

**Chair's Report
May 26, 2014**

Partnerships, outreach and other community initiatives

The Toronto Comic Arts Festival (TCAF), a week-long celebration of comics, graphic novels, and their creators, culminated on May 10 and 11 as 18,000 people from across North America and beyond descended upon Toronto Reference Library for a two-day exhibition and vendor fair featuring hundreds of comics creators from around the world. The festival also included readings, interviews, panels, workshops, gallery shows, art installations, and more. TCAF has been presented by Toronto Public Library and held at Toronto Reference Library since 2009.

torontocomics.com

Makerspace Time, a pop-up innovation lab initiated by Danforth/Coxwell Branch in partnership with the Toronto Tool Library, gave children and their parents a look at the fascinating worlds of 3D printing, basic robot building and circuitry and also included a station where children could make their own LED light-up buttons. Staff at the branch were thrilled to see the positive family interactions and to hear the excited chatter about when the library will be doing this again!

Funding for the Library Settlement Partnership, a tri-partnership between Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Toronto Public Library and settlement agencies, was renewed for the fiscal year 2014/15. Through the partnership, settlement services are delivered locally at convenient hours in 16 library branches by settlement workers, in languages that reflect newcomer needs. In 2013/14, more than 36,000 clients were reached either through one-on-one settlement service or through program attendance. An evaluation of the program in 2014 confirmed that the program is meeting the service objectives of the partners, and found that 99% of those newcomers surveyed would recommend the Library as a resource for new arrivals.

Luminato returns to the Library this June with a number of events, including two at the Bram and Bluma Appel Salon: Kill Like a Scandinavian on June 8, where attendees will have a chance to meet their favourite crime fiction writers from the region, as well as Holland's Herman Koch, best-selling author of *The Dinner*; and #ReadWomen2014 on June 11, with four powerhouse women writers weighing in on the ongoing debate about the role and recognition of female writers in the literary landscape. The Library's Bookmobile will also be at Luminato's Literary Picnic on June 15 at Trinity Bellwood Park.

luminatofestival.com

Rhymes to Re*Education: A Hip Hop Guide for Educators was launched at the York Woods Branch on April 22 to an overflow crowd. The project was funded and supported by Educational Attainment West (EAW) and the Toronto District School Board (TDSB). This project included teachers, community members, members of the EAW Board – including Library staff member Gail MacFayden – and young people, who worked together to create a curriculum for students on the history and importance of Hip Hop; the project has spawned a book, a website and a link on the TDSB site. The project provided an opportunity for youth engagement and inclusiveness in learning and literacy through Hip Hop music and culture.

rhymestoreeducation.com

Programs and exhibits

The Keep Toronto Reading Festival enjoyed another successful year, with this year's One Book, *The Cellist of Sarajevo*, enthusiastically embraced by readers across the city. The promotional campaign kicked off in January with a Guess the One Book contest, followed by the One Book reveal at the Book Lover's Ball in February. In March, the Library partnered with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra to stage a highly successful "Travelling Cellist" promotion; in the book *The Cellist of Sarajevo*, a lone cellist carries his instrument into the cratered war-torn street to perform Albinoni's Adagio for 22 days to honour 22 people killed while waiting in line to buy bread. To highlight the book's central theme of the power of art in times of darkness, and also to celebrate our city's landmarks, TSO cellists performed the Adagio for 22 consecutive days at 22 locations across Toronto. More than 1,000 people came out to see the performances, and the promotion drew a lot of attention in traditional and social media. A video of the performances is on the Library's YouTube channel and has received over 1,700 views in less than a month.

Other highlights of the Keep Toronto Reading Festival include: 1,000 students in 40 Toronto District School Board (TDSB) high school classes reading and studying the One Book; signature events in the Appel Salon that drew combined audiences of 1,300, including one sold-out event with historian Margaret MacMillan and a book club meet-up with the One Book author, Steven Galloway; partnered events, including a screening with Hot Docs, a piano concert in partnership with the Canadian Opera Company, and a TDSB event with Galloway.

