

## **One Book Nova Scotia Final Report for 2012**

For seven weeks in the Fall of 2012, Nova Scotians were invited to take part in the first ever One Book Nova Scotia (1BNS) community reading event. Organized under the umbrella of Libraries Nova Scotia, public, university and community college libraries came together to work with the Writers' Federation of Nova Scotia, the Nova Scotia Provincial Library and Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage, as well as local bookstores to encourage Nova Scotians to get excited about one book.

The book selected for the inaugural year of the project was Leo McKay, Jr.'s novel *Twenty-six*, about the 1992 Westray Mining Disaster. Set in Pictou County, this story resonated with Nova Scotians of all ages and spurred discussions about the environment, unsafe workplaces, families, and community support in times of tragedy.

Between September 21 - November 9, 2012, 1,168 people borrowed the book from libraries across the province. The novel was available as an audiobook and ebook as well as in print to ensure accessibility to as many Nova Scotians as possible. At the end of the seven weeks, there were still 324 people on waiting lists at libraries for the book. Although the 2012 program officially ended on November 9<sup>th</sup>, libraries continue to actively promote and circulate the book.

Thanks to funding from the Canada Council for the Arts, a series of twelve author readings were held throughout the Province. In addition there were also separately funded readings at Mount Saint Vincent University, Saint Mary's University and NSCC Truro campus with 457 people attending these events.

The One Book Nova Scotia website (1bns.ca) garnered a great deal of activity with 3,033 unique visitors to the website and 13,269 pageviews from September-November 2012. Social media also played an important role in the campaign with 281 "likes" on the 1BNS Facebook page. There were 304 "tweets" on the 1BNS Twitter feed with 355 people following.

Media coverage included spots on CBC Radio's Information Morning and ATV's Live at Five, an article in the Chronicle Herald and coverage in numerous local newspapers and radio stations throughout the province. A full media coverage list was compiled and a great deal of publicity was generated through Word on the Street and in an article and advertisement in the fall edition of Atlantic Books Today.

Libraries were not the only beneficiary in the One Book Nova Scotia project. Book stores sold 1,366 copies of the title between August - November 2012.

One Book Nova Scotia operated with a budget of \$14,000 which is incredible considering it was a province-wide initiative. Funds were secured through a Cultural Activities grant from the Nova Scotia Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage, a literary readings grant through the Canada Council for the Arts, funding from partners such as Novanet, Nova Scotia Community College, Nova Scotia Library Association, Nova Scotia Association of Library Technicians, Atlantic Provinces Library Association and the Nova Scotia Provincial Library. Businesses showed in-kind and financial support by donating services such as logo and website design, discounts for copies of the book, free hotel rooms for author readings, and studio time and engineering to record an audiobook version of the title. This support combined with the in-kind support of all libraries across the province helped make One Book Nova Scotia a success.

A small group of nine from public, university, and community college libraries as well as representatives from the Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage, Nova Scotia Provincial Library, NSCC and the Writers' Federation of Nova Scotia comprised the Steering Committee for the project. Library staff from around the province volunteered on sub-committees including marketing, book selection, finance, and social media.

The 2012 Steering Committee was as follows:

Frances Newman (Chair) Annapolis Valley Regional Library  
Sarah Wenning (Vice-chair) retired from Halifax Public Libraries  
Lynn Somers, Nova Scotia Provincial Library  
Ian Colford, Dalhousie University Libraries  
Leigh Gagnier, Nova Scotia Community College Libraries  
Nate Crawford, Writers' Federation of Nova Scotia  
Angela Johnson, Department of Communities, Culture & Heritage  
Erin McDonah, Nova Scotia Community College  
Marlo McKay, Halifax Public Libraries

Based on the positive response to the 2012 One Book Nova Scotia program, the Steering Committee plans to make this an annual event each fall in Nova Scotia. Plans are already underway for the 2013 program. Some recommendations for the 2013 program include:

- Launch the program earlier in September (in 2012 it launched on September 21)
- Hold the author readings a little later so more people have had time to read the book
- Appoint a key contact at each participating library system to ensure all relevant information is communicated to all library staff
- Announce the title earlier to staff so that they have time to read the book before the general public and can make program plans
- Provide promotional materials earlier to library staff

- Liaise with CNIB to ensure visually challenged Nova Scotians have adequate access to the title chosen

To sum up, One Book Nova Scotia is a worthwhile project that encourages reading, social engagement among readers, and promotes Canadian literature and libraries. Libraries Nova Scotia partnerships have enabled staff from public, university and community college libraries to work together on a mutual project and minimized the silos that exist between different types of libraries. It provides a positive contribution to literacy and culture in Nova Scotia for very little cost with a high return on investment.