

Shelf life

Toronto Public Library News & Views

January 2009

Celebrate Black History Month in February

pg 2

Library use up as economy declines

Toronto Public Library's free resources, programs, training classes and collections draw Torontonians in



WHEN THE ECONOMY is uncertain, public libraries play a vital role in ensuring free access to up-to-date technology, the Internet and job-finding resources. The library also offers Toronto families a place to borrow books, CDs and DVDs at no cost. And it provides cultural opportunities that might otherwise be beyond the financial means of many Torontonians.

In the last half of 2008, as media across North America reported on the ongoing economic decline, Toronto Public Library experienced a significant upsurge in use.

"From July to December 2008, we had more people using our branches to get reference help, to access computer workstations, and to read newspapers and reference materials in library branches," says Toronto's Chief Librarian, Jane Pyper. "Visits to the library increased by eight percent during this time, and use of library computer workstations increased by 13 percent, as media reporting confirmed an economic downturn."

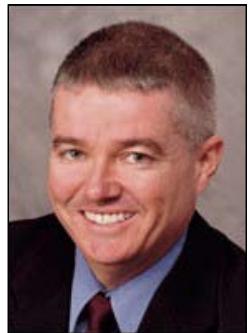
And Toronto isn't the only place where this is happening. Libraries in many American cities including New York, Chicago and Boston, have confirmed an upsurge in use. And other Canadian library systems are reporting similar trends, with Ontario library systems such as Guelph, Kitchener and Hamilton reporting between four and 12 percent increases in circulation.

The reasons for the increase are as many as the resources and services the library has to offer. Job seekers can update resumes, research potential employers and submit applications online using the library's free word processing software, WiFi and Internet access. Seniors living on fixed incomes can meet at the library and attend book clubs and other popular cultural and recreational programs. And recreational readers and music and movie lovers can access books, CDs and DVDs at no charge.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Library Board member profile: Councillor Paul Ainslie

COUNCILLOR PAUL AINSLIE has been a member of the Toronto Public Library Board for the past two years, but his connection to the public library in Toronto goes back to when he was a child growing up in Scarborough.



"I remember being so excited about getting to the library to report on a book I'd read for the Summer Reading Club one year," remembers Ainslie, "that I had the librarians worried about my health, because I rode my bike to the Morningside Branch one day during a heat wave."

Ainslie survived the heat wave and went on to work as a page at Morningside while in high school. "I felt like I'd come full circle when it came time to join the library board," says Ainslie. "The library gave me my first part-time job. Being on the board is a chance for me to give something back."

The library has changed a lot since Ainslie worked as a page. "Back then, I would fill out a form to order a book from another branch and hand it in to staff. Now I can go to my computer at home, put a hold on the book I'm looking for and have it delivered to my local branch. And this is just one of the many technological advancements that help to make the public library system in Toronto one of the greatest in the world," says Ainslie.

"The library plays such an important role nurturing the intellectual community," adds Ainslie, "and in collecting and preserving our cultural, political,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



COUNCILLOR PAUL AINSLIE
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

philosophical and scientific heritage. But more than that, the library is an amazing community gathering place."

According to Ainslie, Toronto Public Library has embraced its role as a primary provider of public space in the city. "The outdoor reading garden at Dufferin/St. Clair Branch is an excellent example of the innovative approach the library is taking in meeting the needs of the community with respect to providing beautiful, relevant public space. Another good example is our new KidsStops."

KidsStops are interactive early literacy centres for children, now open at Dufferin/St. Clair and S. Walter Stewart Branches, with more slated to open as the library continues its branch renovation program.

"Anyone can go to their neighbourhood branch — families like my own who have lived in Toronto all our lives, families who arrived here yesterday, and everyone in between," points out Ainslie.

But it isn't just families and other members of the public who benefit from the library offerings. "The business sector also understands the significance of what the library has to offer," says Ainslie. "Take a look at what TD Bank has done to help make the TD Summer Reading Club available, not just in Toronto, but across Canada."

