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City Librarian's Report
June 27, 2016

Advancing Our Digital Platforms

A new emagazine service, Flipster, is now available to Toronto Public Library (TPL) cardholders, providing access to many popular titles, including current issues of *Maclean's*, *Canadian Business*, *Chatelaine*, *Bloomberg Businessweek* and *People*, to name just a few. As with other online magazine and journal services provided by the Library, Flipster allows customers to read current and back issues of magazines on their computers, tablets or smartphones, and a Flipster app is available for offline reading.
tpl.ca/flipster

Breaking Down Barriers to Access, Driving Inclusion

Thanks to a donation from Google Canada and funds from the City of Toronto, TPL is now loaning wi-fi hotspot devices that give people free access to the internet at home. The program is starting small with a pilot at six branches – Albion, Cedarbrae, Evelyn Gregory, Parliament Street, Thorncliffe and York Woods – all located in neighbourhoods serving large numbers of low income households. There are a total of 210 participants and we're working with them to show how the devices work, and make sure they know how to access free TPL eLearning resources and ebooks, digital magazines and more. At a launch event on June 15, hotspot borrower Dr. Riaz Qureshi shared his story. Originally from Pakistan, Dr. Qureshi was educated and trained as a family doctor. He practiced medicine in Saudi Arabia for 13 years and has now moved to Canada for a better quality of life. An avid library customer, he is using the hotspot to prepare for his medical license exam this fall. Other speakers at the launch included Mayor John Tory, TPL Board Vice Chair Lindsay Colley, City Librarian Vickery Bowles and Sam Sebastian, Managing Director of Google Canada.

The purchase of **a new bookmobile**, scheduled to arrive in 2016, will allow many new service enhancements to bookmobile services for populations that face barriers to accessing local branches. The new bookmobile will incorporate new technologies, flexible space and a modular design, providing wireless internet, enhanced information services, access to library e-resources, visually appealing merchandizing, and a broader range of programs, such as 3D design and printing.
tpl.ca/bookmobile

TPL is excited about the opportunity to take on full operational responsibility for **The S.P.O.T. at Malvern** and to continue to build on the success of the services offered. Working with an advisory committee of representatives from area service agencies, residents and an advisory group of local youth, TPL will collaborate to ensure that the space is animated with programming that has been informed by youth and reflects their needs and interests. We thank the City of Toronto and United Way of Toronto and York Region, as well as area agencies, including On Track Career and Employment Services, Malvern Family Resource Centre and East Metro Youth Services for working with us to seek a sustainable solution for operations and to animate The S.P.O.T. during the

transition period. Thanks to funding support from the City's Poverty Reduction Strategy, TPL looks forward to opening a new Digital Innovation Hub and to revitalizing the recording studio as part of the plans for service delivery at The S.P.O.T. this fall.

Two recent changes to the Library's **online payment system** will make it easier for customers to pay their fines and fees. As of June 1, the 50 cent service fee for online payment has been entirely eliminated. A mobile friendly version of online payment is now available, compatible for viewing on most smartphones and other mobile devices.

Effective July 3, year-round **Sunday service** starts at eight branches – Albion, Cedarbrae, Lillian H. Smith, Malvern, North York Central Library, Northern District, Richview and the Toronto Reference Library. And effective September 11, 2016, new Sunday service will be offered from September to June at Bridlewood, Centennial, Fort York, Mount Dennis, Runnymede and Scarborough Civic Centre branches from September to June. Adding service at these branches increases geographic equity and improves service at the neighbourhood level, while also meeting customer demand for more open hours. It also supports the City's Poverty Reduction Strategy by extending access to essential services, including space, technology and information.

Expanding Access to Technology and Training

TPL was well represented at the full-day **Science Rendezvous event** at Yonge-Dundas Square. Staff provided 3D Printer demos, showcased our Makey Makey and Arduino Kits, hosted a science-themed craft table and chatted with hundreds of visitors to promote our extensive resources, programs and services.

