

Chair's Report
February 22, 2016

Visitors

Mr. Jorgen Bartholdy, Library Director of the Skanderborg Municipal Library, Denmark, was in Toronto for the Ontario Library Association Conference, where he spoke at an information session on library technology and trends. He discussed Skanderborg's experience with allowing access to libraries after regular open hours, an initiative sponsored by Convergent Technologies. Mr. Bartholdy also met with Toronto Public Library staff. His keen interest in learning about the Library's Digital Innovation Hubs led to a tour of Fort York Branch. Mr. Bartholdy was also very interested to learn about Newcomer Services at Toronto Public Library and spent a morning with Sulekha Sathi, Library Service Manager of Agincourt District and Chair of the Multicultural Services Committee. They had an informative visit and tour of Agincourt Branch, including the Library Settlement Partnership service, and discussed library services that support the successful settlement of newcomers.

On January 21, **MP Michael Levitt and his assistant Daniel Lovell toured Downsview, Centennial and Jane/Sheppard branches**, learning about the programs, services and partnerships that each of these branches offer the community. Mr. Levitt and Mr. Lovell had the opportunity to see Centennial's Library Settlement Partnership workers in action and to learn about the many programs they facilitate, including the extremely popular English Conversation Circles. They also greeted Centennial's Youth Advisory Group, which was convening for its biweekly meeting. At Downsview, they were interested in the Tool Library and the wide variety of programs the branch offers, in particular ESL, Immigration Workshops and Ready for Reading. They heard about the successful PanAm programs held at the Reading Sprouts Garden beside the Jane/Sheppard Branch, and enjoyed meeting with library customers at all three branches.

Awards

Scarborough Civic Centre Branch has won a **Merit Award at the 2015 Wood Design and Building Awards**, a North American program that recognizes excellence in wood architecture. The branch will be featured, along with the other award winners, in an upcoming issue of *Wood Design & Building* magazine. Winners, selected from over 140 entries, pushed the boundaries of what is thought of as conventional applications for wood products, reaffirming wood's versatility within structures that seek to complement their surrounding environment from a green, functional and aesthetic point of view.

The **Canadian Public Libraries for Fair Ebook Pricing** campaign, led by Toronto Public Library and Ottawa Public Library, has been selected as a finalist for the PR News Nonprofit PR Award in the "PR on a shoestring budget" category. This honour, which is awarded annually by New York-based *PR News Magazine*, celebrates the top international public relations campaigns undertaken with a limited budget and an emphasis on making every dollar count toward its goals. Other finalists for the award include the United Nations Foundation's *Girl Up* campaign, the Lymphoma Research

Foundation's *Light it Red for Lymphoma* campaign, and the *Girl Scouts Adds a 'Byte' to Its Iconic Cookie Program* campaign of the Girl Scouts of the USA. The winner of the award will be decided on March 15, 2016 in Washington D.C. at an event at the National Press Club.

Programs and exhibits

In January 2016, Toronto Public Library officially expanded Family Literacy Day – a national initiative created by ABC Life Literacy Canada to encourage families to read and engage in literacy-related activities together – into a month-long campaign called **Family Literacy Month at Toronto Public Library**. Branches were encouraged to present fun, accessible, literacy-focused programs that parents/caregivers and children of all ages could enjoy together. Friends of Toronto Public Library, South Chapter donated \$6,000 to fund programs, supplies and prizes, with a portion of the funding going to run two Sunday programs. A Family Literacy webpage featured links to branch programs, a special reading list (which was also available in branches), and links to the Growing a Reader Blog. A family literacy bingo contest, Twitter posts sharing fun family literacy activities, and a well-attended program at Fairview Branch featuring the 2016 Honorary Family Literacy Day Chairperson, author/illustrator Barbara Reid, were all part of the fun-filled month.

tpl.ca/familyliteracy

Toronto Public Library is holding a number of programs throughout March in celebration of **International Women's Day** (March 8), including a visit by Ontario's first female premier, Kathleen Wynne, in conversation with Toronto Star managing editor Jane Davenport. Premier Wynne will talk about women in governance, a new era at Queen's Park and inspiring young women to become future leaders.

tpl.ca/iwd

Toronto Public Library is celebrating **Black History Month** in February. The kickoff gala on January 29 was hosted by CTV's Marci Ien and featured a spectrum of great performances that included music, dance and spoken word. Other notable events among the nearly 90 programs include Man Booker Prize winner Marlon James in conversation with TIFF artistic director Cameron Bailey, and authors Craig Shreve and Pamela Mordecai, both participating in eh List programs. Other notable appearances include Toronto's former Poet Laureate George Elliot Clarke, Pamela Mordecai, Craig Shreve and a special event with Lawrence Hill on *Café Babanussa* written by his sister, the late Karen Hill.

tpl.ca/blackhistory

It's early in the year, but the **2016 eh List lineup** is already proving to be popular, with over 230 guests converging on Toronto Reference Library for an encore presentation by Giller Prize-winning author Andre Alexis, who was also part of the fall 2015 eh List series. The launch of the spring eh List season opens on International Women's Day with political activist and author Monia Mazigh. Other authors appearing in the series in 2016 include Craig Davidson, Kathleen Winter, Lisa Moore, Edward Riche, Diane Schoemperlane and Michael Crummey. Last fall's eh List series was a resounding

success, with a fantastic lineup of award-winning Canadian authors, including Camilla Gibb, Nino Ricci, Will Ferguson, Rosemary Sullivan, Ian Brown, and curling champion Colleen Jones. Lunch time talks at City Hall Branch proved to be particularly successful, with more than 100 guests for cartoonist Lynn Johnston and close to 100 for journalist Kevin Donovan.

tpl.ca/ehlist

Toronto Public Library offers personal finance programs and resources year round, but during **Personal Finance Month** in February, the Library highlights its offerings to help Torontonians take control of their finances with the latest books, the newest tips and the most comprehensive databases. Customers are invited to attend one or more free events during February – and all year round. Whether buying a new home, planning for retirement, writing a will, or protecting against fraud, customers can learn how to make the most of their money for free at the Library.

tpl.ca/personalfinance

Prepared by Toronto Public Library staff.