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City Librarian's Report
April 25, 2016

Partnerships, outreach and other community initiatives

Torontonians now have access to the city's first musical instrument library – the **Sun Life Financial Musical Instrument Lending Library** at Parkdale Branch. Toronto Public Library was approached by Sun Life Financial to create this innovative program that allows library customers to borrow a variety of instruments by simply presenting their library card. Guitars, ukuleles, violins and keyboards are among the 100 instruments available to everyone, from beginners to seasoned musicians. The Library is also holding a month-long Musical Instrument Donation Drive, ongoing until May 7, giving Torontonians the opportunity to drop off their new or gently used musical instrument donations at Parkdale Branch or two participating Long & McQuade locations. The program was launched with a successful media event at Parkdale Branch that generated extensive news coverage. Speakers included Lindsay Colley, Paul Joliat of Sun Life Financial and special guests Chantal Kreviazuk and Raine Maida. The event ended with a charming performance by young students from The Regent Park School of Music.
tpl.ca/instrumentlending

To help welcome Syrian newcomers and their families to Toronto, Toronto Public Library is inviting our newest residents to explore Toronto's cultural attractions and museums for free, through the **MAP Newcomers Pass**. The initiative, created especially for Syrian newcomers, is an extension of the Library's popular program, the Sun Life Financial Museum + Arts Pass (MAP), which has been making arts and culture more accessible to Torontonians since 2007. As part of the Library's outreach efforts, Syrian newcomers receive a booklet, printed in both Arabic and English, that features information about participating MAP venues, including the Aga Khan Museum, the Art Gallery of Ontario, the Bata Shoe Museum, City of Toronto Historic Sites, the Gardiner Museum, the Royal Ontario Museum, the Textile Museum of Canada and the Toronto Zoo. Included in the booklet is a voucher that recipients can redeem for a MAP pass to the venue of their choice when they register for a library card. The program was launched at a Syrian welcome event at North York Central Library on April 5.

As part of the **Canadian Public Libraries for Fair Ebook Pricing coalition**, Toronto Public Library is moving ahead with the next phase of the #FairEbookPrices campaign. The Library continues to advocate for more reasonable prices and terms for ebooks with an open letter to multinational publishers, social media and a Twitter chat at the end of March hosted by Vickery Bowles, Sharon Karr (Manager, Collection Management and Access, Edmonton Public Library) and Tim Tierney (Chair of the Ottawa Public Library Board). The campaign continues to receive support on social media and generate news coverage. Toronto Public Library, along with representatives from the Canadian Urban Libraries Council and Edmonton Public Library, will be meeting with multinational publisher Simon & Schuster to discuss pricing issues as a result of the open letter.
fairpricingforlibraries.org

Toronto Public Library is partnering with the Toronto Public Health (TPH) Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention Directorate to increase access to health information and programming for Torontonians. **Your Health Matters: Be Informed, Get Healthy** is running at ten library branches across the city: Albion, Downsview, Dawes Road, Flemingdon Park, Kennedy/Eglinton, Malvern, Morningside, Mount Dennis, Parkdale and Parliament Street. After working with the Library to tailor programming to community needs, TPH staff prepared recommended reading lists and provided funds to purchase additional copies of recommended titles. The titles and the program information are displayed in the branches in specially made display units.

On March 22, Toronto Public Library participated in **an information and networking event, hosted by TRIEC** (The Toronto Region Immigration Employment Council) and MaRs Innovation, with the goal of supporting immigrants seeking to become entrepreneurs. The event, Newcomer Start-ups: Building a Successful Business, featured a dozen successful immigrant entrepreneurs sharing their experiences and strategies, and brought together 20 partner organizations that offer programs, services and supports to help immigrants start their businesses. Of the 85 registered participants, many dropped by the library table and more than 30 stayed to get detailed information about library resources.

Toronto Public Library is currently hosting **two student placements from the University of Toronto Medical School's Community Based Service-Learning Project**, which helps medical students understand the central role community organizations play in supporting the health of individuals and communities. The students will gain an understanding of the Library by shadowing, observing and meeting with key staff at a number of branches across the city. They, in turn, will help to advance the goals or objectives of the Library by contributing expertise and assistance in the development and delivery of the Library's health-related initiatives.

