

Chair's Report
September 24, 2012

Partnerships, Outreach and other community initiatives

Together with the Institute for Canadian Citizenship, and Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Parkdale Branch hosted a **Canadian Citizenship Ceremony for 40 new Canadian citizens** on June 20. Always a moving event, this Citizenship ceremony was all the more special because of the roundtable discussion session prior, where new citizens came together with established citizens from the Parkdale community to discuss common experiences of immigration, settlement, citizenship and community. The conversation was lively and engaging. This enhanced format was developed by the Institute for Canadian Citizenship (ICC), founded and chaired by the Right Honourable Adrienne Clarkson and John Ralston Saul. At the community level, roundtable ceremonies are facilitated by local ICC committees across Canada. Miranda Huska, Parkdale Branch Head serves as chair of the Parkdale committee which was formed three years ago. The Canadian Citizenship ceremony itself was presided over by Judge Joyce Frustaglio. Area manager Cheryl Skrovronek provided welcoming remarks on behalf of Toronto Public Library. Councillor Gord Perks spoke on behalf of the City of Toronto. Penpa Tsering, a world-renowned Tibetan singer and performer, now living in Parkdale, provided a musical interlude. Following the ceremony, cake and refreshments were provided to everyone courtesy of Tim Horton's and the local committee.

Business Inc., the Library's business series for new entrepreneurs, is being offered again this fall in three locations: Cedarbrae, North York Central and York Woods. Since its inception in the spring of 2011, more than 100 participants have been helped to launch their businesses through nine weeks of classes in which they learn all the concepts, skills, and techniques to plan, build and operate a successful business. Sessions are conducted by staff of the Toronto Business Development Centre and by Library staff who introduce participants to business research tools and other business support available through Library branches and the website. The program is open to everyone with a valid Library card, but is targeted particularly to newcomers and young people living in low income neighbourhoods. A follow-up survey conducted six months following completion of the pilot program indicated that 63 percent had started businesses and the remaining 27 percent intended to start within three to six months. Business Inc. is delivered in partnership with the City of Toronto's Economic Development and Culture Division, and the Toronto Business Development Centre, and is generously supported by the Toronto Public Library Foundation through a gift from the estate of Norman G. Hinton.

The **Kids@Computers** team completed another successful summer in 2012. This year's team provided computer and information literacy instruction to 834 participants at 11 Toronto Public Library branches. After completing two classes and their Kids@Computers Challenge workbook, the participants receive their own computer, educational software, and Internet access for their homes. Toronto Public Library is one of the key partners in this program, which is administered by and funded through Toronto Social Services. The program aims to help families whose incomes may limit their access to electronic information resources.

Branches

The roll-out of RFID technology is moving ahead quickly in 2012. Ten branches have introduced self-service check-out so far this year, including Parkdale and Albion. By year end, it is anticipated that this popular service will be available at 60 of TPL's 98 branch locations. RFID technology is also being used to check in library materials at some of the Library's busiest branches. Four branches now have automated check-in units with built-in sorters, with another four installations planned over the coming year. Woodside Square's sorter has just been installed this month. Children are fascinated to watch the conveyor belt carry away their returns, while adults particularly like receiving a receipt that lists all of the returned items.

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Programs

WORD OUT teen summer reading and the TD Summer Reading Club wrapped up at the end of August. Detailed statistics are not yet available, but preliminary indicators show an increase in participation for both of these well-attended programs. Web stats for the redeveloped TD Summer Reading Club website show an increase in visits of nearly 450 percent over 2011 on the English site, and nearly 480 percent on the French site. Primarily an online program, WORD OUT saw increases in visits to its website in July and August of 20 and 32 percent, respectively, over 2011. WORD OUT was generously sponsored for the first time this year by TD Bank Group, as they expand their efforts to support literacy among young people in Toronto and across Canada. Once again this year, the TD Summer Reading Club program, developed by Toronto Public Library in partnership with Library and Archives Canada, was offered at library systems across Canada, in both French and English. Plans are already well underway for the 2013 edition of both WORD OUT and the TD Summer Reading Club.