Establishing TPL as Toronto's Centre for Continuous and Self-Directed Learning

Two summer programs, for children and teens respectively, will encourage school age customers to keep reading in July and August. The **TD Summer Reading Club** invites children from birth to age 12 to escape their everyday lives, step outside their ordinary selves and seek the unknown and untamed. Kids can join the Club at their local branch, get a kit to keep track of their reading, and visit the Library all summer for a variety of fun, free programs. On June 25, Get Your Summer Read On Day, children who register for the Club will have the chance to win a pair of tickets to a Toronto Blue Jays home game. **TPL Teens Summer Edition** inspires teens to get creative during the summer in libraries and online. Free programs at library branches in all parts of the city offer teens a chance to try something new, and a selection of 100 recommended books, including a Top Ten list by local authors, will encourage teens to keep reading and to share their ideas and passions with other teen readers throughout the summer.
tpl.ca/readingclub
tpl.ca/teens

The Toronto Reference Library has embarked on a project to archive the rich history of Chinese Canadians in the Greater Toronto Area from 1878 to the present, through individual or organizational records, photos, documents, diaries, memoirs and videos. A program delivered in May, The Chinese in Toronto – Celebrating the Asian Heritage,

allowed library staff to establish contact with members of the Chinese community who are considering donating valuable family archives to the project. Other programs, including Archive in Your Attic: Discovering Family Treasures, are scheduled for the fall. A launch day to showcase the archive will be confirmed in the coming months. TPL has a rich collection of local history archives and the Chinese Canadian Archive will fill a gap, making important resources available to researchers, lifelong learners and other members of the public.

TPL has partnered with Toronto Public Health's Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention Directorate to **increase access to health information** and provide life-long learning programs to Torontonians at ten library branches across the city. The pilot sites – Albion, Dawes Road, Downsview, Flemingdon Park, Kennedy/Eglinton, Malvern, Morningside Mount Dennis, Parkdale and Parliament Street branches – offer "Your Health Matters" stations with recommended health information to inspire customers to get healthier, as well as programs provided by public health nurses and dieticians. To date, Toronto Public Health has provided 59 programs for the public, reaching more than 550 people. Additional services and programs are planned for the remainder of 2016.

In May, the Business, Science & Technology Department at the Toronto Reference Library partnered with the Career Skills Institute for a **Speed Mentoring session** in the Hinton Theatre. A few dozen small business owners met with twelve mentors to share ideas on marketing and branding. Mentors included JustEat.ca's social media expert, a campaign strategist for Scotiabank, and an award-winning documentarian who has worked for CNN and National Geographic.

Creating Community Connections through Cultural Experiences

Spring is a busy time for TPL programming. May was **Asian Heritage** month and the Library celebrated with a city-wide roster of author visits, storytellers, cooking demonstrations, artists and musicians.

In June, **Aboriginal celebrations**, sponsored by TD Bank Group, focus on Canada's Indigenous heritage, with free programs for all ages, including lectures, musical performances, author talks, puppet shows and crafts at library branches across the city. Featured programs included an Indigenous Writers' Gathering with special guests Lee Maracle, Thomas King and award-winning author Joseph Boyden; and Nobel Peace Prize nominee and Inuit activist Sheila Watt-Cloutier in conversation with former TVO host Allan Gregg.

June is also **Seniors Month** and Torontonians are invited to rediscover their local branch by attending programs ranging from engaging guest speakers, to literary and cultural programs, book club discussions, computer classes and volunteer opportunities. A free Seniors Discovery Fair, held on June 8 at North York Central Library, offered a great opportunity for seniors to discover the programs and services that are offered for older adults and seniors in Toronto.

A number of branches participated in June's **Bike Month** with maintenance clinics and other programs.

