

**City Librarian's Report**  
**Monday, October 24, 2016**

**Advancing Our Digital Platforms**

Toronto Public Library (TPL) is pleased to announce the launch of its **new Ready for Reading website** for parents and caregivers of children five and under. The new website, developed with extensive user testing and input, connects parents and caregivers with TPL's carefully chosen collections for young children, storytime programs, easy everyday activities, hands-on learning and reading spaces in branches, and expert staff assistance at library branches across the city. In addition to browsing picture books by family-friendly topics, the site highlights ebooks and other content formats available for young children. Helpful tips and early literacy research and background information is available to assist parents in helping their children develop pre-reading skills in fun and engaging ways. The new website is well-positioned to become a compelling individual and family-friendly destination that complements the branch experience. Comprehensive promotion of the new website is ongoing. Watch for details!

**[kids.tpl.ca/ready-for-reading](http://kids.tpl.ca/ready-for-reading)**

In support of the Library's strategic goals of advancing our digital platforms and breaking down barriers to access, the TPL website now offers **increased access to multilingual collections**. Customers can search and place holds for materials directly from the New to Canada portal by selecting the multilingual language collection from the Materials in Your Language section. The new feature is mobile-friendly, making it easy for customers to place online holds on books, movies, music, and digital content in over 40 different languages, and have their materials arrive at their preferred location for pickup.

**Breaking Down Barriers to Access, Driving Inclusion**

TPL is currently piloting an **embedded librarianship** program, an exciting concept that moves librarians out of the traditional library setting and into a new framework for providing library service. For the duration of the pilot, TPL has established embedded librarians at the Toronto South and Toronto East Detention Centres, Elizabeth Fry Society, Toronto Employment and Social Services and The Spot – Jane Finch Community Family Centre. An embedded librarian becomes a key member of a specific community, building strong relationships and delivering proactive results. The intent is for the embedded librarian to learn about and understand distinct information needs and respond by providing the best possible mix of library services and programs. Running to the end of 2016, the pilot is part of a key TPL strategic initiative that responds to changes in the way information is accessed and to the overall market for library service.

TPL was invited to participate in a Stephen Lewis Foundation Roundtable Discussion on **developing library services and engaging community outreach to marginalized communities** in five countries in Africa. Held at the end of September, the roundtable was an opportunity to connect and share best practices for library service with librarians and Non-Government Organization (NGO) staff from community-based organizations working in five countries across Africa. The majority of participants work at the

frontlines of their communities through libraries, built through funding by the Blue Lupin Foundation, a private family foundation, in Uganda, Zimbabwe, Ethiopia, Botswana and South Africa. In concert with presentations by Plan Canada, and School Box, TPL offered a presentation on the range of its services, resources, programs and collections that respond to and reflect the needs and interests of diverse customers and communities. TPL's *Ready for Reading* booklets, distributed to the participants, were very well received and appreciated. The group also enjoyed a tour of Parliament and St. James Town branches.

### **Expanding Access to Technology and Training**

This fall, TPL is offering budding and established virtual reality content creators the opportunity to learn from writer, producer, director and virtual reality filmmaker Elli Raynai. On until December 10, the Innovator in Residence program at Scarborough Civic Centre Branch will see Raynai leading workshops, lectures, and other programs about virtual reality. Raynai will also take bookings for one-hour appointments to provide feedback, guidance and technical help to those interested in developing their own virtual reality content. The Innovator in Residence program is made possible by a Community Grant from Google Canada.

**[tpl.ca/iir](http://tpl.ca/iir)**

### **Establishing TPL as Toronto's Centre for Continuous and Self-Directed Learning**

**Small Business Month**, in October, provides an opportunity for customers to sample some of the programs and services that the Library offers throughout the year to people who want to start or grow their small businesses. Business Inc., a successful program offered annually in partnership with the City of Toronto and the Toronto Business Development Centre, is currently underway. The Library's 2016 Entrepreneur in Residence, Sima Gandhi, will be meeting with budding entrepreneurs and running programs throughout the fall. Gandhi has a varied background in private sector startups, spanning several industries, including manufacturing, education and construction.

**[tpl.ca/smallbusiness](http://tpl.ca/smallbusiness)**

On September 21, Sanderson Branch and Sanderson Youth HUB hosted the Canadian launch of the comic book *Guardians of the Galaxy: Rocket's Powerful Plan*, the latest venture for Visa and Marvel Comics, who team up to provide **financial literacy education to pre-teens and youth**. Surprise guest DeMarre Carroll from the Toronto Raptors spoke to about 60 teens and children about saving their money and focusing their efforts at school. He told the youth about his first experience with a credit card to show them that financial knowledge is an asset for everyone. The audience responded to his questions and eagerly waited to have their picture taken with the Raptor. The comic, published in 16 languages, is available at all TPL branches.

### **Creating Community Connections through Cultural Experiences**

A series of short stories that highlight what the Library means to our users, staff and communities, dubbed **TPL Stories**, launched the last week of September with the story of Ani, who came to Toronto from Guadalajara and landed a job as a designer after learning to

use Adobe Illustrator through Lynda.com, a series of video tutorials that is available for free at the Library. Other TPL Stories feature a newcomer who is studying for his medical accreditation exams with the help of a wifi hotspot from the Library, and sisters who are part of the teen writers group at Brentwood Branch. The stories, which appear once a week, are featured on the Library's Facebook and Instagram pages.

The International Festival of Authors partnered with the Library this year to present **Book Bash: Canadian Children's Literature Festival** at Harbourfront Centre on October 22. The free, fun-filled afternoon featured a variety of activities and programs with Canadian children's authors, illustrators and entertainers. Funding for the festival was made possible by the Muller Scholastic Endowment Fund for Canadian Children's Literature at the Toronto Public Library Foundation. Featured guests included some of Canada's most renowned children's authors, illustrators, storytellers and musicians, including Elise Gravel, Rukhsana Khan, Thao Lam, Kenneth Oppel, as well as original music by a school-aged band of kids called Kingdom of Birds.

**[tpl.ca/bookbash](http://tpl.ca/bookbash)**

Heroes and villains took over the Bloor/Gladstone Branch on October 15 for an action-packed party in the stacks. **Hush Hush**, an annual extravaganza hosted by New Collection, a young patrons membership group of the Toronto Public Library Foundation, featured refreshments, a virtual reality experience, a tattoo parlour, a Toronto Life photo booth, and one of Toronto's hottest female DJs. This all-out, graphic novel party supports programs at Toronto Public Library like the Young Voices program.

**[tpl.ca/foundation](http://tpl.ca/foundation)**

On September 30 and October 1, TPL partnered with Culture Days and the Neighbourhood Arts Network to offer more than 40 free programs at branches across the city. Culture Days increases Canadians' awareness, accessibility, participation and engagement in the arts and cultural life of their communities. Since its inception in 2009, 10 million Canadians have participated in 40,000 Culture Days activities and events in 900 cities and towns across the country.

**[tpl.ca/culturedays](http://tpl.ca/culturedays)**

The 26th annual **Word on the Street**, held for the second year at Harbourfront Centre, featured three TPL booths. Library staff greeted festival attendees, registered them for library cards, promoted programs and services, did live virtual reality and 3D printing demos, and gave away TPL bags. Half-hour storytelling sessions were popular in the children's tent, and the bookmobile did a brisk business.