

Advancing Our Digital Platforms

Early in November, Toronto Public Library (TPL) reached a **milestone in its initiative to digitize the Library's special collections**. What began in 1997 as a pilot project to make the Library's collection of Toronto City Directories available online has blossomed into a vast resource featuring more than 100,000 unique books, works of art, photographs, ephemera, maps and manuscripts from the Library's special collections, all now available online through our Digital Archives.

tpl.ca/digitalarchive

The earliest record of a Chinese community in Toronto can be traced back to Sam Ching, who arrived here in 1878 and opened a laundry business on Adelaide Street. Since then, the Chinese Canadian community in Toronto has grown to over 300,000 people of Chinese heritage. On November 29, the Library celebrated this valued community with a public launch of the **Chinese Canadian Archive**, held in the atrium of the Toronto Reference Library, and featuring Canadian author Judy Fong-Bates. The Chinese Canadian Archive is a new TPL initiative that aims to collect and preserve the documents, photographs and memorabilia that reflect the rich heritage of the Chinese Canadian community in Toronto. The archive will be housed in the Marilyn & Charles Baillie Special Collection Centre on the 5th floor of the Toronto Reference Library.

On November 5, TPL held a **consultation to get input from teens** on our online resources and social media. Seventeen teens created user profiles and empathy maps to help tell their generation's library story. The teen user profiles all had very busy, even stressful lives, with competing interests on home, school and personal relationship fronts. Consultation participants described the library as "awesome," "welcoming," "necessary," "dope," and "fun." A majority of the teens said they use the TPL website at least sometimes, and 75 percent have attended library programs. Youth services staff are reviewing the consultation results as they develop a cohesive and relevant approach to digital services for youth customers.

The inaugural meeting of Toronto Public Library's **Innovation Council** was held on November 24. Council members present included Eric Boyd (Toronto Mini Maker Faire, HackLab), Ramtin Attar (Autodesk), Bianca Wylie (Open Data Institute), Sarah Goodman (Film Director and TV writer), Zahra Ebrahim (Doblin), and Jeremy Bailey (New Media Artist, Freshbooks) with regrets from Pamela Robinson (Urban Planning, Ryerson University). Vickery Bowles welcomed the group and Pam Ryan, Heather Mathis, and Alex Carruthers introduced the Council to TPL's strategic priorities and current digital innovation initiatives. The Council provided feedback on an early draft of the Digital Innovation Spaces vision, suggesting strategies for meaningful community consultation and engagement, and identifying key qualities of digital innovation spaces in which to invest. The Council will continue to meet quarterly.

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

On November 9, community organizations including the TPL, along with The Learning Partnership and the Minister for Education, MPP Mitzie Hunter, launched the **Men Raising the Next Generation** initiative. Funded by the Ontario Trillium Foundation, this one-year program is designed to raise the level of engagement among men in their children's education in two neighbourhood priority areas in Scarborough. By providing expert information through a series of workshops, men are given the opportunity to enhance their skills as parents and caregivers within a supportive group of other males from their community. Cedarbrae Branch staff assisted in developing content for the workshops, specifically in the areas on reading and homework help. Male participants are also given a copy of the *Let's Get Ready for Reading* guide to supplement the workshop information.

Over 150 volunteer tutors gathered at North York Central Library on November 5 for the seventh annual **TPL Tutor Conference**. Volunteers from the Adult Literacy, Leading to Reading, and Youth Hubs programs came together to network, develop their skills and learn from each other. The conference featured workshops on mentoring and leadership, as well as program-specific workshops on spelling instruction, managing difficult behaviours and engaging teens with new technologies.

Creating Community Connections through Cultural Experiences

Expanding on ABC Life Literacy Canada's Family Literacy Day, held annually on January 27, TPL will once again host **Family Literacy Month**. Library branches across the city will present fun programs in January to inspire families to read and engage in literacy-related activities together. Programs include book "tastings", puppet shows, storytelling, game nights and Kamishibai storytimes. A Family Literacy Month booklist will be available in branches and online, and a TPL-wide bingo contest will engage families in completing a set of reading challenges for the chance to win books and games. Thanks to the Friends of Toronto Public Library, South Chapter, for their generous support.

Princesses, fairies, giants and beasts are all part of the enchanting exhibit of best-loved folk and fairy tales now on display in the TD Gallery at Toronto Reference Library. **Once Upon a Time** explores classic fairy tales and traditional stories from around the world through a surprising array of books, toys, games and art held at the Library's Osborne Collection of Early Children's Books.

tpl.ca/tdgallery

Remembrance Week is a time to reflect on the men and women who fought for Canada and won the freedoms we enjoy today. Annually, throughout the month of November, the Library remembers the triumphs and sacrifices of war, through programs, exhibits and displays at our branches around the city. On November 8, in partnership with Canadian Geographic Education, Toronto Reference Library hosted students for a tour of a giant floor map of Vimy Ridge, commemorating Canada's involvement in the Battle of Vimy Ridge, which took place nearly 100 years ago, on April 9, 1917. On November 9, R.H.

Thomson and Peter Keleghan recalled the lives of two WW1 soldiers through music and dramatic readings in the Bram & Bluma Appel Salon. At Yorkville Branch on November 10, Go Ahead Tours, in partnership with The Vimy Ridge Foundation, took customers on a virtual tour of the Vimy Memorial, which stands as a tribute to the 10,000 soldiers who were killed or wounded in the Battle of Vimy Ridge. And the World Remembers Project, a global commemoration of those who lost their lives in WWI, was on display on the Cube screen at the Toronto Reference Library nightly from October 20 to November 11.

On November 30, TPL announced the titles on the **2017 First & Best booklist**, an annual list made up of the ten best Canadian books to help kids get ready for reading, as chosen by the our expert children's staff. First & Best is part of our Ready for Reading suite of programs, services and resources.

tpl.ca/firstandbest

The Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery, in partnership with TPL, is bringing contemporary art experiences to five library branches across the city this fall and into the winter of 2017. Children and their families explore, create and take home unique art that is related to exhibits currently on display at The Power Plant. A recent program at Thorncliffe was extremely well attended, with 40 children participating on a Saturday in November.