June 4 was **100 in 1 Day**, offering Torontonians an opportunity to turn ideas into reality all over the city by celebrating the cumulative power of small changes. A number of library branches participated with initiatives that ranged from a community fair, to book sharing, to mural painting, to a Twitter party.

And finally, June is **Pride Month**, and TPL joined the celebrations in a number of ways: for the third consecutive year, the pillars around the front entrance of Yorkville Branch were wrapped in rainbow colours; staff have created a Pride-themed "we recommend" booklist, available at **tpl.ca**; and the Toronto Public Library Pride Alliance will march in the much anticipated annual Pride Parade on July 3.
tpl.ca/asianheritage
tpl.ca/aboriginal
tpl.ca/seniorsmonth

In partnership with the Institute for Canadian Citizenship (ICC) and Immigrant Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), Parkdale Branch hosted its annual **Canadian Citizenship Ceremony** on April 29. Prior to the official ceremony, the 50 new citizens and their guests, together with established citizens invited from the Parkdale community, engaged in lively roundtable discussion around common experiences of immigration, settlement, citizenship and community. In attendance for the ceremony were Parkdale Branch Head Miranda Huska, who serves as chair of the Parkdale ICC committee, Dr. Rita Cox, who presided over the actual citizenship ceremony, library area manager Cynthia Toniolo, who provided welcoming remarks on behalf of TPL, Parkdale/High Park MP Arif Varani, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, who spoke of his own experience of new citizenship, and Councillor Gord Perks, who welcomed the group on behalf of the City of Toronto. RCMP Constable Terry Russell stood guard over the ceremony, having had the opportunity to speak to the group about the role of police in Canada at the roundtable session. Tstsen Lhundup, a Tibetan singer and performer now living in Parkdale, provided a musical interlude.

Transforming for 21st Century Service Excellence

We held a **Blogger Day for library staff** on June 8 at Northern District Branch. Over 65 staff members participated in a full-day training session, which included presentations from industry professionals at the Art Gallery of Ontario, New York Public Library and Shopify, as well as staff-led sessions. Library staff learned about the latest trends in digital media and technology, including podcasts and video production, and were given practical tips to improve the Library's online content. This fun and unique learning experience will help staff promote the Library more widely to Toronto residents.

TPL's Innovation Team hosted the Second Annual **Staff Innovation Fair** at North York Central Library in May. More than 50 Toronto Public Library staff members heard from three keynote speakers: Derek Phillips on the innovation process at Google; former

Innovator in Residence Derek Quenneville on the future of 3D printing; and Terry Myers from Digital Generals on the history of virtual reality. Staff also heard from their colleagues about ongoing innovation projects, including a geocaching pilot, a community mapping tool, a meetup pilot, and a robotics club for teens.

Scarborough Civic Centre Branch won one of ten **Ontario Association of Architects Design Excellence Awards**, which recognize the innovative skills of Ontario architects in creating spaces, buildings and communities that respect and enhance the environment and enrich human activity. In the citation for the award, it is pointed out that this is "the first significant public building realized within the Scarborough Civic Centre Precinct in 25 years," and that the new library "realizes part of the original 1969 plan for the area, which envisioned a library as part of the civic centre," while embodying a larger redevelopment strategy for the area, "moving away from the car-centric… thinking of the 1960s… towards a more pedestrian oriented… future."

Summer construction is now underway at Richview and Bloor/Gladstone branches. The work at both locations focuses on the building exteriors and involves improvements to the entrances and walkways. For Richview branch, this exterior work represents the first of a two-phase building project, which also includes renovation of the second floor.

An open house in early June at the **Eglinton Square Branch** gave customers an opportunity to preview upcoming changes to their library. The branch will be closed for renovations starting this summer for approximately seven months. The expanded branch, which will more than double in size from 4,716 square feet to 10,000 square feet, will offer more in-branch services and spaces, increase access to technology and training, create opportunities for partnerships, civic engagement and resident participation, and advance the Library's state of good repair mandate.