

LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS

The Library has never worked in isolation; our strategic planning is traditionally done in consultation with the public, many of our service efforts involve community partnerships, and branch staff work hand-in-hand with daycares, schools, community agencies, parents, seniors and youth daily. Below are some recent branch initiatives undertaken with community partners.

Centennial Branch is piloting an "Employment Café" on Tuesdays from 1:30-3:30 p.m., in partnership with the Ward 10 Youth Services Network – a group of front-line youth service providers – and with St. Stephens House and Toronto Employment and Social Services. The Café will provide employment services in the community to all residents (to not only meet the needs of youth, but also their parents) on a weekly basis. The project will likely run through June, and then resume on a weekly basis in September.

Richview area staff participated in the Community Connections Employment Service Information Fair on May 29, which drew about 500 people. As a member of Community Connections, the Library helped to coordinate the event, and hosted a display of the Library's employment related resources, as well as conducting a workshop on "Researching Potential Employers," which drew 35 people.

Kipling Community Council, of which Toronto Public Library is a member, is in the process of implementing an after school program for at-risk youth at Kipling Collegiate Institute. The program will consist of a one hour study hall plus workshops on such topics as research skills, plus another hour of recreational sports. Kipling Collegiate Institute has donated classroom, library and gym space, while other community partners, such as the Library, will contribute programming staff. The pilot is expected to begin in September.

In partnership with the TAIBU Community Health Centre, Malvern Branch is hosting a series of programs to increase knowledge of holistic and integrated health issues affecting the community. TAIBU – which is a greeting in Swahili meaning "Be in Good Health" – is a new non-profit, community-based organization in Malvern, providing comprehensive primary health care, health promotion and specialized programs and services to the Black community. Building strong relationships with our community partners to enhance the lives of the Malvern residents is the focus of this partnership. These events will also give Malvern Branch an opportunity to highlight the Rita Cox Black and Caribbean Heritage Collection, a world of culture, history and literature with more than 16,000 print and audio-visual materials for adults, children and teens.

JANE'S WALK

A couple of branches were on the agenda for Jane's Walk this year. On Sunday May 3, **Gerrard/Ashdale** staff member Gail Ferguson participated, with about 200 other people, in Jane's Walk in the Greenwood/Coxwell neighbourhood. When the crowd arrived at Gerrard/Ashdale, Gail Ferguson spoke about the various structures built on the lot that the library now occupies; the changes to the original library building built and opened in 1924; the development of the multilingual collections that reflect the changing neighbourhood; which reflect yet more changes in the neighbourhood.

The Jane's Walk in the Eglinton/Oakwood neighbourhood saw 54 local residents, including Mike Colle, MPP for Eglinton/Lawrence, business owners, York BIA, and service providers participate in the 1.5 hour walking tour of the neighbourhood on May 2. The final stop on the walk was **Maria A. Shchuka Branch**, where photographs taken by community youth, under the direction of Art Starts, were mounted on the branch's front windows. Attention was called to the planter outside the library that had been decorated with tiles made by youth in a program, Settin' Stone, co-sponsored by Maria A. Shchuka Library and Art Starts.

NEW CENTRE AT TRL

The Toronto Reference Library has a new department – the **Business and Health Sciences Centre** (formerly Business Information Centre and the Consumer Health Information Service) on the third floor. The new centre merges Health Sciences with Business and, together with the transfer of the health sciences collection from the second floor Main Reference Centre, gives users the benefit of accessing all of TRL's health resources in one location. This new set-up is a result of the closure on May 8 of the Consumer Health Information Service (CHIS) as a result of the withdrawal of funding by the Ministry of Health Promotion.

PEDOMETERS

Ten new branches have joined the list of **pedometer lending libraries** in Toronto, bringing the total to 28 branches. This partnership with Public Health has seen some interesting developments, including the use of Library-loaned pedometers for a dance-a-thon at a Parkdale neighbourhood school.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Public libraries experience increased use during an economic downturn and Toronto Public Library is currently experiencing this trend. Many more people are visiting library branches to access computers, the Internet, email and word processing applications; to read newspapers and magazines, use reference books, borrow materials and to ask staff for help. First quarter results for this year reveal that, for the first time, all key performance measures experienced a simultaneous increase. This means circulation, visits, holds, information requests, in-branch use, and use of workstations are all higher

than the first quarter 2008. Circulation is up 2.1 percent, with March up significantly at 6.5 percent. Use of workstations is up 12 percent, information requests 13.8 percent, and visits 7.8 percent.

FOUNDATION

Toronto Public Library Foundation President Heather Rumball, Library Board Chair Matthew Church, along with His Worship Mayor David Miller, and Ontario Minister of Culture, the Honourable Aileen Carroll, helped announce the Foundation's \$10 million **re:vitalize - Toronto Reference Library Campaign** at a May 7 media launch at the Reference Library. At the well-attended media event, the Foundation announced that it has raised \$5.2 million in gift commitments to date including a lead gift of \$3 million from the Bluma Appel Community Trust, which will be recognized through naming of the Toronto Reference Library's new state-of-the art event space. The Bram and Bluma Appel Salon at the Toronto Reference Library will allow for a host of cultural events and programs when it opens to the public in September.

The funding raised through the Foundation's **re:vitalize** Campaign supplements the significant contributions already made by the City of Toronto (\$14 million) and the Government of Ontario (\$10 million) to fund the \$34 million renovation of the Reference Library.

