

**Chair's Report**  
**May 27, 2013**

**Partnerships, Outreach and Other Community Initiatives**

**The Library Settlement Partnership (LSP)** program at Toronto Public Library has received a strong endorsement on the Maytree Foundation's website Cities of Migration. An article titled "The Great Equalizer: Toronto Public Library" states that "Few institutions reflect and serve the diversity within the community better than the Toronto Public Library," and goes on to describe the LSP program as one that thrives on partnership. Nine community organizations partner with the Library to provide the program, which places settlement workers in 19 Library branches and is funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada.

Eatonville Branch hosted an information session on April 23 featuring **Fiona Crean, City Ombudsman**. The session was held in partnership with the Etobicoke Youth Network and City departments, including Toronto Employment and Social Services, Toronto Public Health and Toronto Forestry, Parks and Recreation. Over 50 youth and adults attended, all with questions for the Ombudsman about accessing city services. This program was hosted by the Library to promote youth and resident civic engagement and as part of the City Ombudsman's community outreach work.

Toronto Public Library's important role in sustaining and encouraging reading in Canadian society was reinforced in a recent article in the *Toronto Star* announcing the release by the **National Reading Campaign (NCR)** of a new report, "Towards Sustaining and Encouraging Reading in a Canadian Society." The article quotes Toronto Public Library's Children and Youth Advocate Lisa Heggum: "The important research that the NRC is gathering shows that choice, variety and access to reading materials are critical in promoting reading for all ages. Libraries are uniquely and ideally positioned to provide universal access to a broad range of materials." The NCR is a non-profit organization dedicated to making Canada a country of readers.

This year's **Toronto Comic Arts Festival** took place on the weekend of May 11 and 12 at Toronto Reference Library. The event drew 16,500 guests and welcomed over 400 cartoonists from 18 countries around the world, including the US, UK, Japan, Belgium and Israel. Guests met their favourite artists and attended panel discussions and workshops. Toronto Public Library was also a festival exhibitor and the Library table promoted our collections, programs and services – including the WORD OUT teen summer reading program and *Young Voices* magazine. The ongoing partnership with the festival organizers is a highly cost effective initiative that yields strong results, bringing new young audiences, in particular males, into the Library and providing wide and positive exposure through extensive media.

## **Programs**

In April, the Library held its **eighth annual Keep Toronto Reading Festival** – its biggest yet, with more than 120 programs held at 62 branches across the city. Our campaign this year was tied to our One Book community read title, the classic novel *Fahrenheit 451*, and offered programs and activities ranging from discussions about censorship, media saturation and the power of books to story times delivered by firefighters. More than 5,000 people took part; in addition, 1,000 high school students joined us in reading and discussing the book.

Winners of Toronto Public Library's **Design-a-Bookmark Contest** were honoured at a celebration event at North York Central Library on May 9, during Canadian Children's Book Week. The Board was represented by Benjie Wulffhart at this event. The 16 winners, who ranged in age from 2 to 13, were recognized for their impressive artistic talent and charming, original creations. Designs included a toddler's whimsical finger painting, a cityscape by night, and the slogans "Books are Awesome" and "Reading is Golden". The Design-a-Bookmark contest is a much-anticipated annual event that offers a great opportunity for our youngest customers to explore their imagination, express their love of books, and to feel that they are vital members of their Library. The bookmarks are now available in all branches for customers to take home, share, put into use and enjoy.

**The Library's annual Aboriginal celebration** will this year feature a number of national treasures appearing at Library branches around the city. Activist, humorist, novelist and critic Thomas King will be at both North York Central and Toronto Reference libraries to present his darkly humorous retake on North American history from the point of view of the First Nations of 'Turtle Island'. Former Ontario Lieutenant Governor and award-winning author James Bartleman will launch his new novel, *The Redemption of Oscar Wolf*, at Spadina Branch, and then follow up with an eh List appearance at Northern District Branch. And veteran National Film Board filmmaker Alanis Obomsawin will screen and discuss her latest film, *People of Kattawapiskak River*.

## **Branches**

Congratulations to the Oakwood Village Branch Youth Advisory Group for winning the \$3,000 grand prize in the **Yell the Truth video contest**. The contest is sponsored by Assets Coming Together (ACT) for Youth at York University, which brings together a multi-sectoral alliance of community stakeholders and an interdisciplinary network of researchers that seeks to develop a comprehensive youth strategy that articulates how urban communities, like the Jane-Finch community, can energize community assets that support positive youth development. The video has generated a great deal of community interest: ACT has inquired about the possibility of working with the Oakwood Village Youth Advisory group on another project; Councillor Josh Colle has asked to meet with the teens in the group to congratulate them for their inspiring message; and the Oakwood Village Arts Festival organizers have approached the group about possibly showcasing the video at one of their events during their festival in June. The winning video is online at <http://youtu.be/qV86jlpTHnM>.