

# **MATISS RIHARDS IKŠE**

## **Ventspils library**

### **Library for Education of Society**

Ventspils Library consists of 5 structural units – Main Library, Children’s Library, Parventa Library, Galinciems Library, Ventspils University of Applied Sciences Library and external service point in Northern Kurzeme Regional Hospital. Ventspils Library performs regional main library functions for 13 Ventspils region libraries and methodically conducts implementation of school library information systems, work and development for Ventspils city and regional schools.

Along with high quality service for citizens, library personnel develop citizen affinity with various type information tools, facilitates skill proficiency with newest information technology by offering resources of Main Library’s Regional Learning Centre for learning. Along with informative events, the Library offers educational, literary, musical events, as well as exhibits and meetings. Each year Ventspils Library hosts more than 700 events.

Ventspils library plays a vital role in provision of information and education for various target groups - from three-year-old to seniors, teachers, schoolchildren, students, lecturers and other interested persons in library and beyond. Starting from reading facilitation programs to informationality and 3d technology affinity.

To capture the interest of children and youth in technological affinity to create a smart and educated society, in the last 2 years Ventspils Library in cooperation with Ventspils Digital Centre has realized various new projects. An outdoor event held during the city festival - Digital Europe, which offers technically creative workshops with robots, Lego, 3d printers and 3d pens, printing equipment etc. The event highly popular and demanded and will be held in the august of 2018.

Ventspils Main Library's Learning Centre offers 3D prototype development and printing lessons in "3D workshop for schoolchildren". These lessons are mostly attended by pupils from 4th to 6th grades and students of Ventspils Art School. More than 80 pupils have attended these lessons since the autumn of 2016. Students work with the online tool "Tinkercad" and learn how to independently develop their very own 3D objects (prototypes), create 3D holograms and work with the 3D printer, creating various objects – phone cases, gingerbread forms, glasses, accessories for girls etc. By learning 3D layout designing, students may acquire interest in computer graphics, interior design, architecture, computer game or animation development.

During the night of scientists visitors were able to have an insight in the secrets of science laboratories, reproduce the world-famous Edison experiment, create an electrical circuit, learn about the working principles of catapults, partake in digital engineering labs and robot-technological workshops, get to work with a microscope, learn about 3D printers and test their knowledge by participating in a quiz, see the model of Latvia's first very own satellite - Venta-1, and last but not least, meet with Pauls Irbins - the only Latvian, who tried to become one of the first "Martians", by applying to the ambitious Mars One project.

"Book Start" is a program that is actively underway to facilitate readership. "Owl school", "Children's, youth and parent jury", "Loud reading competition", "Learning letters with Vinnijs the dog and his friends" and "Cookbook festival".

"Book Start" is a literature initiative of Latvian National Library's Children's Centre. The reading facilitation programme for 3-4 year olds "Book Start" began in Children's and Parventa libraries in September, 2015. The main goal of the project – to facilitate toddler interest in reading and "show the way" to library, introduce them with library services and, of course, books. Ventspils toddlers along with their parents once in a week from September to January visit the library, see children's book, read together and express their emotions in drawings and creative works.

In January, in the last lesson, little readers receive the "Book Start" kit – backpack with an owling, a book and a plush toy. The owling is the symbol of the readership programme, therefore, little Ventspils residents affectionately have named these lesson "The Owling School". Parents also receive handy gifts – a pamphlet with

helpful tips on how to facilitate a child's interest in reading and books, as well as how to help children discover the wonderful and captivating world of books. In the 2017/2018 season "Owling School" was attended by 41 toddlers – 26 in Children's Library and 15 in Parventa Library. In the "Owl School" season ending in January, 2018 little "owlings" received a surprise – a spectacle by Liepaja puppet theatre in Parventa Library. Reading facilitation programme "Book Start. Owling School" is financed by Ventspils Municipality.

