

2018 Honourary Life Member Award Recipient - Helen Sutherland of Lakeland

Helen Sutherland is a former teacher and farm wife. She is mother to eight. She has always loved books.

Regional libraries were being established all over Saskatchewan in 1967. In Lakeland - not so much. At a home and school meeting that year a few like-minded people decided Borden needed a community library.

Village council and the mayor offered the sales area of a vacant machinery dealership. The garage area housed the half ton that served the fire department and their equipment.

Elbow grease prepared the space. Provincial Library and Literacy Office supplied the books. The committee setup a rotation to cover opening hours.

In 1972 Lakeland was established. Borden was Branch Number 4. Now there was advice and direction from trained library personnel, a larger rotating book collection, inter-library loans and a 12 hour per week paid position. Since no one else was willing, Helen became the first branch librarian in 1968.

In 1980 the renovated and enlarged community centre was opened. The library moved across the street to the larger, brighter, and reliably warm quarters; programs expanded.

Previously there was a well-attended story time, a summer program for 5 to 12 year olds, and evening activities for seniors. Now there was space to showcase local craftspeople and artists. A large bulletin board in the public hall advertised local events each month. There was space for pre-school and juvenile books to be displayed – even a toy library. Thanks to an active board the library sponsored programs and competitions to encourage library use.

In 1994, with a suggested 65 age retirement by the region, Helen resigned as librarian. She continued as a local board member, including a short term on the regional board, until 2017. All in all Helen has been part of the library system for 50 years.

She is gratified that the local branch is still a vibrant, ever changing place for the community. For Helen it has been a wonderful place to meet friends and welcome new people. The books and other services do so much to enrich life for all.