

Chair's Report – November 21, 2011

Partnerships

Toronto Public Library and nine community partners celebrated **Library Settlement Partnership Day** on October 21 and 22, marking the third anniversary of the Library Settlement Partnerships program. A Citizenship Ceremony, four Newcomer Human Library programs, visits by citizenship judges and community information fairs paid tribute to the program, available at 19 library branches and made possible through a partnership with Citizenship & Immigration Canada.

Sun Life Financial MAP Family Saturday programs, part of the library's partnership with Toronto's museums and other culture providers, brings the Toronto Zoo, Colbourne Lodge, the Textile Museum of Canada, and others into library branches throughout November. These family programs are a fun and educational tie-in to the Sun Life Financial Museum + Arts Pass program that allows Toronto Public Library borrowers to gain access to cultural experiences they might not otherwise be able to afford.

Collections

Toronto Public Library's fifth annual **First & Best booklist** features a selection of the very best in Canadian books for children from birth to age five that are fun to read and also help build early literacy skills. The books are all available through the online catalogue and in branches. The booklist is part of the library's extensive Ready for Reading program to help parents and caregivers build early literacy skills in their children through fun, everyday activities at home and at the library.

Branches

Toronto Public Library continues to increase efficiency through **self-serve checkout technology**, with 39 branches currently outfitted with RFID self-service checkouts. In most cases, the installation of express checkout stations involves modest renovations, such as installing security gates, RFID equipment and software on existing PCs, and creating new workstations when existing circulation desks can't accommodate them. Some of the renovations are more extensive and involve retrofitting or removing old circulation desks to create more public space for housing popular collections and better flow and access to the buildings. More express checkout upgrades are planned, which will bring the technology to an expected 59 branches by the end of 2012. Work is also underway to install automated sorting systems at North York Central Library and Richview, Agincourt and Fairview branches over the next two years. Currently, Cedarbrae Branch has an automated sorting system.

Programs

The Appel Salon launched its third highly successful season this fall, and has already hosted some blockbuster events. Umberto Eco tickets were booked in a record three hours; Pulitzer Prize winner Jeffrey Eugenides also filled the Appel Salon, as did

economist Jeffrey Sachs, dancer Karen Kain, rocker Randy Bachman and anthropologist Wade Davis. Upcoming programs will feature Samantha Nutt, Peter C. Newman, writer William Gibson, and Wael Ghonim, the Egyptian Google executive who played such a critical role in the Arab Spring.

Toronto Public Library's second **Human Library** event took place on November 5, as 35 Human Books met one-on-one with library customers at four locations: Richview and Cedarbrae branches, and Toronto Reference and North York Central libraries. The Human Library is an alternate, accessible way of learning that sets up space for dialogue and interaction. Visitors to the Human Library are given the opportunity to speak informally with 'people on loan' – storytelling from someone who has a unique life experience. This year's collection of Human Books included, to name just a few: Dr. Eldon Comfort, a 98-year old World War II veteran turned peace activist; Chris Upfold, the new customer services chief at the TTC; Scott Mills, the head of social media for the Toronto Police; and a number of people who are surviving and thriving in spite of difficult health issues. Toronto Public Library's Human Books were checked out more than 150 times over the course of the afternoon. The library acknowledges the support of the Toronto Public Library Foundation for supporting the Human Library in 2011.

Young Voices, Toronto Public Library's magazine of teen writing and visual arts, was launched on October 13 and has since been distributed to library branches across the city. The magazine, which has been published since the 1960s, gives teens a chance to express themselves creatively. Two days after the launch of *Young Voices*, on Saturday, October 15, more than 140 teens gathered at North York Central Library for the **Young Voices Writers Conference**, a day-long opportunity that offers creative teens a friendly and safe place to meet with each other and to connect with young professionals who act as mentors. A third related initiative, the annual **Young Voices Writing Workshops**, will take place in February and March 2012. The library acknowledges the support of the Toronto Public Library Foundation in the printing of *Young Voices* magazine.

Online

November marks the one-year anniversary of the launch of our ***What's On at the Library* e-newsletter**. Each biweekly issue of *What's On at the Library* features a wide variety of library news, programs, collections, recommended reading and video links. The newsletter has proven to be extremely popular with library customers, with more than half of recipients opening the newsletter, and 30 percent of those going on to click through to our website. These percentages have remained steady and are well above industry standards, demonstrating the value and relevancy of the information the newsletter provides. The number of opted-in subscribers has increased by 230 percent since the program was launched – going out to more than 4,600 recipients to date – and the library is expecting further growth in subscriptions rates in 2012, as a number of engagement strategies are implemented.

The library's e-newsletter is just one part of a comprehensive online communications strategy designed to improve communications with library customers, providing relevant and targeted information in more timely and cost-effective ways.

Foundation

At the staff recognition luncheon on November 16, the Toronto Public Library Foundation announced the winners of two awards that support staff pursuing careers in public library service. The \$1,000 **Peter J. Bassnett Award for Professional Development** was presented to Brendon Foster-Algoo for demonstrating outstanding achievement in his library work and studies. The \$3,500 **Pauline Hinch Memorial Award for Staff Development** was presented to Marie Belanger who demonstrates, as Pauline Hinch did, a strong commitment to public librarianship. The late Peter J. Bassnett was a former CEO of the Scarborough Public Library who was passionate about both public libraries and librarianship, and about encouraging aspiring managers. The Pauline Hinch Memorial Award is funded through the Pauline Hinch Endowment Fund at the Toronto Public Library set up by Mr. Gordon Hinch in memory of his late wife who was a former manager at North York Central Library.

A \$1 million legacy gift from the Estate of Norman G. Hinton, will be used to enhance the library's collections and programs supporting small business development, investment knowledge, and financial literacy, including support of the Business Incubator Program, small business month programming, and other programming initiatives across the library system. A portion of the gift will be endowed to maintain enhanced financial literacy supports in perpetuity. Another portion of Mr. Hinton's Estate has been designated to the Foundation's **re:vitalize – Toronto Reference Library Campaign**. Mr. Hinton will be recognized with the naming of the "Norman G. Hinton Learning Theatre", a new learning hub opening on the third floor of the Toronto Reference Library in 2013.

The Foundation is also pleased to announce that Dr. Murray Frum and family are contributing **\$100,000 toward refurbishments at the Barbara Frum Branch** over the next four years. Dr. Frum recently joined the Foundation's Governors' Council.

The Foundation's seasonally-themed version of the Honour with Books program, **the second annual Give Joy campaign** is underway offering the public an opportunity to make donations in the name of special people in their lives for the holiday season. For a donation of \$10 or more, the donor receives a tax receipt and the Foundation sends a seasonal card acknowledging the gift to the person in whose name the donation was made. The Foundation has produced a Give Joy video that is available on the Foundation website, tplfoundation.ca

Capital projects

The Mount Dennis Branch of Toronto Public Library closed on October 29 for a \$4.3-million renovation scheduled for completion in 2013. The 11,350-square foot renovated branch will include a new main entrance with enhanced exterior and interior design. Along with accessible washrooms, a new teen zone, and a new study space, the renovated branch will include express checkout and security, a multi-use program room, a KidsStop interactive early literacy centre for kids, and more public computers.

Other

The new fine structure, which goes into effect on January 3, 2012, will be the subject of a public awareness campaign launching in November. In addition to an increase in fines, the new structure will relate fine rates to the age classification of the material (children, teen or adult) instead of basing charges on the age classification of the card holder. A special effort will be made to alert teens through special messaging and by working with school boards and other community agencies.