



Book Clubs for
Inmates

Celebrating 10 years of transforming lives

ANNUAL REPORT 2017

WHO WE ARE

Book Clubs for Inmates (BCFI) is a registered charity which organizes volunteer-led book clubs within federal penitentiaries across Canada. Currently, BCFI is facilitating 30 book clubs from Nova Scotia to British Columbia.

BCFI runs French and English language book clubs for men and women incarcerated in minimum, medium, and maximum security facilities. Book clubs are usually made up of 10 -18 members who meet once a month to discuss books, both fiction and non-fiction, of literary merit.

Every month, hundreds of inmates participate in book clubs across the country and each year thousands of brand new books are purchased, read, and discussed.

Transforming lives one book at a time.



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www.bookclubsforinmates.com

Book Clubs for Inmates encourages positive change through the power of literature.

We encourage inmates to make meaningful changes; develop pro-social skills; such as respectful listening and speaking. As inmates read and discuss literature, they also develop stronger reading and communication skills.

Together, these help inmates make meaningful life changes, and upon release, reintegrate more successfully back into the community.

Our Impact

Number of Book Clubs across Canada

30

Number of volunteers hours per year

10,000

Number of volunteers across Canada

90



The average number of readers for each book

10

More than 21,000 copies of books distributed

21,000

Number of titles distributed to inmates

250

Voices

One member lingered
after the others had gone.
He wanted to talk.

He said he wasn't that proficient in English before,
but the book club has really aided his understanding
of written language.

He said he loves the intense debates and discussions.
They have helped him see other points of view,
even those he doesn't agree with. Before he thought
he was always right!

He said every book has spoken to him, given him
a message. He is hopeful that once released he will
be a better person.

From Bowden

“Ladies,
Thanks for everything you have done during the past three and a half years, for making my journey through this part of my life easier, and more rewarding. It is an amazing thing you do, donating your time, sharing space with us here inside. I don't know if you fully understand what it means to the guys to have people on the outside come in and treat us like “normal” human beings. Thank you for your kindness and generosity and for, no matter how bad things might be going, giving me one night each month to look forward to. You have made a difference in my life.”

A note from a book club member at Warkworth who was granted parole

“All in all, it was a terrific discussion in which we all agreed that Book Club is a great place to practice listening and a wonderful venue for solid conversations.”

Book Club Facilitator, March 2018

“Loved this book. As I read it, it occurred to me that while the darkness seems to be so overwhelming, there are often little acts of goodness which should not be forgotten or overlooked.”

Book Club Member, about *Sarah's Key*, Warkworth

“A fascinating book of many anecdotes, which bring home some crucial questions about racism, poverty and injustice. Liked this book a lot.”

Book Club Member, about *Born a Crime*, Warkworth



“We can truly celebrate with you who are such an integral part of all we do for ‘the last, the least, and the lost’.”

FROM THE FOUNDER
CAROL FINLAY

**This past year has been one of transitions, as BCFI has “come of age”.
We are now ten years old and there is much to celebrate.**

We constantly hear from Correctional Service Canada how valuable the book clubs are in terms of teaching pro-social skills and offering inmates the choice of literature instead of just TV and cards for their spare time. Of course, those who are most impacted are the inmates themselves, who write from prison and halfway houses about the difference the book club is/was to their lives inside, how it was a humanizing activity in a bleak place, and how grateful they are for the wisdom and kindness of the volunteers.

Our board has acquired new faces: John McKeller, CM, QC, who has spent his career involved in the arts, and incorporated BCFI as a charity in its early days; Paul Haslip who designed this annual review and created our brand and website.

As we go to print, I'm delighted to announce that The Hon. Ian Binnie, CC, QC, a former justice of the Supreme Court of Canada and a long time supporter of BCFI has agreed to be our new Honorary Chair; as well, our board now includes Sharon McFadzean, a facilitator of a thriving book club at Bath Institution; David Baker, an eminent disabilities lawyer and one time reader for our book lists; Peter Bennett, our new treasurer has had a long career in finance, specializing in Estate planning and planned giving. And last but not least Helga Stephenson, OOnt, a film industry executive and human rights advocate.

They individually bring much talent and enthusiasm to the board, and are already contributing to the smooth running of BCFI.

We're delighted too that, Margaret Atwood, CC, OOnt, FRSC, FRSL, has agreed to be an Honorary Patron. Her novels are dearly loved by BCFI's book clubs members. As well, she has been an outspoken advocate of the prison farms, and has written about prison conditions for women in her 1996 novel, *Alias Grace*, and about performing Shakespeare in prison in her 2016 novel, *Hag-Seed*, currently being adapted for performance by Prison Performing Arts in St. Louis, Missouri.

2017's fundraising efforts from October to January exceeded our expectations. Donors' generosity has allowed us to open more book clubs, take on two more scholarship recipients, and still keep ahead of our bills. Our heartfelt gratitude goes out to all our generous donors!