In September, 2017 Latvian National Library's Children's Literature Centre organized the very first state-wide loud reading competition for 5 – 6 grade pupils. By undertaking this campaign, LNL Children's Literature Centre aims to develop children's ability to choose a suitable and interesting literature for the competition, facilitate interest on reading and books, to unite children for collective reading activities, as well as make reading fun. An unforeseen amount participated in the event – more than 7 thousand passionate 5 – 6 grade readers. The 13 best from Ventspils and its region participated in the finals to earn the right to compete in the national final. 30 regional reading champions participated in Riga finals, from whom 17 were boys and 13 – girls. Finals were held in Latvian National Library and was livestreamed in LNL's homepage.

The idea of the campaign was borrowed from The Netherlands, where this competition is held for the 25th year in a row with an attendance of approximately million pupils, in order to lessen the inadequate low reading proficiency level among them. Referring to a study in 2016 by PIRLS (*Progress in International Reading Literacy Study*), Latvian pupils have rated themselves 4th from the bottom of the list of 50 countries. Loud reading contest was made to develop confidence, as well as to balance readership figures among boys and girls.

Ventspils Children's Library has implemented a new exercise cycle for children aged from 4 to 6 "Learning Letter with Vinnijs the Dog and His Friends". In these exercises, children learn letters with the help of 3 canines from the Ventspils Canine Therapy Team. 7 exercises are planned in 2018 once in a month with a duration of 40 minutes. Given the specifics of these exercises, each one is for 15 children at most. For children learning from 1 – 4 grades, an event called "Travel the World with

Vinnijs the Dog and His Friends” was held, in which children, along with the doggies learned about each dog’s country of origin and learned geography.

In May 16th, 2018, for the second time the event called “The Edible Book” was held, in which students from Ventspils Vocational Secondary School, future catering specialists, along with 9th grade pupils from all Ventspils Primary Schools took part. During the masterclass, they had to prepare cakes and pies by interpreting a randomly selected literary works of Latvian authors. In a matter of hours, the “edible books” were prepared, each unfolding the name, content and characters of the said works. “Edible books” were presented in Ventspils Main Library, each cake and pie presented by its creator. The said “edible books” were tasted and rated, but in the finale – a lecture by Ventspils University of Applied Sciences assistant professor, Astra Skrābane, called “Bread of Europe”. This event, on one hand, promotes readership, for the books have to be read first. On the other hand, primary school children working together with students of the vocational school gain knowledge on the profession of a catering specialist, but students develop their skills in a fun and creative way.

Library is holding senior training for the sixth year. This year 105 participated, who for 7 months once in a week attended lessons in computer skills and other skills in the wide world of modern technology. These lessons were held in Latvian and Russian and for people with preliminary knowledge and with none. Each lesson was attended by approximately 30 people. Seniors chose lesson topics together with the teacher by informing about what’s actual for them, like computers, smartphones, tablets and internet use, in the beginning of the learning season. During these 7 months’ seniors learned how to use e-mail, taxes, online banking and e-services, as well as using social networks, for example, Facebook and Ok.ru. Smartphone applications (WhatsApp, Waze, etc.) were especially popular among the seniors. Participants admitted that these lessons were quite useful, along with having the possibility to be in the society, meet friends and new people at the lessons. New season in computer skills will begin in October, 2018.

Since 2013 Ventspils Library also hosts the Ventspils Europe Direct information centre. which is financed by European Commission. EDIC organizes free seminars for

business specialists by attracting lecturers – well-known experts of the field. From 2013 to 2017 more than 7000 attended more than 70 events held by EDIC Ventspils, 41 of those being seminars related to practical business topics for new entrepreneurs and tourism workers.

New target groups have appeared along with creation of a new library unit in the Kurzeme regional hospital - medical workers, who frequently use subscribed databases, such as EBSCO etc. Since 2017, along with actively preparing for the opening of a new library unit – Ventspils Music Library within the brand new Ventspils Music School and Concert Hall, which will be opened in 2019, teachers and students from both Ventspils and regional music schools regularly attend seminars on digital music resources and collections, databases and other useful resources in their professional work.

Ventspils Library, just like other libraries, is a vital resource for learning motivation promotion, career support, formal and non-formal education. Library accumulates information for lifelong education and has a developed and accessible infrastructure for visitors – rooms, technology, software, human resources. Library is suitable for self-education and organization of various courses and seminars. Most Library services are oriented on promoting information literacy.