

Chair's Report February 17, 2015

Children's

A new language, Persian, has been added to the **Dial-a-Story service**. The Library's Multicultural Services Committee recommended adding Persian, largely because it is listed as one of the top ten home languages spoken in Toronto, based on 2011 census information. Dial-a-Story is a free, multilingual telephone story-telling service offered by the Toronto Public Library for children. Dial-a-Story started in North York in 1989 and has expanded over the years, with stories now available in 16 languages, including English, French, Gujarati, Italian, Mandarin, Polish, Portuguese, Somali, Spanish, Tamil, Cantonese, Korean, Russian, Tagalog and Urdu. The addition of Persian stories will provide many new customers with the opportunity to listen to and enjoy wonderful stories.

torontopubliclibrary.ca/dial-a-story

St. Michael's Hospital and Toronto Public Library launched one of the first **Reach Out and Read** programs in Canada, and the first connected with a Canadian hospital, on Family Literacy Day (January 27). Reach Out and Read is a three-part literacy promotion program developed by pediatricians and early childhood learners in Boston, with a special emphasis on low-income families. During regular well-child checkups for children ages six months to five years, Reach Out and Read physicians and nurse practitioners talk to parents about the importance of reading aloud to their children. They give each child a developmentally appropriate book and they maintain a well-stocked library in their waiting rooms. In addition, at their first visit, families will be given a **Ready for Reading** kit from the Toronto Public Library so that they can bring early literacy tools and resources into their homes to create a literacy-rich environment.

Beginning in January 2015, each district branch will hold a weekly **After-School Club for children aged nine to 12** throughout the school year. After-School Clubs are themed-based programs (with activities like LEGO or drama) that foster a love of reading and give children opportunities to create, discover and learn. This program is part of Toronto Public Library's Middle Childhood set of services.

torontopubliclibrary.ca/middlechildhood

Programs and exhibits

Freedom City: Uncovering Toronto's Black History, a new exhibition in the TD Gallery at Toronto Reference Library, celebrates the early black citizens of Toronto, through original paintings, drawings, photographs, manuscripts and broadsides. On until March 29 and generously sponsored by TD Bank, Freedom City covers the history of black Toronto from the days of early settlement to the end of the 19th century. The exhibit, enhanced by the research and contributions of prominent Canadian historians Karolyn Smardz Frost and Afua Cooper, is part of the larger series of Black History Month programs and events held at library branches throughout the city.

torontopubliclibrary.ca/blackhistory

The *Freedom City* exhibition kicks off the **2015 TD Gallery Season** at the Toronto Reference Library. For the first time, the Library will be launching a branded marketing campaign this spring to raise awareness of the Gallery and the great line-up of exhibitions this year. The campaign has been made possible by TD Bank, TD Gallery Season sponsor for 2015. The campaign will include a new TD Gallery brand expression; and a season brochure distributed to more than 250,000 Torontonians via insertions in the *Toronto Star* and *Globe and Mail* newspapers, and social and earned media outreach.

torontopubliclibrary.ca/tdgallery

Emerging Voices, a free creative writing conference at the Bram & Bluma Appel Salon on February 7, gave young writers a chance to meet and interact with a variety of professionals, students and other young writers, and to celebrate the diversity of Toronto's writing community. Hosted by University of Toronto Scarborough Students of English Literature & Film (SELF), in partnership with the Toronto Public Library, the all-day conference was geared to youth in the 17 to 24 year-old age range, and introduced students to a range of experts from a variety of backgrounds and genres, including George Elliott Clarke, J. Torres, Faranza Doctor and more.

Collections

North York Central Library's Canadiana department has received a large and valuable **donation of materials relating to the history of North York** from the North York Historical Society. The Library and the historical society share a mutual interest in preserving and making available local history resources and will continue to work together to enhance availability of these materials, which consist of books, photographs, memoirs and local histories, maps, posters and other ephemera.

Staff training, enrichment and other enhancement opportunities

As always, Toronto Public Library staff and spaces featured prominently at the annual **Ontario Library Association Super Conference**, held this year at the end of January. A tour of branches, hosted by director of branches Anne Bailey and manager Susan Martin, featured the recently renovated Don Mills Branch, as well as a sneak peak at the soon-to-open 100th branch at the Scarborough Civic Centre. And this year, in a partnership with Centennial College, the tour included a stop at Centennial's Ashtonbee Campus Library, which opened a year ago. Presentations/panels featuring Toronto Public Library staff this year included sessions on: makerspaces; 2014 "Best Bets" lists of Canadian literature for children and teens; the public library as civic educator; rebranding the TD Summer Reading Club; digital project management; fanfiction at the public library; strategies for strengthening public library workforces; tactile and textile books; innovation and experiment in program development; the library as place.

Over 70 Toronto Public Library children's services staff members attended the **Inclusive Library Services for Children with Special Needs training** in January. Irwin Elman, Ontario provincial advocate for children and youth, spoke about the "I Have Something

to Say,” project. Hands-on interactive workshops for staff were conducted by the Director of Brooklyn Public Library’s The Child’s Place for Children, with the help of special needs staff from the Macaulay Child Development Centre, the Learning Disabilities Association of Toronto, the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB), and the Centre for Equitable Library Access (CELA). Library staff, including the International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY) Collection librarian and the accessible services librarian, also shared valuable information and resources about providing inclusive library services.

Awards

For the second consecutive year, Toronto Public Library has won the **Ontario Library Association’s Minister’s Award for Innovation**. At a gala dinner on January 29, the library was presented with the award in recognition of Toronto in Literature: Map of Book Lists by Neighbourhood, the first-of-its-kind list of books plotted visually on an online map of Toronto neighbourhoods. Developed by library staff, the map has a far-reaching impact as it makes the vast and varied literary experiences in Toronto’s diverse communities instantly accessible to a world of readers online, around the clock and around the globe. The Honourable Michael Coteau, Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport, was in attendance and spoke highly of the important role public libraries play in cities and communities across the province.

Foundation

The 10th anniversary of the Foundation’s annual gala fundraising event, *The Book Lover’s Ball*, was held on February 5 at the Toronto Reference Library. A resounding success, the event hosted over 800 guests and showcased 100 reasons to support the Library. Over \$565,000 was raised through sponsorships and ticket sales, and on-site through the silent auction and Adopt-a-Branch appeal. The Foundation Board thanks the Toronto Public Library Board for this opportunity to showcase the Library to this influential group of current and potential donors. Special thanks to the Toronto Reference Library staff for all their help in making the event such a success.

Prepared by Toronto Public Library staff