

## Chair's Report October 21, 2013

### **Partnerships, Outreach and other community initiatives**

Following on the heels of a group reading at Yorkville Branch on October 3 by all five authors shortlisted for the **Toronto Book Awards**, the winner of the award was announced at a gala celebration, hosted by CBC's Matt Galloway, at The Bram & Bluma Appel Salon at Toronto Reference Library on October 9. The winner of the Toronto Book Award for 2013 is Kamal Al-Solaylee for his memoir *Intolerable: A Memoir of Extremes*, a moving portrayal of the inner turmoil and emotional complexities that Kamal Al-Solaylee experiences being gay and leaving his Arab family and culture behind. City Councillor Gary Crawford was in attendance to present the award, which is presented as a partnership between the City of Toronto and Toronto Public Library.

Toronto Public Library received a partnership award from CultureLink Settlement Services at their 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gala on October 18<sup>th</sup>. Andrea Tagalakis attended the event and accepted the award on behalf of the Board. The *Sister Organization* award acknowledges the long history between the two organizations. The partnership has resulted in many benefits for newcomers, including placing settlement workers in three of the 16 branches participating in Library Settlement Partnerships (LSP). CultureLink was a founding partner in the LSP program.

**The publication *Historical Walking Tour of North York Centre: Celebrating the 25th Anniversary of North York Central Library, 1987-2012*** has been nominated in the Short Publications category of the 39th Annual Heritage Toronto Awards. The Awards recognize books, short publications, media, architectural work and volunteers who have helped maintain the city's heritage and history. The nominated book is published by the Toronto Public Library Board in partnership with North York Historical Society, North York Community Preservation Panel and Gibson House Museum.

### **Programs**

The **fall season in the Bram and Bluma Appel Salon** has been exceptionally successful so far, with five consecutive sold out events packing the Appel Salon, featuring Louise Penny, Stuart McLean, Ben Heppner, Jhumpa Lahiri and Mary Walsh. The crowds are expected to continue, with upcoming events featuring Colin Mochrie, Donna Tartt, Michael Ignatieff, Joe Clark, Freeman Patterson, Jung Chang and Chris Hadfield. The turnout should also be excellent for the November 25 Idea Jam, an event presented in partnership with the Toronto Star that asks Torontonians to come out and share their ideas for making Toronto better.

Efforts were made in 2013 to strengthen partnerships and the reach of the **TD Summer Reading Club** program. All Toronto District School Board teacher librarians received information packages, and Toronto Community Housing "Rookie League" groups provided kids with program materials and facilitated Library visits and card registrations. The TD Summer Reading Club website was redeveloped in 2013 to make it more user

friendly and attractive, with art on the site created by TD Summer Reading Club 2013 illustrator Matt James. Driven by feedback from Canadian children, the site also featured digital versions of books from the booklist, lent to the program by publishers Orca and Groundwood. Also in 2013, the Library piloted two new means of collecting information in Toronto: children's focus groups and a parent/caregiver survey, the results of which will guide the future development of the program.

**WORD OUT 2013** – the summer reading program for teens – continues to help Toronto Public Library in its efforts to grow a city of readers. The number of youth participating in the program remained steady relative to 2012, but youth engagement in the program increased significantly. There was a marked increase in the amount of time teens spent on the website, as well as a record number of comments left by participating teens. More than 20 well attended WORD OUT events were organized at branches across the city throughout the summer, featuring authors, artists and others who gave presentations relating to the nine themed booklists. Initial indications suggest that books promoted through the WORD OUT booklists saw circulation increases of as much as 30 percent on average during the summer.

Both the TD Summer Reading Club and WORD OUT are generously funded by TD through the Toronto Public Library Foundation.

Toronto Public Library continues to help people of all ages further their careers in a range of areas in both the culture and business sectors with its **expanding program of professional residencies**. The second annual Entrepreneur in Residence program was launched recently at Toronto Reference Library, as Michal Hlinka interviewed serial entrepreneur Jean Chow. Writer in Residence, city of Toronto writer and advocate Shawn Micaleff, kicked off his fall residency with a walking tour of Yonge Street and a twitter chat. And two new residencies will ultimately serve Toronto's younger residents: a partnership with the Canadian chapter of IBBY (the Switzerland-based International Board on Books for Young People) sees Toronto Public Library host its first Illustrator in Residence, children's book illustrator Martha Newbigging, who will be meeting with artists interested in pursuing a career in illustration; and, as part of the Young Voices suite of programs, a one-month pilot project will see poet Gary Barwin working online with Toronto teens to help and encourage them in their pursuit of creative writing endeavours.

### **Library services**

On Monday, October 21, the Ontario Library Association (OLA) kicked off **Ontario Public Library Week** at Cedarbrae Branch. Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport Michael Chan, MPP Mitzie Hunter, Library Board Chair Paul Ainslie, City Librarian Jane Pyper and OLA representatives spoke in honour of Ontario Public Library Week. The event finished with a tour of Cedarbrae Branch.

## **Online**

Toronto Public Library has launched an **advertising campaign to promote e-books and e-magazines**. Ads began running earlier this month on TTC subways, streetcars and outdoor shelters, as well as in Toronto *Metro* news and online at The Grid and Blog TO. There will also be posters across the city promoting e-content. The campaign will run until mid-November. The campaign addresses the fact that the public is generally unaware of the availability of e-content at Toronto Public Library. A recent survey found that only 48 percent of Library users and 24 percent of non-users are aware that the Library offers e-books. Although awareness is low, demand is high among those who are aware. Last year alone, there was a 105 percent increase in e-book usage and growth is even stronger this year. The campaign – which supports the Library's strategic plan objective of growing a city of readers by a variety of means including building awareness of the availability of e-content – aims to let as many people as possible know that e-books and e-magazines are available at [tpl.ca/ereads](http://tpl.ca/ereads).

Toronto Public Library's commitment to bringing people and ideas together for co-creation, learning and discovery, thereby furthering innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship in the city, has led to the creation of a **collaborative online site called #YourYongeStreet**. The site is crowdsourcing digital content – stories, documents, maps, photographs, audio files, and video files – of contemporary and distant history along Yonge Street, the longest street in the world. Library staff and users are being encouraged to contribute content to the #YourYongeStreet site. The goals of the project include: supporting users in creating and sharing content; expanding the digital frontier by increasing content in the Library's Digital Content from contributions; engaging Torontonians in the stories of their own city; and showcasing the Library's unique collections.

## **Media**

For the final instalment of their Four Corners series, **CBC Metro Morning broadcast live from Mimico Centennial Branch on September 27**. About 100 people were in the branch by 7:30 a.m. to hear the program. Host Matt Galloway interviewed Library settlement worker Claudia Montoya as part of this series profiling different neighbourhoods in the city.