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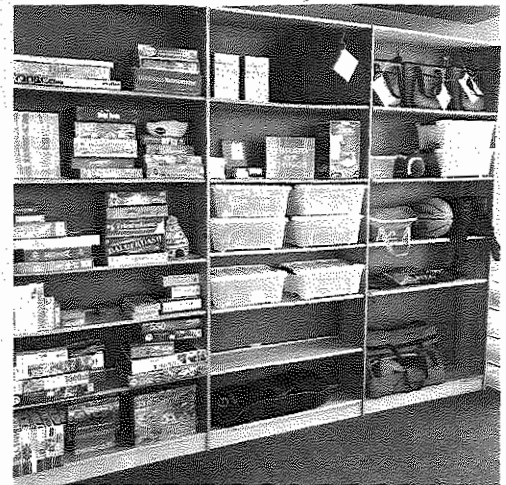
CHECK IT OUT: More Than Books at the Library!

By KEASHA MAILE, PCO

The Port Colborne Public Library has expanded its popular Library of Things collection, adding a wide range of items aimed at fostering creativity, recreation, and lifelong learning. The initiative was made possible through a generous \$10,000 donation from the Erwin Taylor Charitable Foundation, allowing the library to introduce new tools, games, and technology for the community to borrow.

Rachel Tkachuk, CEO of the Port Colborne Public Library, highlighted the benefits of the expansion. "Some items could be useful for someone looking to use something once, like a screwdriver from the toolset, but then it saves them from having to purchase an entire toolset for that one-time use," she explained. "These kits might also be a good way to try out a new hobby and see if you like it."

The Library of Things now includes household items, sports equipment, crafting kits, technology, and wellness tools. The new additions include seasonal cookie cutters, gardening tools, a 148-piece tool kit, a bike repair kit, and a sewing machine. For those looking to try new sports or activities, the collection features disc golf sets, an agility field kit, lacrosse equipment, pickleball sets, snowshoes, and walking trek poles. Tech enthusiasts can borrow items such as microphones, a microscope, therapy lamps, and colourblind glasses. Families with young children will find educational Launchpad tablets



and Whazoodles, which are preloaded with games, songs, and stories.

The expansion was inspired by community feedback and the popularity of the existing collection, which includes board games, jigsaw puzzles, musical instruments, and video games. "Many of these items have never even been shelved at the library because as soon as they are returned, someone else is checking them out!" Tkachuk noted. The Nintendo Switch collection, for example, boasts over 70 games, with only a handful available at any given time due to high demand.

The new additions were introduced at the City of Port Colborne's New Year's Eve event at the Vale Health and Wellness Centre, where the response was overwhelmingly positive. "We saw faces light up when they realized that these items were available to borrow for free with their library card," Tkachuk said. "Many people shared how they would use the items, like taking their child snowshoeing or borrowing lawn games for a family gathering."

The Library of Things is prominently displayed in the library's front windows, ensuring that visitors can easily explore the wide variety of items now available to the Port Colborne community.