I'm pleased to say that at this 10-year anniversary mark (as of August 2018) the future looks very bright. We are in fine fettle, as the saying goes, and we can truly celebrate with you who are such an integral part of all we do for 'the last, the least, and the lost'.

Thank you,



Carol

Visiting Authors

We would like to thank our visiting authors for their generosity of time and spirit in supporting the work of BCFI. Their visits to book clubs have been inspirational and life changing.

Stephen Brunt

Lawrence Hill

Stevie Cameron

Robert Hough

Colin Campbell

Jake MacDonald

Denise Chong

Marina Nemat

Elizabeth Copeland

Lawrence Scanlan

Terry Fallis

Jordin Tootoo

Trevor Ferguson

Charles Wilkins

Camilla Gibb

David Gilmour

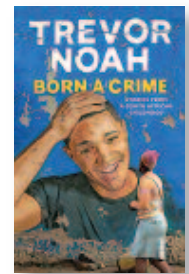
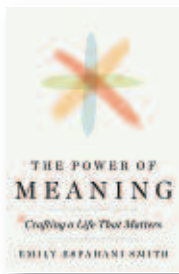
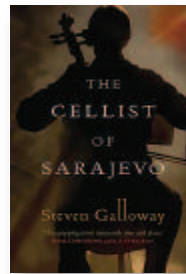
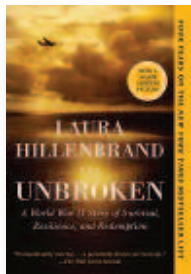
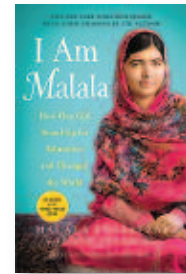
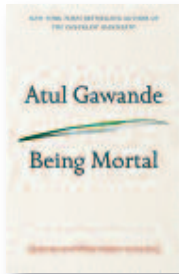
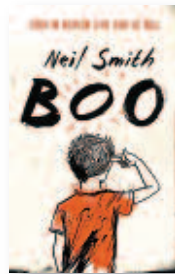
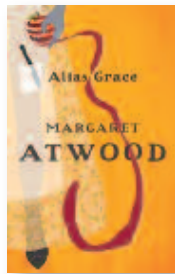
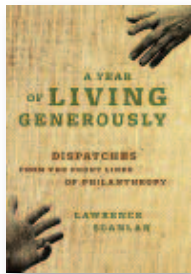
David Goudreault

“Book Clubs for Inmates is the sort of charity I like to support. You get a lot of bang for your buck.”

Donor

What we've read

This is a small sample of the books which we have been reading over the past 10 years. We are very grateful to our volunteer readers who assist in the formation of our yearly reading list.





“Reading aloud is the single most important thing a parent or caregiver can do to help a child prepare for reading and learning.”

“Reading is the gateway to future success in life and in school.”

CHIRP

Children of Inmates Reading Program



BUILDING A HEALTHIER PARENT/CHILD RELATIONSHIP

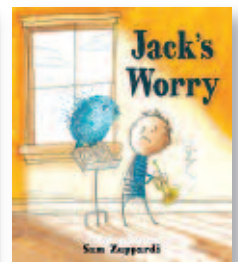
BCFI's commitment to the successful reintegration of inmates and to stronger, healthier communities includes the development of Children of Inmates Reading Program (CHIRP). Canadian Families in Corrections Network estimates that there are over 450,000 Canadian children with an incarcerated father and another 1,650 with an incarcerated mother in our federal correctional system.


Under the leadership of a child reading specialist, the mandate of CHIRP is to build and enhance a healthier parent/child relationship, develop literacy and listening skills, increase vocabulary and attention spans for children and promote a love of learning in children through the consistent presence of a parent and books. All are foundational for children in building a successful life emotionally and offering opportunities for success and community stability as they move into adulthood.

HOW CHIRP WORKS

This innovative program connects incarcerated parents and grandparents or other close family members to their children in a very positive and meaningful way. The program has been known as CHIRP or Children of Inmates Reading Program but also is known as Parent Child Reading Program.

It is a simple program to run, with just two enthusiastic volunteers who commit to once a month visits with the parents. They bring along with them a selection of quality children's books. Each participant who has been cleared for the program will choose a book and read that book to their child while they are being recorded with a digital voice recorder. The reading is then transferred later by the volunteer onto a CD and then a pocket is glued into the front of the book and the book and CD are mailed to the child. The program takes place once a month on a set day and time throughout the entire year.





“I give to BCFI because books can open new worlds for inmates and give them an interest and purpose that they never knew they had.”

Donor

Circles of Support

Book Clubs for Inmates has supported 9 individuals in accessing post-secondary education through the Justice Joan Lax Memorial Scholarship. The scholarship was established in 2014 through a donation in memory of Justice Joan Lax, a former member of the BCFI Board of Directors. In addition to the scholarship money, a circle of support is established with each recipient as they navigate their return to the community after incarceration and enter into their educational studies.

