



## BOOK CLUBS FOR INMATES

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### BCFI NEWSLETTER

September 18, 3033

- Celebrating 15 years
- \$15 for 15 Campaign
- New Board Members
- Upcoming Plan



**Transforming lives for 15 years, one book at a time.**

*Celebrating*  
**15 YEARS**

We are delighted to celebrate the 15th anniversary of Book Clubs for Inmates (BCFI), a registered charity that organizes volunteer-led book clubs within federal penitentiaries across Canada. BCFI was founded in 2008 by Rev. Dr. Carol Finlay, an Anglican priest and former high school and university professor who envisioned bringing the joy and benefits of reading to incarcerated people. Since then, BCFI has grown to facilitate 44 book clubs from Nova Scotia to British Columbia, reaching over 500 inmates every month.

We have now opened over 15 Children of Inmates Reading Programs (ChIRP) for incarcerated parents to read brand-new books to their children or grandchildren. None of this would have been possible without the generous support of our donors and volunteers, who have made BCFI a very effective and empathic organization helping inmates. Our donors have provided the necessary funds to purchase books and resources, cover minimal administrative expenses, and sponsor special events such as author visits and graduation ceremonies.

Our volunteers have donated their time, skills, and passion as book club facilitators, parolee support, readers, and board members. They have created a safe and respectful space for inmates to share their thoughts, feelings, and insights on various books, ranging from classics to contemporary fiction. Through reading and discussing books, BCFI has helped inmates improve their literacy, communication, and critical thinking skills, as well as their self-esteem, empathy, and social awareness. Many inmates have expressed how BCFI has improved their lives, giving them hope, inspiration, and a sense of belonging. BCFI has also raised public awareness of inmates' issues and challenges and the importance of rehabilitation and reintegration.

We are proud of what we have achieved in the past 15 years, but we know more work still needs to be done. We hope to expand our programs to more institutions and regions and offer inmates and their families more opportunities to engage with literature and learning. We invite you to raise a glass and join us in our mission of transforming lives through the power of books. Thank you for being part of our BCFI family!

## \$15 for 15 Fundraising Campaign

### Author Visits with BCFI for Fall 2023

- September 11, 2023: *Unbroken*, Angela Sterritt
- September 28, 2023: *Fire Weather*, John Valliant
- September 28, 2023: *Lullabies for Little Criminals*, Heather O'Neill
- October 10, 2023: *The Rebellious Tide*, Eddy Boudel Tan
- November 20, 2023: *We All Fall Down* and *Lost Immunity*, Dan Kalla

BCFI is exceptionally proud of what we have accomplished together in the past 15 years, but they know more work still needs to be done. BCFI needs your help to continue providing quality books and materials for their book clubs, especially during these challenging times. BCFI also needs your help expanding its reach and impact to more prisons and inmates across Canada.

On August 9th, our official anniversary date, BCFI launched its \$15 for 15 efforts to help celebrate the fantastic impact achieved in the last 15 years. The \$15 for 15 challenge aims to raise \$10,000 by December 2024. If a minimum of 45 people sign up to be monthly donors, we can accomplish that goal in 16 months. To become a monthly supporter for 15 months, go to:

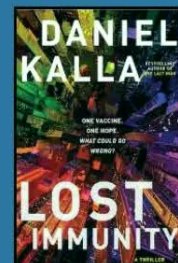
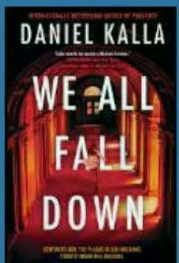
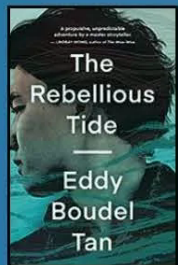
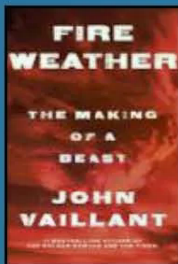
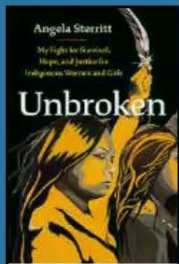
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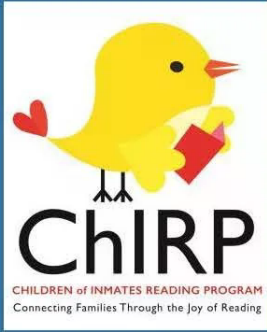
to create an account. The funds you donate will help us purchase new books this coming season and assist with our initiative to update reading materials in all federal penitentiaries across Canada.



