

Chair's Report October 19, 2009

A program for newcomer high school students called **Newcomer Orientation Week (NOW)** saw a fruitful partnership with the school boards. The purpose of NOW is to orient newly arrived newcomer students to school and community. The program is a partnership between the schools, Settlement Workers in Schools, the Library, and peer leaders who are themselves former newcomers who are trained for these positions. Over a four-day period before school begins, peer leaders provide a range of information and experiences to these newly arrived students with the help of settlement workers and teachers. Toronto Public Library became involved in 2008, with NOW groups visiting branches for half-day orientations. This year there was a 43 percent increase over 2008, with 29 schools visiting 20 branches and over 1,000 participants. Nearly 400 library cards were issued, up from 340 in 2008.

Library programs for youth this fall:

- **Focus on Youth**, our annual author series that sees classes invited to the Library throughout October to meet with authors of books for teens;
- **Young Voices 2009** was launched on October 15 at North York Central Library, with a group of well over 100 guests composed of magazine contributors and their friends and families; two days later, on October 17, the annual Young Voices conference was again fully subscribed, with around 120 teens signing up for writing workshops and submitting creative work to be published in the annual Instant Anthology;
- **Make Some Noise** has expanded beyond a single concert at North York Central Library; this year, in addition to the North York concert, there will be shows in the stacks at College/Shaw and Bloor/Gladstone branches, featuring up-and-coming local indie artists like Bruce Peninsula and Katie Stelmanis.

After an appearance at Word on the Street on September 27, the five finalists for this year's **Toronto Book Awards** went on to visit Bloor/Gladstone Branch on October 7. The winner, Austin Clarke for his novel *More*, was announced by Mayor David Miller at the Toronto Book Awards gala, held in the Appel Salon on October 15.

Nuit Blanche at the Library was a huge success this year, with thousands of people attending a dance party at Toronto Reference Library that started on the evening of October 3 and ran till the next morning. Many people commented that the Library's Dance Dance Evolution was one of the best of all the Nuit Blanche events going on around town. After seeing demonstrations by professionals from dance studies around the city, participants got to try 12 types of dance from around the world, and through the decades – from Bollywood and Disco to Hip Hop and Capoeira.

Generation X author Douglas Coupland helped launch the newly opened **Bram and Bluma Appel Salon at Toronto Reference Library** on September 30, with about 350 people showing up to hear him interviewed by *Globe and Mail* feature writer Ian Brown, who will be meeting with a number of authors this fall for his six-part library literary

series, *The Writer's Room*. The audience for Coupland was young and enthusiastic, and very interested in what Coupland had to say. They asked lots of questions and the book signing went on for an hour, with Coupland stopping to chat with everybody who approached him.

Word Out! teen summer reading was also a big success. Forty branches participated in the program this year, but most of the action was online, with nearly 2,000 teens signing up and nearly 4,000 comments logged on the site. Every time a teen posted a comment to one of the discussion threads, they were entered into a contest for great prizes, including movie passes and a grand prize of an iPod Touch.

In the media in September, City Librarian Jane Pyper was interviewed by CBC Metro Morning host Andy Barrie, and also by *Toronto Star* feature writer Lynda Hurst, on the subject of the future of libraries. Both interviews were spurred by the Libraries in 2020 symposium held in Toronto at the end of September. There were also feature articles on the Appel Salon, including the *Star* feature in early October.

Federation of Ontario Public Library (FOPL) News – Items from David Allen, CEO

Provincial Funding Committee

FOPL members will recall that at the Federation's AGM in January, a motion was passed to refer the issue of per capita funding to a Provincial Funding Committee for further examination and to report back to members on the implications and findings as soon as possible. Sonia Lewis, CEO of Kitchener Public Library has assumed the role of Chair of the committee. The FOPL Board has approved terms of reference and an operating budget for the Provincial Funding Committee. Those terms include a commitment to ensure proposed funding models do not take funding away from any library, particularly those serving communities with declining populations.

Plans for Queen's Park Reception

The Federation will hold its 2nd annual reception for MPPs at Queen's Park on Wednesday, November 18, 2009 in Room 228 of the Legislative Building from 5:00 to 7:00 pm. Minister Aileen Carroll agreed to make the booking on FOPL's behalf, attend the full event and make a short speech. Like last year, the Federation's representatives at the event will include members of the Board of Directors, Advocacy Task Force and staff, plus the President of Chief Executives of Large Urban Public Libraries (CELUPL).