City Librarian's Report
June 19, 2017

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ADVANCING OUR DIGITAL PLATFORMS

Save Items and Make Lists on the Library Website

In response to customer demand, we have added list functionality to the library website. Library cardholders can now save books and other items while searching or browsing the website, and organize saved items into lists that can be viewed and managed in the new version of your account.

BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS TO ACCESS, DRIVING INCLUSION

Children's Summer Programming Expanding to Sundays

As part of our mandate to increase access to in-branch services on Sundays, TPL will add Sunday programming for children age four to eight at 13 branches this summer. The eight-week Mini Makers program allows children and parents to take part in fun, hands-on activities that encourage problem-solving, explore STEM concepts and promote lifelong learning.

TPL Welcomes New Canadians at Toronto Newcomer Event

TPL promoted its newcomer programs and services at the third annual Toronto Newcomer Day, held at Nathan Phillips Square in May. More than 350 customers visited the TPL information table. Using an iPad and an internet hotspot, staff were able to demonstrate digital content such as Zinio, with its multilingual magazines, and Lynda.com. At the same time, at the City Hall Branch of the Library, 45 kids and their parents sang songs and playacted at Drama Time sessions facilitated by Young People's Theatre. TPL staff also participated in discussions with new Canadians during the citizenship ceremony that took place at the event.

EXPANDING ACCESS TO TECHNOLOGY AND TRAINING

New Digital Innovation Hubs Provide Access to High End Computers and More

Two new Digital Innovation Hubs opened at Albion and Agincourt branches in the first week of June giving library users access to high end PCs and Macs, 3D printers, audio/video production equipment, robotics, electronics and more. Hub staff support digital creation and learning through workshops, demonstrations and lectures. The launch of the new Hubs coincides with the completion of renovations at Agincourt and the reopening of Albion in a brand new building.

TPL Reaches Out to Caregivers through ENRICHES Collaborative

A number of initiatives offered through the ENRICHES Collaborative are helping TPL promote its online resources for family caregivers age 55 and up. A Family Caregiver Appreciation Day event at City Hall on April 4 included promotion of TPL's digital content and Home Library Service. The event was live-streamed to eight satellite locations, including four library branches, to allow caregivers in different locations to view and participate. A digital health forum, which aims to reduce social isolation and

improve access to needed resources, is scheduled for the Victoria Village Branch on July 19 as part of the ENRICHES collaborative. Digital health forums are also being planned for other branches.

Robotics and Circuitry Programs for Children Coming to TPL
Following a series of training sessions, staff at district branches are ready to deliver children's programs and outreach visits featuring new robotics and circuitry equipment recently acquired by the Library, including Dash & Dot, Sphero Sprk+, Codeybot and littleBits. This initiative increases digital literacy by exposing children to new technologies, developing a basic understanding of how they work and providing opportunities to use these tools creatively.

Agincourt Branch Receives $5,000 Grant to Promote Youth Empowerment
Following a successful Investment in Youth Engagement (IYE) initiative in 2016, Agincourt Branch was able to secure an additional $5,000 in funding for 2017. The initiative sees youth peer leaders trained and then dispatched to surrounding schools in the community to educate other youth on various health-related topics. The program runs from January to July and includes several exciting initiatives, including using Green Screen technology to develop health-based digital media, creating a Snap Chat geo-filter and conducting healthy nutrition seminars.

ESTABLISHING TPL AS TORONTO'S CENTRE FOR CONTINUOUS AND SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING

Business Inc. Helps Entrepreneurs Turn Dreams into Reality
Business Inc, an eight-week program, returned to TPL this spring. Offered in partnership with the City of Toronto and the Toronto Business Development Centre, Business Inc. helps entrepreneurs turn their business dreams into reality. Participants prepare a business plan, work with an advisor, access valuable resources and network with like-minded entrepreneurs. Each receives a Business Seminar Series Certificate of Completion and is eligible to apply for a small business loan ranging from $5,000 to $30,000. Workshops were held at Bloor/Gladstone, Richview and Fairview branches between April and June.

Fragile Planet Program Kicks off to Nearly 200 Participants
Our Fragile Planet spring program series kicked off to a great start! One of our new programs this year with a real-life storm chaser, George Kourounis, brought in nearly 200 people at Flemingdon Park and Burrows Hall branches. According to a Flemingdon Park Branch staff member, "George was engaging, and the kids couldn't stop asking him questions."

