

Chair's Report
March 27, 2013

Retail Affiliate Program

Toronto Public Library is now offering customers the option to buy books via torontopubliclibrary.ca. When browsing for library materials, customers are able to click on “Buy Your Own Copy” to go to a third party retailer’s website to purchase a copy of the book. The link appears at the bottom of the bibliographic record on the Library website when there is a copy available to purchase on the retailer’s website. The Library will receive a portion of the sale price, which will be used to support collections and services.

Programs

On March 14, the Library unveiled its program and activity lineup for this year’s **Keep Toronto Reading Festival**. Firefighters, storytellers, authors and artists are onboard to offer 96 events at 62 branches right across the city throughout the month of April. Most of our programming this year centres on our One Book, *Fahrenheit 451*, by Ray Bradbury. A specially wrapped bookmobile gave away copies of the book at select stops from March 14 to 16. Program highlights include a Ray Bradbury legacy tribute, a panel discussion on the effects of non-stop media saturation, a discussion of book burning in the digital age and a look at censorship in comics. Also on offer are screenings of the Francois Truffaut film, discussions at 43 book clubs across the city, and performances of passages from banned books. For kids, outreach officers from the Fire Department read their favourite stories at branches across the city. And, in a continuing partnership with the Toronto District School Board, 1,000 students will be reading the book at 35 schools across the city. There are also fun social media activities, and for the first time, the Library is inviting people to play an alternate reality game, called KTR 451.

The Young Voices program, which is benefiting from a donation by the Daniels brothers in honour of their mother, Norine Rose, through the Toronto Public Library Foundation, includes a number of **Young Voices creative writing and art workshops** every year. This year, thanks to the donation, the number of workshops was doubled, with the majority of them taking place during March Break at branches around the city. In total, well over 100 creative teens attending workshops facilitated by Toronto writers, poets, and arts professionals, including Toronto Poet Laureate George Elliott Clarke, who met with teens at Maria A. Shchuka Branch.

North York Central Library hosted a number of very successful programs in February, including an appearance by acclaimed singer-songwriter and author Dan Hill, who drew an audience of 135 for his Black History Month program, sponsored by TD Canada Trust through the Toronto Public Library Foundation; and a Freedom to Read Week program for teens, hosted by local author Ryan Kerr, where participants could voice their perspectives on books that have been and/or continue to be controversial.

The spring 2013 season of the eh List has a great lineup of literary luminaries, including this year's Giller winner Will Ferguson, last year's French-language GG winner Kim Thuy, Robert J. Sawyer, Nancy Richler, Guy Gavriel Kay, Annabel Lyon, John Ralston Saul, and James Bartleman.

Spaces

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Mount Dennis Branch re-opened on March 11 to a very appreciative community, after a renovation that saw the branch closed for approximately a year and a half. Features of the renovation include a complete redesign of the 11,350 square foot interior space with convenient express check out, improved lounge and casual reading space, a new KidsStop interactive early literacy centre, a new teen zone, new study space, and an art lounge. The newly designed branch also includes an increase in the number of computers and a laptop lending service, an improved programming and community meeting space, and the addition of a new outdoor reading space.

Traditionally, one of the outcomes experienced with new or renovated library spaces is an increase in public use. A great example of this is the **renovated and enlarged TD Gallery** on the main floor of Toronto Reference Library, with its increased visibility and eye-catching media screens at the gallery's entrance. The second show in the new space, *Adventures with Sherlock Holmes*, drew a record breaking 4,551 visitors in its relatively short nine-week run. A new exhibit, *War Stories: Toronto and the War of 1812-14*, will run from March 30 to June 22.

Foundation

On March 7, the Toronto Public Library Foundation and Toronto Public Library co-presented **the inaugural Bluma Lecture**, headlined by Pulitzer Prize winners Sheryl WuDunn and Nicholas Kristof, founders of the "Half the Sky" movement. An enthusiastic audience of 340 attendees heard both sobering and inspiring stories about ending the oppression of women in the developing world. Thanks to the generosity of the Appel Community Trust, which provided 100% of the funding for the lecture, the event was broadcast live on the Library's website, which marks a first for Toronto Public Library. The Bluma Lecture, intended to be an annual event, is dedicated to the discussion of important issues by some of the world's most thoughtful opinion-leaders.

In the Chair's Report for the January 2013 Library Board meeting, the Foundation announced its **revamped Tribute Giving program**, which offers donors the choice of 18 cards featuring images from the Library's special collections to mail or email to the recipient honouree. The new program has met with much praise and, during the first two weeks of the campaign alone, 33 donations (from 26 donors) were received, totalling \$1,120. At least half of the donations were from first-time donors to the Foundation. The program will run year-round with special promotions leading up to select holidays and occasions.

Online

A new improved interface for Toronto Public Library's OverDrive e-collections has just been launched. The new interface features a streamlined design, easier check-out and a new format option called OverDrive Read that allows customers to read the same title on multiple devices in their browser without the need to download. Also beginning in March, Library customers using OverDrive now have access to OverDrive's email technical support service for help with software, setting up of their eReaders, downloading, error messages and other technical issues.

Other

Taxpayer donations to Toronto Public Library of over \$4,600 will be available for use in 2013. The donations are the result of changes in city property tax bills that allow taxpayers to supplement their tax payments with donations directed to a city program or service of their choice. In 2012, the city collected over \$38,600 in donations, 12% of which were earmarked for the Library. For reference, Toronto Public Library receives 4.5% of every tax dollar raised by the city.

Beginning in late March or early April, Toronto Public Library will launch its Date Due Slip advertising program. The six-month pilot will have advertising from over half a dozen advertisers, and is projected to generate approximately \$20,000 in revenue during the six-month period.