"I think it's important that we, as members of the library board, help get the word out that the library is vital to the city," concludes Ainslie. "We need to make sure the importance of the library is recognized by all levels of government and that appropriate support is provided."



Dwayne Morgan



Oni the Haitian Sensation



Boonaa Mohammed



Michelle Muir



Chioma

Lyrical Fireworks light up Toronto

Black History Month celebrations at the library support cultural expression

FINDING INNOVATIVE WAYS of supporting city-wide cultural expression is one of Toronto Public Library's key strategic goals for the next few years and Lyrical Fireworks, the library's Black History Month celebration for 2009 is helping to accomplish this goal. "Toronto Public Library continues to provide relevant, dynamic, original and creative programming," says manager of program development for the library Tina Srebotnjak. "In the case of Lyrical Fireworks, we're partnering with Toronto's Caribbean and African Canadian communities to create programming that showcases the power of African-Canadian voices." Lyrical Fireworks and the Rita Cox Black and Caribbean Heritage Collection of 16,000 items are two of the many ways the library continues to engage Toronto's diverse communities. Join the library for the Lyrical Fireworks kickoff event at York Woods Branch on Thursday, February 5 at 7 p.m., featuring poets Dwayne Morgan, Oni the Haitian Sensation, Boonaa Mohammed, Michelle Muir and moderator Chioma.

RBC is proud to support Black History Month at Toronto Public Library.



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LIBRARY USE UP
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

"Libraries play a vital role in these times. We're anticipating continuing increases in the use of the city's library branches as the current economic uncertainty extends further into 2009," says Pyper.

The library also offers free author readings, performances and other cultural activities that can be expensive at the city's theatres, galleries and museums.



Toronto's Library. Absolutely Vital.

Million dollar friendship

Friends volunteers support vital library literacy efforts

WHEN THE FRIENDS of Toronto Public Library, North and South Chapters presented a combined donation of \$118,000 to the library at their Annual General Meeting on December 4, it brought the total to date donated by Friends of Toronto Public Library volunteers to more than \$1 million.

The Friends of Toronto Public Library run two bookstores: Book Ends at North York Central Library and Book Ends, South at Toronto Reference Library, where they sell donated and withdrawn library materials. Most of the items they sell go for a dollar or less.

"It's amazing," according to Toronto Public Library Foundation president Heather Rumball. "Every year the Friends are more and more generous, and equally determined to increase their donation, which is just fantastic."



South Chapter Friends gather in Book Ends South bookstore at Toronto Reference Library.

All of the money raised by the Friends helps support vital library programs such as Leading to Reading, a program for primary school children who need help with their reading and numeracy skills, and English Can Be Fun, a program for newcomer children who need help learning English.

To find out more about the Friends of Toronto Public Library, or how to become a volunteer, contact the Toronto Public Library Foundation at 416-393-7123.

National Bank Financial Group helps extend library's reach

Outreach Story Time promotes early literacy



NATIONAL BANK FINANCIAL Group has significantly increased the library's ability to support early literacy by pledging \$90,000 over the next three years in support of the library's Outreach Story Time initiative. National Bank's help will go a long way to helping the library achieve its goal of supporting caregivers in developing pre-literacy skills in their children, as outlined in the recently released strategic plan, *Our Shared Stories: Writing the Future of Toronto's Library*.

"Outreach Story Time takes the library's quality in-branch story time program out into high needs areas of the city," explains library children and youth advocate Ken Setterington. "We've tailored the program to fit particular audiences in the locations the program is visiting, such as community centres, parenting centres and programs for teen mothers. We are indeed grateful that National Bank Financial Group has agreed to help fund this much-needed and much-appreciated library program."

The program, led by an experienced library staff member, involves stories, songs, rhymes and conversation, and encourages the participation of parents, caregivers, agency staff and volunteers.

"The library's Outreach Story Time fits nicely with National Bank's commitment to fostering the development of the next generation of leaders, and helping them to acquire a set of sound values," says Sylvie Roy, Vice-President, Corporate Marketing and Communications. "National Bank Financial Group is an institution firmly anchored in the communities in which it is active and deeply committed to contributing to their prosperity and well-being, and to enhancing the quality of life of people in Toronto and across Canada."

