So much has happened in the last few months, it’s hard to know where to start! In a year of firsts, our first completely virtual BCTLA conference stands out. Hours of planning, changing directions and replanning was rewarded with an incredibly successful conference. I am so grateful to all those who made it happen. You can read more about it in the conference article, but I wanted to take this opportunity to thank the presenters, our amazing keynote speaker, Rebeca Rubio, and our author’s panel moderator, Joseph Jeffrey, for their amazing contributions. Also, a huge thank you to the BCTLA executive for all their efforts in making our conference a reality. Quietly working away in the background, our BCTLA Conference Vendor Co-ordinator, Jennifer Fox, was responsible for booking our authors, organizing vendors, dealing with website logistics and so much more. I honestly don’t think we would have had a conference without her. Also, a big thank you to Keely Thornton for organizing our fabulous conference social.

We continue to work through some challenging times, but I hope the conference was a bright spot for members this fall. We are already looking at organizing next year’s event, so keep an eye out for updates in the new year!

by Kristie Oxley
This year’s PSA Day on Friday, October 23, 2020, exceeded expectations. As we all know, it has been a challenging year with the pandemic and many PSAs had to switch gears after much planning to change the platform from in person to online. The BCTLA is no exception. We took on the challenge and switched to have presenters who can shift their workshops online and present via Zoom with very little time to spare before the Summer Break. In addition, we had to find a way to include a space for our vendors and appeal to you, our participants, while learning how to use the platform during quarantine.

After much worry and stress, the day arrived and we were overwhelmed by the amount of TLs that attended the conference. We had over 500 participants, including TLs from out of province and out of country! The beauty of being virtual meant that many were able to attend from different places, including those from rural parts of BC. The feedback from you was positive and our keynote, Rebeca Rubio, was brilliant and timely! She has already been asked by multiple districts to present again. The BCTLA will be hosting a webinar featuring Rebeca on January 14, 2021 as previously mentioned in the upcoming events section.

Many of the presenters put on their brave faces and presented to a computer screen. Not being able to see their audience and gauge the room, they were nervous and scared. Nonetheless, they persevered and we thank them all for taking this big step to presenting into the ether not knowing if we were listening or not.

To top it off, we hosted a virtual social night the evening before the conference led by our Special Projects and Events Coordinator, Keely Thornton. In this space, we presented the BCTLA awards before we dove into a competitive Library Pub Quiz game. The winners of that night were Colin Sexton from Lord Tweedsmuir and Holly Broadland from Tecumseh Elementary. Everyone had a wonderful time and we congratulate all the Award Winners presented on the side.

Thank you to our executive members, Kristie Oxley and Jennifer Fox for organizing the bulk of the conference. Without them, it would not have happened.
Another successful year of D.E.A.R. has passed and we celebrated in the ways we always do - by encouraging our schools to all READ!

Jennifer Fox from Dawson Creek Secondary went a step further and gave her teachers three options so that they had the choice between:

- Watching a video made by students about zombies being placated by books! (see photo above)
- Teachers sharing with their classes the benefits of reading provided by the T-L
- Reading for 20 minutes (see photo below)

All great options that give teachers the flexibility to participate in D.E.A.R. but not necessarily all reading right away. Some of us need to dip our toes before entering the water completely.

At Salish Secondary, many teachers appreciated the time to settle into reading mode and melt away some of the anxiety from being back in the classroom in a quarter system. This year’s D.E.A.R. day had deeper impacts than just promoting reading. It promoted mental wellness as well.

Many thanks to our Advocacy Coordinator, Sheri Kinney, for organizing our D.E.A.R. efforts this year.

For further information on annual reading events such as D.E.A.R. and Love Your School Library Day, please visit our website at https://bctla.ca/member-services/dear/.

Remember to email your D.E.A.R. stories to us!

We want to hear from you!

Are you doing something fabulous in your Library Learning Commons? Then the BCTLA wants to hear from you!

We are looking to highlight stories of professional practice from around the province. Inquiry, digital citizenship, virtual field trips, efforts in diversity... if you’re doing it, we want to highlight it!

Send us an email at psac49@bctf.ca if you are interested in being featured in an upcoming newsletter. Deadlines for stories are Feb. 28th for our Spring newsletter and May 15th for our Summer newsletter.

Selected contributors will receive a $50 gift certificate to the bookstore of their choice.

Love Your School Library and I Read Canadian Day

February 14 is Love Your School Library Day.

February 17 is I Read Canadian Day.

Keep an eye on our website for more information as the days approach.