

Chair's Report
April 30, 2012

Branches

All Toronto Public Library branches opened and services resumed on Friday, March 30 following an 11-day labour disruption. Customers and staff were all very happy to have branches open and programs and services running again. Staff were welcomed back by customers with everything from home baked goodies to cards and letters to verbal thanks. Here are a few comments that came through on TPL's Facebook page when we announced we were reopening:

- “Yeah, I've missed you all. The library is like my second home! :)”
- “Wonderful news! You folks do a great service to the city. Thanks for all you do.”
- “hurrah!! i miss my libraries. I'm a library junkie!”
- “Great news! We've missed you all.”

Resumption of service went very smoothly, and special provisions were put in place so customers did not have to pay late fees during the labour disruption and had two weeks to return their materials and pick up holds. This was very much appreciated by customers.

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Collections

In mid 2013, North York Central Library's Children's Department will welcome the **IBBY collection of outstanding books for young people with disabilities**. The International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY) is a non-profit organization that represents an international network of people from all over the world who are committed to bringing books and children together. Toronto Public Library was selected by the IBBY Executive Committee from a range of international applicants as the new home of the IBBY Documentation Centre of Books for Young People with Disabilities. The 4,000-book collection, established by IBBY in 1985, has been housed in Norway since its inception, and represents the best titles published worldwide for children and teens with special needs. Formats include books with sign language illustrations, BLISS symbols, PCS pictograms, Braille or tactile illustrations and cloth books. Every two years IBBY invites its members in 72 countries to submit recently published books, then selects the 50 best books currently available that give young people with disabilities access to books and the opportunity to enjoy them. Each new selection is first exhibited by IBBY at the Bologna International Children's Book Fair and subsequently shown around the world as an IBBY travelling exhibition. Toronto children and teens with disabilities and their families, as well as the educators, librarians and helping organizations who serve them, will benefit from the ready availability of this collection of outstanding books.

The Government of Canada has announced that it will phase out all of its print publications in the next two years. This culminates a trend that has been evident for a number of years with the government producing fewer print materials each year. This means that TPL will no longer provide print copies to its users as it has in the past, but as with other electronic and digital content, we will provide access to this important content

from the Library's website and through our public access computers. This will increase access for many users as they will now be able to make use of the publications from their homes, rather than having to visit government or library buildings to view and utilize the publications. However, for those residents without internet or computer access, or those wishing to use these resources in the library environment, the government's transition to digital publishing also underscores the increasing importance of free and open access to technology in libraries so that all residents can have equal opportunity to the information and resources that enable them to participate in the civic, economic and cultural life of their city and their country.

Programs

The seventh annual **Keep Toronto Reading Festival** has just wrapped up. There were 100 events at 51 branches (the biggest city-wide celebration we've had to date), and audiences of all ages enjoyed a wide range of programs and events that celebrated books, including author readings, panel discussions, workshops and walking tours. This year's One Book, *Girls Fall Down*, by Maggie Helwig, was much discussed at events, online, and in a special weeklong campaign on TTC video screens. And the annual BookBash Festival, celebrating the best in Canadian children's literature, was a great success as well.

Senator Vivien Poy, founder of Asian Heritage Month in Canada, will give the keynote address at North York Central's feature event on May 10, marking ten years of our **celebration of Asian Heritage at Toronto Public Library**. Eight pan-Asian Homelands Festivals in Library branches all over town will feature heritage and cultural expressions from East Asia, West Asia, South Asia and China. A new addition to the Library's Asian Heritage Month celebrations is an Asian Heritage Film Festival, made possible through a partnership with the National Film Board of Canada. Once again, we acknowledge the financial assistance of the Toronto Public Library Foundation in securing RBC Foundation funding to support our month-long Asian Heritage celebrations.