### BCFI says welcome and farewell to new and old board members.

BCFI has had to say goodbye to two remarkable board members who've been with us for 25 years: Kathy Kernohan and John McKellar. Before joining BCFI, Kathy had a 40-year career as owner/manager of Phoenix Artists' Management Limited in Toronto. Lawyer John McKellar is partner emeritus at WeirFoulds LLP. Now retired, he is a member of the Order of Canada, described as a "lawyer, volunteer, and impresario."





**GREAT NEWS!**  
*Indigo Love of Reading Foundation (ILOR) teamed up with ChIRP this summer to give children the gift of reading!*

Indigo endowed our ChIRP program with a \$50 gift card for every child.

Children lose a considerable amount of reading and math skills over the summer, and this ability loss tends to compound each year. According to a more recent survey of kids in third through fifth grades, the average student loses roughly 20% of their reading gains and 27% of their math gains over the summer break.

With a \$50 gift card, we hope to provide the kids with reading and activity books to help overcome those odds.



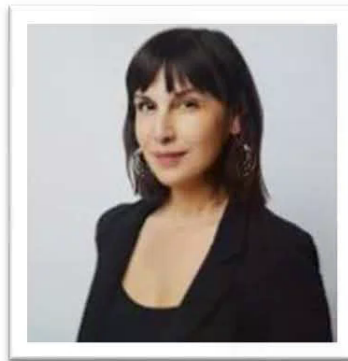
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BCFI wishes both Kathy and John all the best in their future endeavours.

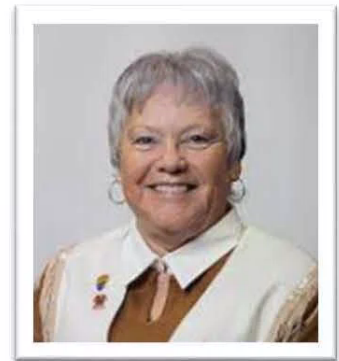
As we say farewell to Kathy and John, we welcome **Stephanie Sinclair** and Elder **Caroline Buckshot** to the board of Directors at Book Clubs for Inmates.

As one of the nation's most significant and successful literary agents, Stephanie has over twenty years of experience in the performing and creative industries and enters this position with a strong network of connections. Stephanie self-identifies as Cree, Ojibwe, and a German/Jewish settler. Currently, Stephanie Sinclair serves as vice president of Penguin Random House Canada and publisher of McClelland & Stewart and Hazlitt.

Elder Caroline Buckshot (she or her) is a well-respected Elder in many communities and comes from the Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg community in Maniwaki, Quebec. Her Anishinaabe name is KaNigan a Pit, which means *Woman Who Sits at the Front and Teaches*. She resides and works in Abbotsford, British Columbia, on the traditional and unceded territory of the Stó:l Nation. She is an Elder for the Parole Board of Canada (PBC) and the In-House Elder for the Justice Institution of British Columbia (JIBC). Elder Buckshot joined the National Elder Working Group (NEWG) with CSC and is in the Elder Engagement Program with Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC).



Stephanie Sinclair



Elder Caroline Buckshot

*Stay tuned for our November / December 2023 Newsletter, where we'll close off 2023 with another annual Holiday Card contest. We are inviting the kids from our ChIRP program to take part this year.*