SUPPORT MEMBER

My friendship with a book club member after his release has been entirely positive. Over the past few years I have seen a young man whose youth was spent behind bars integrate successfully into his new life and achieve the lofty goals he had set for himself. For me watching the transformation has been a moving and miraculous experience.

SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT PAROLEE

For three years, I have been a scholarship recipient from the Joan Lax Memorial Fund. I would never have been able to move ahead in my education without this help, for which I am hugely grateful.

Also making the transition to the community after spending the better part of my adult life in prison has been difficult and challenging. Book Clubs For Inmates (BCFI) has buffered me from these challenges by offering a continuum of support from inside the prison to outside where I meet regularly with a circle of support.

Like the BCFI volunteers inside, the individuals I am connected with in the community meet me at eye level and have welcomed me into their lives in a mutual friendship. I know that I can count on them to be there for me if I ever need to talk and they remind me that my place is in the community, not the prison.



2017 INCOME

- General donations: \$146,956
- Public Safety Canada: \$50,810
- Foundations: \$30,000
- Joan Lax Scholarship fund: \$26,084
- Investment income: \$6,123

Total income: \$259,973



2017 EXPENDITURES

- Salaries: \$114,675
- Books: \$47,652
- Scholarships: \$38,687
- Professional fees: \$5,777
- Authors' visits: \$3,629
- Travel: \$7,587
- Volunteer appreciation: \$1,746
- Other: \$18,746

Total expenses: \$238,499

2017 Financial Highlights

Year ended December 31	2017 \$	2016 \$
Revenue		
Donations	207,776	221,776
Public Safety Canada grant	50,810	—
Investment income	6,123	2,957
Fair value adjustment on investments	(4,736)	2,777
	259,973	227,510
Expenses		
Salaries and benefits	114,675*	73,166
Books	47,652	52,211
Scholarship expenses	38,687	33,307
Travel	7,587	14,267
Professional fees	5,777	6,590
Administration	5,373	14,376
Rent	4,896	708
Outside services	4,298	1,996
Authors' visits	3,629	1,632
Communications	1,805	6,154
Volunteer appreciation	1,746	2,113
Telephone and internet	834	4,327
Insurance	805	708
Amortization	500	215
Fundraising	235	8,316
	238,499	220,086
Excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenditures for the year	21,474	7,424

2018 BUDGET

Revenue	
Donations	198,000
Public Safety Canada Grant	50,810
Investment income	2,000
Total revenue	250,810
Expenses	
Salaries and Benefits	90,000
Books	67,500
Scholarship expenses	20,000
Travel	10,000
Professional fees	8,000
Administration	13,925
Rent	6,300
Outside services	3,000
Authors' visits	12,000
Communications	3,700
Volunteer appreciation	3,000
Telephone and Internet	2,560
Insurance	825
Amortization	—
Fundraising	5,000
CHIRP	5,000
Total expense	250,810
Net	—

**This amount is an anomaly. It is a result of unusual factors relevant only to this year. See current year's budget, reflecting adjusted salary item.*

*Full financial Statements are available at:
info@bookclubsforinmates.com*

Thank you

OUR PARTNERSHIP WITH FIRST BOOK CANADA

The majority of our books for both the book clubs and the Children of Inmates Reading Program (CHIRP) are purchased through First Book Canada. This partnership has been critical in ensuring that we are able to provide good quality books at a reasonable cost. The staff at First Book Canada have been key in organizing the successful ordering and delivery of books to each book club.

Our gratitude goes out to Tom Best, Executive Director, and his team at First Book Canada for all that they have done and continue to do in supporting the work of BCFI.

ABOUT FIRST BOOK CANADA

Almost 25% of Canadian households do not have a single book.

First Book Canada is transforming the lives of kids in need by making brand new, high quality books and educational resources available on an ongoing basis. Through a market-driven model, First Book Canada is creating equal access to quality education affordable to its member network of more than 8,000 educators who exclusively serve kids in need.

Since 2009, First Book Canada has distributed more than 6 million books and educational resources to hundreds of thousands of children and youth across Canada.



Special Recognition



Carol Finlay's vision and passion for the work of BCFI has been recognized in many places. With each recognition, there is an increased awareness of BCFI and of the incredible work that is being carried out by men and women across the country.

Carol Finlay pictured here with The Hon. Bill Graham, Chancellor of Trinity College and Mayo Moran, Provost of Trinity College.

Governance

Ian Binnie, CC, QC
Honorary Chair

Margaret Atwood
CC, OOnt, FRSC, FRSL
Honorary Patron

David Baker
Senior Counsel

Peter Bennett
Financial advisor
Treasurer of the Board

Bryan Finlay, QC
Senior Counsel

Rev Dr Carol Finlay, OOnt, MSM
Founder, BCFI

Paul Haslip, FGDC
Designer & educator

Sharon McFadzean
Book Club facilitator

John McKeller, CM, QC
Senior Counsel

Helga Stephenson, OOnt,
Film industry executive and
human rights advocate



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