

Chair's Report
January 19, 2009

1. **Jane/Sheppard Branch** will relocate from its current location in the Jane/Sheppard Mall to its own brand new building. The Jane/Sheppard Mall location will close on January 31. The new building, which is double the size of the current location, will open in March 2009, less than half a kilometre east of the current location.
2. **Programs**
 This year's **Black History Month celebrations**, dubbed Lyrical Fireworks, kick off on February 5 at York Woods Branch, with poetry readings and performances by Dwayne Morgan, Oni the Haitian Sensation, Boonaa Mohammed and Michelle Muir. The evening will be moderated by Chioma, editor and publisher of *Amöi Magazine*. Okeima Lawrence will be participating in the event as well. There are a number of Black History Month programs running at branches across the city throughout February, offering Torontonians the chance to witness the power of African-Canadian voices. The Black History Month flyer includes a list of titles selected from the Rita Cox Black and Caribbean Heritage Collection, which includes more than 16,000 items in four branches: Parkdale, York Woods, Malvern and Maria A. Shchuka.

Once again this year, **Family Literacy Day** (January 27) will be the focus of a month-long celebration of the Library's commitment to family literacy, with storytelling programs, special storytimes, author visits, puppet shows and more being offered at branches around the city throughout January.

The annual **Young Voices winter workshop series** gets underway January 31 at Brookbanks Branch and runs through to the end of February at branches around the city. There are four workshops in the series, three writing workshops and one art workshop. The workshops provide teens with an opportunity to polish their work before submitting it to *Young Voices* magazine, but they are open to anyone 12-19 years old, whether they intend to submit to the magazine or not. The Library also coordinates three outreach workshops, which are still being organized, but are tentatively slated to take place at Sick Kids, at Braeburn Boys and Girls Club in north Etobicoke, and at one other location yet to be determined. The deadline for submissions to this year's *Young Voices* is April 4, 2009.

3. **Foundation News**

The Foundation had a very busy finish to 2008 and starts the new year with some wonderful news: an anonymous donor has made a gift of \$1 million in support of the Library's Ready for Reading early literacy program, accreditation and skills enhancement materials for newcomers, and multilingual collections. This is the first-ever gift of \$1 million received from an individual and a testament to the love that Torontonians have for their Library.

The Foundation also continues to receive very positive feedback about its new "Toronto's Library. Absolutely Vital." positioning and promotional campaign. In December it rolled out new adult book bags co-branded with the Foundation and TPL, launching them with two days of sales in the Bloor/Yonge subway station. They anticipated total sales of 400 bags, but by the afternoon of the second day, had sold over 1,000 bags and received \$250 in unsolicited donations. They also heard countless stories about how much people love and appreciate Toronto's Library.

And just before the holidays, the Foundation initiated a new, major ask to the Federal government in support of the Re:vitalize TRL campaign.

This year, the Foundation's annual fundraising gala, *The Book Lover's Ball*, is promising "A Night of Sheer Literary Fun," with over 50 authors in attendance, including Christie Blatchford, Debbie Travis, Vincent Lam, Richard J. Gwyn and many more. A highlight of the event, as always, is the exclusive fashion show, this year inspired by 60 years of Harlequin romance, and featuring stunning couture designs from top Canadian designers. *The Book Lover's Ball* will take place February 12 at the Fairmont Royal York.

4. **iPod compatible audio books** are now available. Starting on January 12, 650 iPod, iPhone and Mac compatible eAudiobooks were made available for borrowing via the Library website. New iPod compatible books will be added to the collection on an ongoing basis.
5. **A community art** piece, created by local youth, was unveiled in front of the Maria Shchuka Branch on December 11. The piece was a two part creation – the first half with dub poet d'bi young showing the kids how to write poetry, the second with local artist Lois Dellert teaching the kids how to make bricks with the words in the poems. The bricks are now attached to a tree planter outside the library. At the unveiling, youth involved read their poems.
6. **Trends in the Past Half Year**
Library usage often increases during an economic downturn and Toronto Public Library is experiencing this trend. Performance statistics for the last half of 2008 indicate many more people are visiting Library branches to access computers, the internet, e-mail and word processing applications, to read newspapers and magazines, use reference books, to ask staff for help and borrow library materials.

Comparisons between July to December 2008 and the first half of the year (January to June 2008) show the following increases:

- circulation was up by 1.3%*
- workstation use increased 12.6%
- visits to the Library were up 7.6%

- requests for staff help were up 7.4%
 - in-library use of material was up 11.7%
- *Circulation figures are still being finalized for 2008.

Upswings in in-library use in the last half of the year corresponds to the economic downturn in the latter half of 2008. The Library is an even more important resource for people in difficult economic times and I think it is fair to say these trends in use are likely to continue through 2009.

7. **Ontario Library Association (OLA) Super Conference:**

- a. Eman Ahmed will be a presenter at the conference in Session #1215 – Serving Diverse Audiences at Toronto Public Library: Policy, Programming and Service Development – on Friday, January 30th.
- b. Toronto Public Library, in collaboration with the Hamilton and Kingston Frontenac public libraries has been nominated for the **Minister's Award for Innovation** for *Ontario Time Machine* (www.ontariotimemachine.ca) which is a web site dedicated to student learning and the discovery of Ontario's early documentary heritage. The site is designed to support the Ontario Ministry of Education Curriculum expectations for student and teacher learning activities for students in Grades 7 and 8 studying history from 1759 to World War I. The Minister's Award for Innovation recognizes successful new approaches that demonstrate a positive impact in a community and is of continued value for public libraries.

This award will be presented at the **2009 Public Library Awards Dinner** at the conference on **Thursday, January 29 at 7:00 pm** at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre. If Board members are interested in attending the awards dinner, please advise Nancy Marshall (nmarshall@torontopubliclibrary.ca or 416-393-7215) to arrange for tickets.

- c. Toronto Public Library, in collaboration with Halifax, Regina and Vancouver public libraries will be presented with the OLA's **President's Award for Exceptional Achievement** for the *Working Together Project* at the upcoming conference. This award acknowledges outstanding action or contribution that has in a major or unique way enhanced or furthered librarianship in Ontario. The Working Together Project (www.librariesincommunities.ca) uses a community development approach to build connections and relationships in the community.

This award will be presented at the Closing Luncheon Gala at the conference on **Saturday, January 31 at 12:15 pm** at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre. If Board members are interested in attending the luncheon gala, please advise Nancy Marshall (nmarshall@torontopubliclibrary.ca or 416-393-7215) to arrange for tickets.