

City Librarian's Report
November 21, 2016

Expanding Access to Technology and Training

The fourth round of Toronto Public Library's (TPL) **Staff Innovation Program** launched in October. All staff were invited to submit proposals that merge innovation and technology. Successful submissions will gain access to the technology resources and expertise needed to help the ideas grow into something bigger. Special consideration is being given to proposals that address one of the three research themes from the 2016-2019 Strategic Plan consultations: Income Inequality and Poverty Reduction; Middle Childhood; and Youth. The Staff Innovation Program is meant to stimulate staff to combine imagination, technology and a willingness to experiment in an effort to develop innovations that have a positive impact on service, engage a new community or partner, improve staff efficiencies and/or enhance user services.

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

Launched at the end of September, **Gale Courses** is a new eLearning resource that offers unlimited access to instructor-led online courses on a variety of topics. Courses run for six weeks with two new lessons released every week. New sessions start every month. A Getting Started page is available on the Library website to help customers. A valid TPL card is required along with the creation of a personal account at Gale Courses. Topics of courses include accounting, finance, business and management, computer applications, web design, technology skills, personal enrichment, health and wellness, and writing. tpl.ca/databases

Creating Community Connections through Cultural Experiences

In a tradition that started last year with Kansas City Public Library, Toronto Public Library staff put together cheeky **social media posts in support of the Toronto Blue Jays** in postseason. The posts, written as poetry using book spines, are used to taunt the public libraries in the opposing cities. This year, Toronto Public Library faced off against Arlington and Cleveland public libraries. The posts were well received by the public and generated lots of engagement and media coverage – reaching both new and existing audiences. Canadian public libraries like Oshawa Public Library chimed in with their own book spine messages, and elementary school students showed their support by putting together several messages as part of a class activity. Toronto Public Library staff were invited to reveal their selected titles on Breakfast Television for the opening game in the Toronto vs. Cleveland series. The exercise was fun for staff and was a great opportunity for the Library to contribute to the city's excitement.

On November 11, Chris Hadfield gave a presentation as part of the autumn 2016 Bram & Bluma Appel Salon. The talk, entitled How to Think Like an Astronaut, was broadcast via our telepresence technology, in partnership with Cisco, to four TPL locations (Cedarbrae, S. Walter Stewart, Richview, and York Woods) and to Deer Lake First Nation, in Northern Ontario. In each offsite location, kids 9-12 were invited to create a project that addressed

some problem in space and then later were given the chance to interact remotely with Chris to present the solution to their selected problem. The telepresence technology and the Chris Hadfield special event were made possible by the generous contributions of two important partners to the Library: The Bluma Appel Community Trust donated \$400,000 to fund the technology and the program, and Cisco Canada contributed additional equipment, expertise, and technical and strategic support. Thanks to both, for helping the Library transform our services to better serve Torontonians in the digital age.

Supported by the Krembil Foundation, **The Cutting Edge series** explores new ideas at the intersection of health and technology. The 2016 featured lecture was presented by Pulitzer Prize winner Siddhartha Mukherjee on October 17 at the Bram & Bluma Appel Salon. Mukherjee's recent book, *The Gene*, weaves together science, social history and personal narrative to explain one of the most important conceptual breakthroughs of modern times. Dr. Mukherjee's sold out appearance was simulcast to the Toronto Reference Library atrium and live streamed online. Other programs in the 2016 series include Music Medicine: A New Frontier, and Pushing the Boundaries of Alzheimer Treatment. In addition to the Cutting Edge series, the Krembil Foundation funds enhancements to the Library's medical collection, as well as training for library staff.

tpl.ca/cuttingedge

In October, TPL launched a pilot project that extends the **Sun Life Financial Museum + Arts Pass (MAP) program**, making it available to University of Toronto and Ryerson students at their campus libraries. The pass can then be checked out at one of five participating TPL branches, giving the student free access to the AGO, the Bata Shoe Museum, the Textile Museum of Canada and one of eight participating City of Toronto Historic Sites. The goals of the pilot are to encourage student awareness and use of TPL branches, to promote TPL library card registration, to expand the MAP program's accessibility, and to encourage students to make use of the regular MAP program. The pilot will end in the spring of 2017, at which point an evaluation will take place. The regular MAP program allows individuals and families to explore the best of Toronto's arts and cultural treasures by providing free access to 17 participating venues.

tpl.ca/mappass

In partnership with Myseum of Toronto, Toronto Public Library presents **Cosmopolis Toronto: The World in One City – a photography exhibition** that explores the journeys of newcomers to Canada. This series, by photographer Colin Boyd Shafer, captures the stories of someone born in every country of the world who now calls Toronto home. Through photography exhibits and programs, Cosmopolis Toronto: The World in One City will be displayed at select branches across the city. Themes that emerge revolve around the power of family, faith, food, music and the things that remind us of the past, as well as the places that feel like home.

tpl.ca/cosmopolis

October is Canadian Library Month, and this year, **Ontario Public Library Week** was kicked off at Fort York Branch on Oct 17. Todd Kyle, president of the Ontario Library Association, spoke about the valuable role libraries play in Canadians' lives and launched a

fun #bookspinepoetry contest open to the public. City Librarian Vickery Bowles introduced the theme of this year's Ontario Public Library Week, "A visit will get you thinking," and spoke about the transformation libraries are undergoing and the new ways they are connecting with their users. Kevin Finnerty, Assistant Deputy Minister at the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport, presented the Public Library Awards Shortlist, which included Toronto Public Library's Pan Am Host City Project. Attendees toured Fort York Branch, including a visit to the popular digital innovation hub.

Transforming for 21st Century Service Excellence

The **TPL Foundation** was pleased to announce a number of fundraising successes this fall. Sixty thousand dollars was raised through the generous support of patrons of the fourth annual *Hush Hush* fundraiser on October 15 at the Bloor/Gladstone Branch. A portion of the proceeds will go toward Young Voices, a suite of programs that encourages creative expression in Toronto's youth. The Foundation also raised \$9,500 through supporters running or walking in the Scotiabank Charity Challenge; one participant in the Challenge trained by running to all 100 TPL branches! The Foundation is also happy to announce that TD Bank has generously renewed its support of Black History Month Celebrations and Indigenous Celebrations with a combined donation of \$44,000.