

**Partnerships, Outreach and other community initiatives**

**The S.P.O.T. (Success Power Opportunity Teamwork)** is a newly-opened youth-led, 3,770 square foot art and technology centre located in the Malvern community, adjacent to Toronto Public Library's Malvern Branch. The Library and the Toronto Public Library Foundation have played key roles in supporting and developing this important initiative, funded by the City's Partnerships Opportunities Legacies Fund and by the Youth Challenge Fund. The S.P.O.T. serves as a safe and positive community gateway for young people between the ages of 14 and 25, and boasts a performance space, recording studio, media lab and programming space.

Toronto Public Library participated in a CBC initiative that saw **Human Library** events happening in 15 communities across Canada. Four Human Books were available for half-hour one-on-one conversations with Library customers at Toronto Reference Library on January 26. The books were all "borrowed" multiple times, with six appointments each, and reports from both customers and Human Books were all positive and enthusiastic.

Once again in 2013, Toronto Public Library was prominent at the **Ontario Library Association Super Conference**, January 30 to February 2 at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre. A poster session shared the successes of Toronto Public Library's WORD OUT teen summer reading program. A total of ten Library staff participated in seven sessions at the conference, including Branch-tastic! Creating and Maintaining Welcoming, Beautiful Branches; Library Service to the LGBT Community; and TD Summer Reading Club Consultation. In addition, there were a number of Toronto Public Library branch tours associated with the conference.

Toronto Public Library recently hosted and partnered in presenting **Branded 2013, a conference for young entrepreneurs from Toronto's priority neighbourhoods**. Held at York Woods Branch on January 25, the conference focused on helping young and budding entrepreneurs improve their business skills through sessions and informal mentoring by young consultants from the neighbourhood and across Toronto. The conference was free of charge and aimed particularly at African Canadian youth and youth of colour who are living in priority neighbourhoods. Nearly 70 people participated and feedback was overwhelmingly positive. Other partners in the initiative included the City of Toronto, Community Empowering Enterprises, Doorsteps Neighbourhood Services, Youth Enterprise Network and Westside Arts Hub.

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**Programs**

Each year, Toronto Public Library leads a city-wide book club as part of its annual Keep Toronto Reading Festival. This year, the Library's One Book selection will be announced on February 27 at a special event featuring City Fire Chief Jim Sales and City Librarian Jane Pyper at the Yorkville Fire Station, to tie in with one of the main themes of the book. The fire department is partnering with the Library in other ways as well,

with outreach officers telling stories at Library branches in April, and two firefighters doing guest blogs on the Library website. They'll also be taking part in our video campaign, and they are the stars of an ad campaign that will run in the *Toronto Star* on March 2. The complete Keep Toronto Reading program and listing of events will be unveiled on March 14 with a KTR-wrapped bookmobile making its way around the city on that date – and on March 15 and 16 – to help get the word out.

The annual **Young Voices series of creative writing and art workshops for teens** are mainly happening during and around the March Break. This year, thanks to generous funding through the Toronto Public Library Foundation by donors the Daniels brothers, in honour of their mother Norine Rose, the number of workshops being offered has been nearly doubled, with a dozen workshops being held at Library branches and outreach locations around the city. A partnership with the City of Toronto will see Toronto poet laureate George Elliott Clarke do a two-part workshop at Maria A. Shchuka Branch. Other elements of the program expansion include increasing the scope and capacity of the annual Young Voices Writing Conference in October by moving it from North York Central Library to the Bram and Bluma Appel Salon; and a new Young Voices Web-based electronic writer-in-residence program which will see an established writer working with teen writers throughout November.

### **Foundation**

The eighth annual **Book Lover's Ball** took place on February 7 at The Fairmont Royal York. Over 500 book lovers mingled with Canada's top literary talent – including Conrad Black, Vincent Lam, Lawrence Hill, Amanda Lang, Doug Saunders, and so many more – while being treated to decadent hors d'oeuvres, a delectable three-course dinner, and a novel-inspired show. On-site fundraising initiatives this year included a Silent Auction which raised \$34,000 and Adopt a Branch, which raised \$75,000 (\$25,000 in matching gifts from TD Bank Group). Recognized as one of Toronto's Top 100 Events by Biz Bash Magazine, this black tie affair receives impressive corporate support and media coverage. The 2013 event raised over \$525,000.

Last month, the Toronto Public Library Foundation was thrilled to announce a transformational gift of \$1 million from the Bluma Appel Community Trust and the launch of a new annual lecture at Toronto Public Library dedicated to the discussion of important issues by some of the world's most thoughtful opinion-leaders. The **inaugural Bluma Lecture**, being hosted at the Bram and Bluma Appel Salon at the Toronto Reference Library on March 7, is being headlined by Pulitzer Prize winners Sheryl WuDunn and Nicholas Kristof who will speak about the oppression of women and girls in the developing world as seen through their book and documentary series *Half the Sky*. Public tickets for the lecture sold out within 24 hours.

### **Capital Projects**

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The **Mount Dennis Branch**, which closed for renovation in 2011, will reopen on March 11, featuring a more dynamic and prominent street presence and a complete redesign of the 11,350 square foot interior. The newly renovated branch will be

welcoming for everyone in the community, with improved reading space, a new *KidsStop* early literacy centre, a new teen zone, new study space, and an art lounge. The branch will also feature: express check-out; more computers and a laptop lending service; and a larger collection of books, magazines, CDs and DVDs.

### **Online**

Beginning February 13, Toronto Public Library began offering **an email-based due date reminder service** for all customers who choose to receive this notification. The rollout of this service was phased in, beginning with a beta test involving select staff. Initially, there will be limited public promotion in order to ensure good functionality of the service before uptake becomes widespread.