Retiring on a Low Income Workshops Draw Capacity Crowds
Attendance at the April 10 Retiring on a Low Income presentation by social policy consultant John Stapleton exceeded the 180-person capacity of the Toronto Reference Library's Beeton Hall, illustrating the ongoing need for financial workshops for low income individuals. Those who could not attend received a list of Stapleton's other eight TPL presentations happening around the city in May and June. Given that approximately 30 percent of Canada's seniors will rely on income security programs for sole support in

their retirement years, it is not surprising that the workshop continues to be in high demand. The final workshop takes place at Sanderson on June 22.

Suite of Summer Programs Promote Wonder Among Children 6-12
Summer Wonder is an exciting suite of library programs and services for children age six to 12 and their families, piloting at Agincourt, Albion, Cedarbrae, Fairview, S. Walter Stewart and York Woods branches this summer. These programs and services promote wonder, creativity, and discovery, and offer fun learning experiences every day throughout the summer to support children for when they return to school in the fall. Summer Wonder also empowers parents as they help their children build skills, discover new interests, meet friends and have fun.

TPL Promotes an Array of Programs and Services at Parent Expo
The First Annual Parent Expo was held at the Etobicoke Olympium, connecting resources in the community that cater to families, schools and the larger community as a whole. A team of TPL staff promoted our Digital Innovation Hubs, Pop-Up Learning Labs, STEM programming and Ready for Reading programs (among others) to involved parents and new community partners.

CREATING COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS THROUGH CULTURAL EXPERIENCES

Community Turns Out in Droves for Albion Branch Opening
The brand new Albion Branch, which was built adjacent to the existing branch to avoid any major disruption of library service in the community, opened to great fanfare on June 5. Opening celebrations included visits by Mayor John Tory, who addressed an audience of enthusiastic library-goers, as well as City Librarian Vickery Bowles, Board Chair Ron Carinici and Board member Councillor Sarah Doucette. The Mayor spoke to the crowd about the role of the Library in this community and the exciting programs and services offered. Customers were treated to entertainment that included a local Ubuntu drum and dance group, a magician to dazzle the young folks and a DJ who added even more energy to the celebration. Among the many great features, the new branch includes the Library's seventh Youth Hub, which was full of teens busy checking out their new space.

Runnymede and Eglinton Square Branches Reopening this Month
Runnymede Branch will welcome the community back on Wednesday, June 21, after a five-month closure for renovations. The branch now has more open, flexible spaces that respond to customer needs for quiet study and reading, group study, computer use, collaboration, and program attendance. Eglinton Square Branch, located on Scarborough's Golden Mile, will reopen on Friday, June 23 at 10 a.m. after a one-year closure. The branch is double its original size and features welcoming spaces for everyone, including an enlarged children's area, a teen zone, study rooms, and community meeting rooms.

Maker Extravaganza at Toronto Reference Library, July 8 and 9
TPL has partnered with Maker Festival since 2014 to host their marquee event, a maker extravaganza that has grown to include over 100 makers, craftspeople, technologists and hobbyists exhibiting their projects. Admission is free, providing visitors of all ages the opportunity to engage with local makers and spark their imaginations at the many interactive exhibits and workshops at Toronto Reference Library on July 8 and 9. The event kicks off a month-long Maker Festival that ties together maker events run across the city. Over 12,000 people visited the extravaganza weekend in 2016 and we expect 2017 to be bigger and better than ever!

Great Books Lecture Series Continues to Draw Crowds
The Great Books Lecture Series, this year curated by Dr. Paul Chafe of Ryerson University and featuring Canadian literature, remains a popular choice for older adults. St. Lawrence Branch drew over 50 people to hear University of Toronto professor Robert McGill talk about Nobel laureate Alice Munro's story collection Hateship, Friendship, Courtship, Loveship, Marriage. This season's final Great Books lecture, at Deer Park on June 20, features Paul Chafe discussing Michael Crummey's novel Sweetland. The Great Books Lecture series is funded by a donation from her family in memory of Ann Thoburn, a long-time staff member.

Annual Celebration Honours Indigenous Culture
Once again in 2017, the Library is celebrating Indigenous culture with programs at branches around the city featuring First Nation, Métis and Inuit writers and artists. As part of the celebration, the Library is partnering with PEN Canada to present Indigenous Voices Rising, a panel discussion about the effects of mainstream indigenous success on native communities, featuring Lee Maracle, Cherie Dimaline, Lisa Charleyboy and Gerald McMaster. The celebration also features a list of recommended reads.

