



# Elspeth Bowers

(1954 - )

Elspeth Bowers, known locally as “the story lady”, was born in Vancouver, BC on July 16, 1954 to UBC professor parents. An extremely academic family, her parents constantly read aloud and widely to Elspeth and her two sisters: “I talk to families now and encourage them to read to their children, I know that that’s how you make a reader.”

Her father liked to travel and taught in different universities around the world and therefore she has attended school in Vancouver, Massachusetts, and India. Coming back to Canada as a teenager, she no longer enjoyed Canadian high school and worked to graduate early at sixteen. After a year of working in a public library, she enrolled at UBC, graduating with her BA in 1976.

Inspired by her love of literature and a neighbour who was a children's librarian, Elspeth worked at the UBC Library and various branches of the Vancouver Public Library. In 1978 she and her husband Dan moved to Mission, where she joined the staff of the Fraser Valley Regional Library.

Within the library, Elspeth ran various children’s programs including: a book club “BRAG”, an art appreciation group entitled “Emily Carr and Friends”, a multicultural group called “Around the World in 28 Days”. She also teaches the “Parent Child Mother Goose” program. A legendary storyteller and puppeteer, she continues to travel around to various libraries, schools, and events throughout the Fraser Valley and is often recognized by children and parents today.

Besides her work within the library, Elspeth also helped raise her daughter, run a greenhouse business, and joined the Rotary Club of Mission (Sunrise). In 2007 she was honoured with the BC Community Achievement Award for her work in furthering literacy, which is her biggest passion. She explains that “there is great wisdom in stories...there are all sorts of life lessons there.”

Elspeth remained with the Fraser Valley Regional Library until 2013, retiring after 36 years of work within the library. Today she tries to live through her philosophy “be kind, be thoughtful, be aware, be happy”. She spends her days running various programs that support families in Mission, doing story-times, tending to her greenhouse and garden, and travelling the world, visiting 12 countries since 2007: “there are wonderful things that happen when you travel.”

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33215 2nd Avenue P.O. Box 3522 Mission, BC V2V 4L1 TEL. 604.820.2621 [mca@missionarchives.com](mailto:mca@missionarchives.com)

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