The **fall season in the Bram & Bluma Appel Salon** kicked off with a timely event featuring political writer and pundit David Frum, who gave us his take on the coming American election. *Globe and Mail* writer Doug Saunders debated "The Myth of the Muslim Tide" with the *National Post*'s Jonathan Kay, and Emma Donoghue visited to talk about her new collection of short stories. On September 26, Martin Amis will headline a sold out event, and coming up later this fall are Scottish mystery writer Val McDermid, CBC Dragon Jim Trebilcot, Amanda Lang, Lloyd Robertson, and a special event with Terry Mosher (aka Aislin) and Rick Mercer.

Toronto Public Library's **third annual Human Library** will take place on October 20, 2012 at two locations, Toronto Reference Library and North York Central Library. The Human Library is much like a typical library – readers come in, sign out books, read them and return them – the difference being that, with a Human Library the books are real people willing to share their unique perspectives, cultural histories, and experiences. The idea is to introduce people to a collection of individuals who come from different walks of life and realities. The Human Book program this year includes perennial favourites such as Toronto police and war veterans, as well as entrepreneurs, culture

watchers and others. The Human Library program is generously sponsored by the Toronto Public Library Foundation.

Young Voices magazine launches on October 11 with a celebration, at North York Central Library, for this year's contributors and their families and friends. *Young Voices* gives Toronto teens an opportunity to share their creative writing and visual art. The Editorial Youth Advisory Group, a volunteer group of teens, selected about 80 pieces of work to be published from the more than 400 submissions this year.

The annual Young Voices Writers Conference, which has been fully subscribed every year since its inception a half decade ago, takes place this year on October 13. The conference runs all day at North York Central Library and offers Toronto teens an opportunity to work with professional writers at workshops, and to participate in an open mic and other fun activities. Last year, more than 140 teens participated. The 2012 Young Voices Writers Conference is generously supported by Deloitte through the Toronto Public Library Foundation.

Make Some Noise... Take Some Noise, the Library's series of concerts and workshops in support of the Library's local music collection, will include two concerts and three workshops this fall. The 2012 series kicks off with a talk on Canadian rapper Drake at Malvern Branch. Bloor/Gladstone will host a concert in the stacks and two workshops, all focusing on electronic music. And beloved Toronto singer/songwriter Bry Webb will do an intimate show in the stacks at Parkdale Branch. Make Some Noise and the local music collection are supported by Soundscapes music store and *exclaim!* magazine.

Library services

Toronto Public Library will be running a **teen fine forgiveness campaign** starting at the beginning of October and running through to the end of the year. This fall fine forgiveness campaign gives teens who have stayed away from the Library because of fines they couldn't pay a chance to return. As part of the campaign, staff are being encouraged to take every opportunity to re-introduce returning teens to all the services the Library has to offer. The campaign features a \$20 coupon available online via the Library's new teen blog at torontopubliclibrary.ca/teens.

Strategic Plan

The strategic plan consultation that ran online throughout the summer continues this month and next with a number of public consultations. Over 1,000 Torontonians have shared their thoughts by commenting on the strategic plan blog and/or by filling out the strategic plan survey available at branches across the city. Ongoing at the moment is Toronto Public Library's first ever series of Twitter chats, based on a social media strategy employed recently by the TTC and the CBC. Once all the results of the consultation have been collated, a strategic plan for 2012-2015 will be developed and shared online.

Capital Projects

The **Brentwood Branch renovation** is nearing completion, with an anticipated opening in the latter part of October. A reopening celebration will give library customers the opportunity to come and explore everything that's new and improved in their library and discover all of the building and service enhancements, including:

- expanded library from 13,615 to 17,500 square feet, an increase of almost 30 percent;
- meeting room space with kitchen facilities and quiet study spaces;
- new elevator and fully accessible washrooms;
- express check-out and returns;
- more access to technology for research, learning, working and recreation, Wi-Fi, and a new computer learning centre;
- a new urban living room, reading lounges, a new KidsStop early literacy centre, a new vibrant Teen Zone and an outdoor reading space;
- new energy efficient systems with maximized use of sunlight; expanded landscaping and additional trees.