The winners of the **Toronto Star Short Story Contest** were announced at an event held at Yorkville Branch on April 21. The contest is presented annually by the Toronto Star and Toronto Public Library, and is considered the largest such competition in Canada and one of North America's most lucrative. The winner receives $5,000 plus tuition for the 30-week creative writing correspondence program at the Humber School for Writers. The contest receives about 2,000 entries a year. Judges this year included Vickery Bowles, award-winning author Pasha Malla, and Toronto Star reporters Deborah Dundas and Richard Ouzounian.

Children's

The popular annual **Design-a-Bookmark contest** was held in December and January for children 13 years and younger. Children from all across Toronto participated and submitted designs. A selection committee made up of illustrator and author Debbie Ohi and Toronto Public Library staff chose the designs from all the submissions, to be made into bookmarks that will be distributed through all branches across the city. An awards night, attended by Library Board member Sue Graham-Nutter, was held for the grand prize award winners and their families at North York Central Library on April 19.

Spaces

Richview Branch is the newest location for a KidsStop early literacy centre at Toronto Public Library. With a theme of "Bounce", children from birth to five are invited to explore movement through the space, cuddle up with a good book in a reading nook, explore the world through a bug's eye view and play with rhymes and chants that "bounce" around.
KidsStop early literacy centres are fun, literacy-rich, tactile learning environments for children birth to five and their caregivers to learn and play together. These unique spaces feature a wide range of interactive learning stations based on Ready for Reading principles. Other branches with KidsStops include Bloor/Gladstone, Brentwood, Cedarbrae, Dufferin/St. Clair, Fairview, Mount Dennis, Scarborough Civic Centre, S. Walter Stewart and Thorncliffe.
tpl.ca/kidsstops

Agincourt Branch is embarking on a renovation this spring. More than 50 members of the public attended an information session on April 6 where they were treated to a first look at the design plans. Slated to begin in May 2016 and to run for a period of approximately nine months, the renovation will enhance the branch's spaces and offer new, exciting services. The branch will be open during the renovation, with reduced access to some collections and services. Innovative offsite programs will be delivered by library staff in local community spaces through partnerships with local agencies throughout the renovation.

Programs and exhibits

On April 9, Toronto Public Library celebrated the tenth anniversary of its award-winning **Make Some Noise** initiative with a concert featuring two bands, Weaves and Twist, performing live in the stacks at Toronto Reference Library. Make Some Noise kicked off in 2006 as a means of promoting the libraries then-new local music collection, which is dedicated to celebrating the amazing musical talent that continues to emerge in the city.
tpl.ca/noise

On Saturday March 12, Gerrard/Ashdale Branch hosted **All Aboard the 506 Streetcar Project**, a local history themed event to coincide with the neighbourhood's celebration of the 506 Streetcar Project, which aims to connect 15 distinct neighbourhoods through which the 506 streetcar travels. TTC CEO Andy Byford hosted the event, speaking to close to 100 people and then joining in as the crowd boarded a chartered 1951 vintage streetcar to cruise east along the Gerrard 506 route as far as the Main Street Station, and then back to the library. On board, participants heard from local historian Joanne Doucette about the history of our neighbourhood and of the Gerrard Route, the first civic car line in Toronto, which commenced operation on December 18, 1912. Local councillors Paula Fletcher and Mary Margaret McMahon were on hand for this streetcar ride back in time.

During National Poetry Month in April, the League of Canadian Poets and the Academy of American Poets are presenting **Poem in Your Pocket Day** on April 21, inviting poetry lovers to celebrate by selecting a poem, carrying it in their pocket, and sharing it with others. Joining in the celebrations, Toronto Public Library has created a curated list on the Overdrive ebook service of 25 new and classic poetry titles – half of which are Canadian – giving library customers an opportunity to have a poem in their pocket on their phone.

Collections

Toronto Public Library will introduce **two new electronic resources**. Mergent Intellect, available at the end of April, will provide financial and company information on U.S. and Canadian private firms. Gale Courses, an e-learning resource that offers interactive, instructor-led online courses on a variety of topics, will be launched in June.

Visitors

City councillor Norm Kelly was at Agincourt Branch on March 16 for an interview with CityTV featuring his accomplishments. Councillor Kelly highlighted the branch as a community space that connects residents of all ages and backgrounds with each other.