

August 2, 2016

The Honourable Eleanor McMahon
Minister, Tourism, Culture and Sport
9th Floor, Hearst Block
900 Bay Street
Toronto, Ontario M7A 2E1

Dear Minister McMahon:

On behalf of the staff and Board of the Toronto Public Library, please accept our congratulations on your appointment as Minister, Tourism, Culture and Sport. We look forward to working with you on advancing public libraries in the future.

By way of introduction, Toronto Public Library is the world's largest urban public library system. The important role of public libraries cannot be underestimated. The Toronto Public Library:

- fosters literacy and a love of reading as a first priority;
- supports lifelong learning as fundamental to economic prosperity, social cohesion and civic engagement;
- positions Torontonians to succeed in a global knowledge economy by connecting and enabling innovators, entrepreneurs and creators;
- promotes and provides pathways to culture through collections, partnerships, programming and spaces; and
- provides responsive services and promotes a shared sense of ownership and responsibility for the efficient use of public funds and resources with staff, service partners and the public through effective stewardship and a culture of continuous improvement.

The year 2015 was a landmark year for Toronto Public Library. The Library opened its 100th branch, Scarborough Civic Centre, and had its busiest year of the last ten years with more than 18 million people visiting the Library. The results in 2015 reflect the Library's strategic focus on digital and technology-based services, as well as literary and information-based programs for all ages. In addition, Toronto Public Library was the world leader in electronic content usage with circulation of 4.4 million items in 2015.

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The year 2016 is the first of the Library's new four-year strategic plan *Expanding Access, Increasing Opportunity, Building Connections*. The new strategic plan is a critical strategy in delivering library services that reflect the changing needs of Toronto residents. Successful implementation of the plan will transform service delivery, build support and usage, and achieve the vision of making Toronto's residents and communities more connected and more successful.

In the area of e-content, Toronto Public Library has taken a leadership role in raising awareness of the significant challenges libraries face with restrictive pricing models and high prices for digital content by some of the multinational publishers. Information regarding Canadian Public Libraries for Fair Ebook Pricing can be found at www.fairpricingforlibraries.org. At the same time, the news last fall of the loss of provincial funding for e-resources was particularly disheartening given the challenges libraries face to purchase these resources due to the high prices charged for this content and the low Canadian dollar. On behalf of the Board, I encourage you to work with your cabinet colleagues to develop inter-ministerial solutions that will restore the lost funding. I would welcome an opportunity to meet with you to discuss these issues in greater detail.

The Toronto Public Library Board is pleased to count the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport as one of our partners. The Government of Ontario's demonstrated recognition of the value of libraries is appreciated, and your continued financial support is crucial in ensuring that the vital role of libraries grows and strengthens.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ron Carinci".

Ron Carinci
Chair, Toronto Public Library Board

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