Toronto Public Library was pleased to host Book Bash Canadian Children's Literature Festival at Northern District Branch on April 26. The event is a fun-filled, free children's festival featuring an all-star cast of Canadian children's authors, illustrators and performers. This year's exceptional list of guests included authors Matt Beam, Helaine Becker, Marie Louise Gay, Kyo Maclear, Evan Munday, Liam O'Donnell and J. Torres; 2014 TD Summer Reading Club illustrator John Martz; Applefun Puppetry, Maker Kids and Samba Squad. In addition to storytimes, music and puppet shows, for the first time this year, young innovators were invited to take part in the Maker Kids "Book Hacking" program where kids had the chance to redefine books with crafts. Every child who attended received a free book provided by Scholastic. The festival is made possible by the Muller Scholastic Endowment Fund for Canadian Children's Literature at the Toronto Public Library Foundation. The Toronto Public Library and Toronto Public Library Foundation are proud to bring this festival to the city.

Toronto Public Library's first French children's book club – launched at Richview Branch in September 2013 – recently registered in the Ontario Library Association's Forest of Reading Prix Tamarac program for students in Grades 4 - 6. The children voted on their favourite books as part of the province-wide contest that culminated in the Festival of Trees in mid-May, when the winners were announced. Interest in the French book club has been much more robust than expected, with over 50 inquiries from interested parents when the club first launched.

The Design-a-Bookmark Contest awards night took place on May 7 at North York Central Library. Over 5,000 entries were received this year from children all across the city. From those entries, four Elizabeth Cleaver Award winners were chosen, as well as 12 Grand Prize winners, four for each of three age categories: up to six years old; seven to nine years old; and 10 to 13 years old. Children were awarded with a book prize, a certificate and 100 copies of their winning bookmark. Over 75 people attended the celebrations, including TD Summer Reading Club illustrator John Martz and Library Board member Ross Parry.

Collections

In April, Toronto Public Library launched a very successful service with Hoopla Digital, allowing customers to access thousands of streaming and downloadable music and video titles on their computers, tablets or smartphones. E-content continues to be the Library's fastest area of growth, with customers borrowing over two million items last year. In the first month alone, over 9,000 customers registered for the service and borrowed nearly 14,000 items. The launch of the music and video download service generated widespread coverage in news media and many mentions on social media. The story was featured in all major Toronto media, including coverage in Torontoist, BlogTO, CBC News, Toronto Star and Global.
torontopubliclibrary.ca/hoopla

Awards

Last month's chair's report included information on an Ontario Association of Architects (OAA) 2014 Design Excellence Award for Mount Dennis Branch. The Library was also very pleased that Mount Dennis received the OAA Michael V. And Wanda Plachta Award, which is given to the outstanding project within the Design Excellence Award category with a project budget of less than \$8 million.

Another Toronto Public Library renovation was also honoured with an award recently, as Bloor/Gladstone Branch received one of 12 Governor General's Medals in Architecture awarded in 2014. The medals are given out every other year to recognize and celebrate outstanding design in recently built projects by Canadian architects. According to the awards jury, the project architects, RDH Architects Inc. in association with Shoalts and Zaback Architects Ltd., accomplished a "renovation and expansion of a distinctive historical library [that] stands out for being both creative and respectful." The medal was presented on May 13 by His Excellency The Right Honourable David Johnson, Governor General of Canada, at Rideau Hall in Ottawa.

Staff training, enrichment and other enhancement opportunities

Middle Childhood Training Day for Library staff working with children took place on May 6 at Northern District Branch. The training focused on introducing the Library's recently developed Middle Childhood Framework to staff, outlining the developmental stages of middle childhood, and providing strategies to engage children in library programs and services and respond to challenging situations. Other city agencies and community organizations, including the Middle Childhood Matters Coalition, Humber College and the City of Toronto Program & Policy Development for Toronto Children's Services, participated.

Branches

Gerrard/Ashdale celebrated its 90th anniversary on the evening of May 15 with a very well-attended program featuring remarks by library manager Cynthia Toniolo and city councillor Paula Fletcher, who presented a certificate from the city on behalf of herself and councillor Mary-Margaret McMahon. Also on the agenda were: a performance of two 1920s songs by a Grade 3 student choir from Roden Public School; a story told by branch head Gail Ferguson accompanied by the student choir; and a local history presentation by local resident Joanne Doucette. Formal presentations were followed by refreshments, socializing and time to review anniversary displays. And 90-year-old Mrs. Ruth Henry, one of the earliest known users of the branch, was in attendance and made a few remarks about her childhood recollections of the Gerrard/Ashdale.