts of reading.

- Have your whole school read together for 15 minutes one day (at assembly or lunch time) each week. Decide if a teacher or student will lead the session. Will you all read the same book or just pick up and read any book? Perhaps the pages can be projected on a large screen. Someone could start the session by reading aloud the starting pages and then silent reading continues (if younger students are able to read to the level)
- Offer to read aloud to younger children in your school. You or your team can host a Read Aloud 'event' as the children eat lunch. (Use lots of expression and bring the characters alive!)
- Plan and host an intergenerational Read Aloud where children, parents and grandparents come together to take turns reading aloud to their own family group or within other small family groups

Calgary Reads has several programs you can implement with your team at school and in the community – or consider them and create your own ideas:

Check out calgaryreads.com:

Read Up! Be trained as a tutor and help boost the confidence and joy of struggling readers in Grade 1 and 2 as they read and remain on level (tutors must be 18 and older)

Wee Read Share great books and games with kindergarten students

Read2gether Older reading buddies help younger friends to read!

Read Aloud Revival Community members or families come together to share the joy of reading

FINAL THOUGHTS

Resources

As you *Get Your Geek On*, here are other resources that may be helpful:

Youth Central (formerly *Child and Youth Friendly Calgary*) envisions a society where all youth participate in shaping a vibrant community. This vision is based on the firm belief that young people who experience involvement and philanthropy at an early age grow up with an ongoing sense of responsibility. Youth in modern society are undervalued and should be challenged to do more; they need to be included in all aspects of community life. www.youthcentral.com

H!pKids is a program of Humanity in Practice (HIP), which offers flexible volunteer opportunities. It is a simple way to make a difference from your class room, home or group. www.behip.ca

Spelling Bee of Canada (SBOC) is an educational organization that encourages youth, parents, teachers and the community at large to participate in the education process. www.spellingbeeofcanada.ca

Did you fundraise for Calgary Reads?

If so, thank you! We'd love to know more.

Please be in touch to arrange time for your group, team or class to tour our office and tell us how you *Got Your Geek On!* If it's not possible for you to visit, please share your final experiences and make your donation online via CanadaHelps on our website. Share a photo too of your Geeks in action so we can let other Calgary Reads supporters know about your great work!



OVER \$100

RAISED FOR CALGARY READS –
WE WILL GIVE YOUR ORGANIZING
COMMITTEE BOOK GEEK PINS.

Do more with Calgary Reads!

There are ways you – or your group, team or class can be (even more) involved with Calgary Reads.

Our website details volunteer opportunities whether you have a few hours, a day or evening to volunteer – or longer-term ways to be involved. Check us out!

Most of all, we hope you have had fun promoting reading and that you too: **read every day that you eat!**

Last idea for fundraising for Calgary Reads ... to help us build the joy of reading!

Host a 'Geek Day' at school and collect \$5 from everyone who chooses to buy and wear Geek Glasses throughout the school day (order them from the Calgary Reads web store).

(Get your school's permission of course.)



OVER \$500
RAISED FOR CALGARY READS –
WE WILL GIVE YOUR ORGANIZING
COMMITTEE GEEK GLASSES.

calgary reads

CALGARYREADS.COM