

## A guide to storytelling for library advocacy

*"A well-told story is an extremely compelling way to convey your message, which will linger longer in the mind of the listener than a fact." – American Library Association*

Humans have always learned through stories. They are what connect us to each other in uncountable little ways. Using stories to further library advocacy is a surefire way to make sure your message is heard. Board members, patrons, and elected officials are far more likely to resonate with personal stories about how the library has impacted their community than facts or statistics presented alone.

### Gather your stories

Strive to always be in story-gathering mode. Here are some ways you can always be collecting:

- Add a comment section on your feedback forms for programming or other library events.
- When a patron tells you a great story or anecdote, stop right there and write it down. Ask their permission to share and make sure to accurately reflect what the patron said.
- Solicit stories by asking patrons directly. For example, "did the STEM event we did at the library this weekend get your child excited about building robots?" or, "Do you feel confident FaceTiming your granddaughter after our tech for seniors training this week?"
- Make use of the [positive library stories](#) that Parkland has collected and made available to our member libraries.
- Set up a space for patrons to write why they love the library on sticky notes and watch as the community love for the library pours in.

### Using your stories

When communicating with current or potential elected officials, make sure to include a short story or testimonial that really drives home how important the library is to their community. Here are some simple ways to do that:

- Use the [municipal election one-pager template](#) that Parkland has developed. You'll see a spot for testimonials, impressive statistics, and more.
- Use the council funding letter template that Parkland has developed. You can insert your own community stories into the letter for greater impact. ("Q:\Advocacy\Council Funding Letter Template.docx")
- Make social media posts using collected stories from the community. Create your own or use this template that Parkland developed for [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

Reach out to Hailey at [hhalberg@prl.ab.ca](mailto:hhalberg@prl.ab.ca) for more help with turning stories into tools for advocacy.