Congratulations to Richard Boxer, Foundation Vice Chair and **re:vitalize** campaign cabinet member, his fellow campaign cabinet members and the Foundation team for their success in galvanizing strong community support for this important project.

PROGRAMS

Board member Adam Chaleff-Freudenthaler was among the 10,000-plus fans from around the world who attended the two-day **Toronto Comic Arts Festival** at Toronto Reference Library and enjoyed readings, presentations, signings and art installations. Besides enjoying the Festival, Adam was on hand to introduce renowned comic artist Scott McCloud. The festival featured over 200 artists from the world including Scott Pilgrim creator Bryan Lee O'Malley from Nova Scotia, Scott McCloud from the US, Emmanuel Guibert from France and Anke Feuchtenberger from Germany. The Festival generated a great deal of media and online interest, including articles in the *Toronto Star* and the *National Post*.

Thousands of people came out to celebrate the book in all its forms during the Library's first springtime **Keep Toronto Reading**. There were a great many programs for people of all ages and interests, running at branches all over the city, starting April 1 and running right to the end of the month. The second annual One Book community reads program featured a number of events, one of the highlights being a literary pub crawl, organized by the West Toronto Junction Historical Society, that drew almost 100 people. The Friends of the Library (North and South Chapters) and the TTC partnered with us again this year, to sell used books at the Yonge/Bloor and Finch subway stations in April,

allowing the Foundation to raise the profile of the Library while also raising about \$2,000. The Foundation also ran the highly successful *Adopt a Word to Create a Story* campaign, with customers paying a toonie to reveal a word from a story written for the Library by Margaret Atwood. The Foundation also announced nine winners, chosen from 234 submissions, in their **children's drawing contest to illustrate Margaret Atwood's *Persiflage in the Library*** short story. Each winner will receive a package of children's books geared to their age group. All of the winning illustrations are on the Foundation website, tplfoundation.ca.

There was a fair amount of focus on Toronto literature, as we partnered with the City for the Lit City celebration of Toronto's stories. There were a great many other partners, all helping to make KTR a great success, including our media sponsors, CBC and the *Toronto Star*. The Library's very successful partnership with the City in presenting **Lit City**, came to an end with **Doors Open**, this year themed around Literary Toronto. The Library offered programming at ten of our branches, featuring architect and author talks, as well as white glove tours of Toronto Reference Library's special collections.

Other recent program series include:

- **On Stage**, which featured three Canadian performing artists, Christopher House, Sheila McCarthy and Isabel Bayrakdarian, speaking at Toronto Reference Library;
- **Luminato at the Library**, which ran last week with a re-imagining of some favourite books for children.

We're currently in the midst of Seniors Month celebrations, with programs at branches all over the city. Our annual **GreyMatters** series this year focuses on great books; still to come in the series, talks by U of T and York professors about Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*, Homer's *The Odyssey* and Kafka's *Parables and Paradoxes*.

Next week is our annual **Aboriginal Week** celebration, with programs at Toronto Reference Library and Malvern, York Woods, Morningside and Queen/Saulter branches.

Visit torontopubliclibrary.ca and click on Programs and Events for full details about upcoming programs.

CAPITAL PROJECTS

Kennedy/Eglinton is scheduled to reopen June 25 at 12 noon. This is a particularly exciting project, because, besides the upgrades in service – free WiFi, increased Internet access, enhanced and increased space – Kennedy/Eglinton will have a ProTech Media Centre. Funding for the project has been achieved through the Partnership Opportunities Legacy (POL) Fund of the City of Toronto, with the understanding that the Library will be able to expand and enhance services to youth in the community, particularly through partnership opportunities. The Partners for the new Media Centre are Toronto Public Library, City of Toronto, Microsoft Canada, Centennial College, Toronto Community Housing Corporation and Tropicana. Shortage of appropriate youth programming spaces in this community is a serious issue, and the expansion of Kennedy/Eglinton has provided

an excellent opportunity for Toronto Public Library to partner with other agencies to address this issue.

Another exciting renovation project that is about to come to fruition is the **Bloor/Gladstone Branch**, slated to open this summer. A new glass addition will add over 9,000 square feet of space, and feature a two-storey curtain wall providing a striking street presence and view into the library. The new branch will be easier to use with complete barrier-free accessibility and express check-out. A new Le@rning Centre and 32 computers throughout the branch will increase computer access by 88 percent. Also available at the branch are: free wireless Internet access, bigger collections, reading lounges for adults, children and teens, bookable meeting and quiet study room, as well as four group study rooms. And the new Bloor/Gladstone will be a greener building, with a new environmentally friendly partial green roof, and extensive outdoor landscaping with the addition of 20 newly planted trees.

MEDIA

There has been an unprecedented amount of positive **media coverage** about Toronto Public Library over the past few months. Details are included in the board package, but some highlights include:

- a profile of City Librarian Jane Pyper in *The Star*;
- articles about the new Jane/Sheppard Branch by architecture critics Christopher Hume (*The Star*) and Lisa Rachon (*National Post*);
- Globe and Mail, CBC Radio and Television, and CTV features on the popularity and importance of libraries in tough economic times;
- plenty of Keep Toronto Reading Coverage, with ongoing plugs on the CBC and in the listing sections of *The Star*, as well as other outlets, both print and online.

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