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To: ["Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"](#)

Date: 6/10/2021 12:34:27 PM

Subject: VPL Fine Forgiveness Campaign Launch

Attachments: VPL Fine Free Event 2021 Press Release- June 10.pdf

Good afternoon Mayor and Council,

I am writing to convey the following note from Christina de Castell.

I'm pleased to announce that VPL will be launching a fine forgiveness campaign on Monday. I've attached for your information the press release that has just been issued. We're looking forward to welcoming patrons who have been blocked back to the library, and our efforts for this campaign include emails to patrons who have fines, a postcard mailout in low income neighbourhoods, and community outreach to those who are harder to reach via our community librarians and community partners.

We would be delighted to have your assistance in promoting the event, starting on Monday. Your VPL trustee liaison will reach out to you over the next couple of days to answer any questions you have and provide you with information to promote if you would like to assist. You are also welcome to connect with Christina (Christina.deCastell@vpl.ca) directly with questions.

I'd like to thank Council for your support in enabling this event to proceed through the \$150,000 that you allocated to VPL as part of the 2021 budget process. We are looking forward to welcoming patrons who have faced barriers to paying their fines back to VPL, and supporting those who are struggling with affordability and recovering from COVID with renewed access to the Library's resources for their learning, job search and entertainment needs.

Best,
Paul

Paul Mochrie (he/him)
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The City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the x^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam), Sḵwəxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səlilwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

For Immediate Release

VPL Fine Forgiveness Event Aims to Welcome Back Library Patrons

Overdue fines discourage those most in need from using library services

(Vancouver, B.C., June 10, 2021) – [Vancouver Public Library](#) (VPL) is announcing a two week fine forgiveness campaign to welcome back library users affected by fines. Over 70,000 VPL patrons are impacted by fines and one in ten have lost their ability to borrow material due to fines. In addition to re-engaging those library users with blocked access, the campaign aims to raise awareness of the social impact of library fines. From June 14 to 27, Vancouver residents can contact their local VPL branch to have their fines forgiven.

"Whether it's accessing educational resources, building literacy skills or getting lost in a book, library services should be accessible to everyone," says Christina de Castell, Chief Librarian and CEO, Vancouver Public Library. "All too often we hear stories from people who have stopped using the library - sometimes for years - because of a simple error, like not returning a book on time. It's often those most in need of library services that stop visiting us altogether. By forgiving fines, we hope to let these patrons know that we want them to come back and benefit from all the library has to offer."

Once a VPL user reaches \$10 in fines, their borrowing privileges are suspended. For lower income users, this can mean having to choose between life's necessities and borrowing library books.

Fines disproportionately impact those facing economic and social barriers. Thirty per cent of all blocked cardholders live in four of Vancouver's lowest income neighbourhoods (Strathcona, Grandview/Woodland, Downtown, Mount Pleasant). For example, in Strathcona (which includes the Downtown Eastside east of Main Street), the Vancouver neighbourhood with the city's lowest median household income, almost one in five library users have lost the ability to borrow library materials. This is almost double the city average of one in ten.

"The COVID-19 pandemic continues to be an economic challenge for citizens. In times like these, people have an even greater need to access to the resources and community services that the library offers. That's why we are thankful that Vancouver City Council has provided funding for this event," continues de Castell. "Over the next two weeks, anyone with charges of any kind on their account can have their fines waived. It really couldn't be easier - just call, click or come in to your local branch."

VPL is currently exploring ways to move towards a permanent fine free model. A February 2021 VPL survey suggests that there is strong public support for a fine free model. Of the 1,396 respondents, 63 per cent expressed support for a fine free library model, with only 26 per cent not in support.

The fine free movement has been gaining momentum across Canada and in the United States, with an increasing number of libraries permanently ending fine collection. In other jurisdictions, moving to a fine free model has enhanced goodwill, improved return rates, increased circulation, and encouraged the continuous return of users to the library.

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Fine Forgiveness Event Details

- DATES: June 14 – 27
- WHAT: Outstanding charges will be cleared and blocked cards will be reactivated.
- HOW: It is easy to have your fines forgiven by calling, clicking or coming in during the event. Request your fines be cleared by contacting VPL in any of the following ways:
 - Call 604-331-3670 or your local VPL branch
 - Go [online](https://vpl.ca/finefree) (vpl.ca/finefree).
 - Visit any [VPL location](#) in person.

About Vancouver Public Library:

Vancouver Public Library has been dedicated to meeting the lifelong learning, reading and information needs of Vancouver residents for more than 100 years. Our vision is an informed, engaged, and connected city. Our mission is a free place for everyone to discover, create and share ideas and information.

VPL welcomes 6.4 million visits annually with patrons borrowing almost 9.8 million items. A 2018 Insights West survey found that 95 per cent of Vancouver residents agreed “VPL is one of the most valuable services that the City of Vancouver has to offer.”

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/vancouverpubliclibrary/>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/vancouverpubliclibrary/>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/VPL>

LinkedIn: <https://ca.linkedin.com/company/vancouver-public-library>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/vancouverlibrary>

Hashtags: #VPLFineForgiveness #VPLFineFree #VPLForEveryone

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