

Chair's Report
November 16, 2009

TD Bank Financial Group has renewed funding for the successful **Shakespeare for Kids** program that has been running at Toronto Public Library for the past two years. A new session, for children seven to 12 years old, began November 7. Under the direction of Michael Kelly and his actor/teachers from the Shakespeare in Action Theatre Company, the program aspires to enhance arts education through exploring and performing Shakespeare's plays. More than 2,660 children participated at 30 branches during the 2008/09 school year. Branches located in City of Toronto designated high-risk neighbourhoods were offered the program first and then all other libraries that applied, on a first come first serve basis.

This year's **Make Some Noise** initiative, in support of the Library's local music CD collection, got off to a great start on November 5, as Toronto hip hop band Grand Analog rocked the College/Shaw Branch. The band set up in the children's area and among the happy fans were a number of reporters. AUX TV, a new music cable station, filmed the show and interviewed the band; and a reporter from the blog torontoist.com was there and hopes to follow, and report on, the entire Make Some Noise series. The Grand Analog show was our first "concert in the stacks," with another one planned for Bloor/Gladstone Branch on November 20. A new partnership with the Polaris Music Prize saw Polaris Prize nominated bands playing the annual concert at North York Central Library this year; happy local music fans filled the auditorium to hear Bruce Peninsula and Timber Timbre on November 7. Make Some Noise continues to benefit from ongoing partnerships with local music CD store Soundscapes and Canada's premiere music magazine, *Exclaim!*

This year's **Staff Recognition** event, November 17, will be attended by Library Board vice chair Eman Ahmed. About 300 staff honorees have accepted the invitation to attend. The event will be held in the new Appel Salon and will feature guest speaker, former Olympian Bruce Kidd, who is currently Dean of the Faculty of Physical Education and Health at the University of Toronto. The Foundation will also be announcing new staff awards at the event.

Programming at the **Bram & Bluma Appel Salon** continued to bring in big, enthusiastic and eclectic audiences in October. More than 400 people came out for environmentalist Tim Flannery, author of *The Weather Makers*; the Writer's Room with Ian Brown featured best-selling British military historian Antony Beevor; and we launched our series Star Talks, in partnership with the *Toronto Star*, with architect Jack Diamond, followed by soprano Measha Brueggergosman. Still to come in the Star Talks series is retired general Rick Hillier on November 19. Other Appel Salon programs featured Peter Mansbridge and Rex Murphy together on November 10, with economist Jeff Rubin coming December 1. The opening of the Appel Salon has provided the Library with the opportunity to offer free and accessible high profile cultural events to bigger crowds – crowds that are reintroducing people to the Library, such as the young crowd that packed

in to hear Douglas Coupland, or the predominantly male crowd who came to hear Anthony Beevor.

The beta release of the **new Toronto Public Library website** will be made available to the public later this month. The new site is a giant leap forward in helping the public 'Find its Way' to our services and resources online. It presents comprehensive access to catalogue content, and branches fully integrated with programming information and much more. Using sophisticated search technology, the Library has created a highly accessible and user friendly experience and, at the same time, we are also enabling customers to gain access to more of our data so that they can build upon it for their own individual or community needs. The full public launch for the website will happen in 2010.

The H1N1 flu virus has dominated the news recently; the Library continues to respond according to its plans and following direction provided by Toronto Public Health. City communications about H1N1 preparedness are distributed to Library staff as they are issued. The Library has issued a "frequently asked questions" information document to all staff that addresses Library specific issues and directs staff to authoritative online resources about H1N1. Hand sanitizer has been issued to Library staff, from the City's stockpile. Hand sanitizer has also been made available for public use. Toronto Public Health posters promoting good hygiene (hand washing, cover your cough, hand sanitizing) have been posted for staff and public. The Library's website has a link to Toronto Public Health's H1N1 webpage.