Issues of Identity, Struggles, Belonging Find a Voice at Annual Poetry Slam
Poetry Saved Our Lives fourth annual Final Slam was held on May 5 at the Palmerston Branch Theatre. Youth took to the stage to express themselves and to compete in front of a full house for the top prize, an opportunity to perform as featured artists at the Louder Than a Bomb festival at the beginning of June. Featured artist, 19-year-old Nasim Asgari, shared her journey and poems, while inspiring the audience.

400 Comic Creators Meet 20,000 Fans at Toronto Reference Library
More than 23,000 comic and graphic novel lovers converged on Toronto Reference Library over the weekend of May 13 and 14 to check out one of the greatest assembly of comics authors from around the world, including Canadian favourites Jeff Lemire and Jillian Tamaki and international superstars Pénélope Bagieu, Guy Delisle, Gengoroh Tagame, and Marcelino Truong, to name just a few. This is the ninth year of this very successful partnership that sees the Library present the Toronto Comic Arts Festival in May each year. At the TPL table, staff from the collections and planning departments showed off the Library's growing collection of digital comics and signed customers up for library cards.

Sun Life Financial Museum + Arts Pass (MAP) Program Celebrates Tenth Anniversary

This year marks the tenth anniversary of the Sun Life Financial MAP program. To celebrate, the Library hosted a celebration event at the Toronto Reference Library to honour the ongoing support of the program's title sponsor, Sun Life Financial, as well as the participation of our venue partners, including the Aga Khan Museum, Art Gallery of Ontario, Bata Shoe Museum, Black Creek Pioneer Village, City of Toronto Historic Sites, Gardiner Museum, Ontario Science Centre, Royal Ontario Museum, Textile Museum of Canada and the Toronto Zoo. Since the inception of the Sun Life Financial MAP program, more than 1.5 million Torontonians have benefited, borrowing 750,000 passes.

TRANSFORMING FOR 21ST CENTURY SERVICE EXCELLENCE

TPL Shares Indigenous Initiative Strategies at First Nation Gathering

Melanie Ribau, TPL Senior Services Specialist, Indigenous Community Connections and Partnerships, attended the First Nation Public Libraries Northern Gathering in North Bay in May. Hosted by Ontario Library Service North, in collaboration with Southern Ontario Library Service and Ontario Library Association, the gathering provided an opportunity for TPL to share the newly endorsed strategies for indigenous initiatives, and to connect with Ontario First Nation public libraries. Recurring themes included the need for language revitalization and preservation and more supports for First Nation public libraries, primarily through increased and reliable funding. The need for more opportunities for north- and south-region libraries to meet and connect in order to break down geographical barriers and divisions was also discussed.

Danish Library Staff Tour TPL

A delegation of 17 library leaders representing nearly all parts of Denmark arrived at Toronto Reference Library on May 16 to begin a four-day intensive tour of TPL programs, services and spaces. According to delegation leader Lene Shrøder, the aim of the tour was to gain "inspiration on different topics" with which TPL "has a lot of experience." The group toured Toronto City Hall, Toronto Reference Library, and Bloor/Gladstone, Fort York and Fairview branches, and saw presentations on the strategic plan development, digital strategy, community engagement, service delivery, children's, teen and newcomer services, and TPL Foundation initiatives. The group also attended a presentation on City of Toronto's Smart Cities initiatives by Susan Viegas, co-chair of the Smart City working group, and Grant Coffey, the group's strategic planning manager. According to Schrøder, members of the delegation were "impressed with the handling of strategy through the whole organization and how the strategy was presented in all topics concerning youth, programs, special collections, seniors, immigrants, etc. Also interesting is the way you have used smart data to qualify which focus each branch should have."

Library Celebrates Volunteer Contributions

The Library celebrated National Volunteer Week (April 23-29) with two events, one for all library volunteers, and the other geared specifically to youth volunteers. At the annual volunteer appreciation event on April 24 at S. Walter Stewart Branch, more than 60

volunteers of all ages from all TPL programs – including Adult Literacy, Friends of the Library, Youth Advisory Groups, Leading to Reading and Youth Hubs – heard from special guest speaker Andrew Pyper. Pyper read from his new novel, The Only Child, and engaged with the audience. And on May 6, at Toronto Reference Library, the youth volunteer event brought together nearly 90 library volunteers, age 24 or younger, for an afternoon of pizza, prizes, programs and fun! In 2016, nearly 2,700 volunteers contributed over 75,000 hours to TPL programs. Of those volunteers, more than 73 percent were youth. In 2017, 192 volunteers received gifts thanking them for their years of service – including seven 20-year volunteers, and one who has been volunteering for the Library for 30 years!