Your library. Vital to you. Vital to support.
Donate to Toronto Public Library Foundation today.

tplfoundation.ca



Calendar of Events

February 2009

YOUNG VOICES WINTER WORKSHOP SERIES

For teens 12-19 years old.

Saturday, Jan. 31, 1-3 p.m. WordPlay Writing Workshop

Don't know how to get started writing? Get inspired by Toronto author Karen Krossing. Brookbanks Branch 210 Brookbanks Dr.

Tuesday, Feb. 10, 3:30-5:30 p.m. Talking Aloud: Spoken Word Workshop

Raise your voice in an interactive workshop with spoken word artist Dwayne Morgan. Maria A. Shchuka Branch 1745 Eglinton Ave. W.

LYRICAL FIREWORKS: BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Come witness the power of African-Canadian voices at library branches across the city this February. For full Lyrical Fireworks program listings visit torontopubliclibrary.ca/blackhistorymonth

Thursday, February 5, 7-9 p.m. Lyrical Fireworks Kickoff

Poets Dwayne Morgan, Oni the Haitian Sensation, Boonaa Mohammed and Michelle Muir will read/perform from their award-winning works. Moderated by Chioma, editor and publisher of *Amöi Magazine*.

York Woods Branch 1785 Finch Ave. W.

Throughout February Online Discussion with author Lorna Goodison

Join an online discussion with Book Buzz guest author Lorna Goodison, author of *From Harvey River*.

bookbuzz.torontopubliclibrary.ca

Tuesday, Feb. 10, 7-9 p.m.

Sylvia Hamilton, Documentary Filmmaker

The Little Black Schoolhouse – Film & Discussion

Toronto premiere screening of Sylvia Hamilton's poignant documentary, with music by Joe Sealy. Register for free tickets by calling 416-395-5660. Limited seating.

North York Central Library 5120 Yonge St.

CAPTURING CANADA ON PAPER AND CANVAS PROGRAMMING

Toronto Reference Library 789 Yonge St.

Wednesday, February 11, 2 p.m. Screening of C.W. Jefferys' *Picturing Canada*

Wednesday, Feb. 25, 2 p.m.
Screening of *From Field to Studio: The Art of Paul Kane*
Toronto film director John Bessai will introduce both films.

TD GALLERY EXHIBIT

Saturday, Jan. 31 – Sunday, Mar. 1 Capturing Canada on Paper and Canvas

The exhibition of Canadian landscape art features oil paintings, water colours, drawings and prints from the 1780s to the 1910s by notable Canadian artists William Armstrong, Anne Langton, Lucius O'Brien, James Peachey, George A. Reid and others.

TD Gallery, Toronto Reference Library, 789 Yonge St.



John Armstrong, *Kakabeka Falls*, 1911. J. Ross Robertson Collection, Toronto Public Library

For a complete listing of Toronto Public Library programs and exhibits, visit torontopubliclibrary.ca

Library Board Highlights

January 19, 2009

Board chair and vice-chair elected for 2009

The Board elected Matthew Church as their chair for 2009. Eman Ahmed was elected vice-chair.

Teen fine forgiveness campaign reaches neighbourhood youth

The Teen Fines and Fees Forgiveness campaign, implemented in all Toronto Public Library branches from April 1 to June 30, 2008, made \$20 fine waiver coupons available in library branches, schools and local community agencies, and also online for downloading on sites such as FaceBook, MySpace and ramp, the library's website for

youth. Over the three month period the coupons were available, nearly 2,600 coupons were redeemed. Of these, 31 percent were redeemed by teens reporting postal codes for priority areas, suggesting that the program is effective in reaching high needs youth. Also of significance, nearly 360 coupons resulted in card renewals and of those 20 percent were redeemed by teens reporting postal codes for priority areas. About 11 percent of respondents to

a survey included with the coupon indicated that they had not been in a library in the last year or longer, indicating that a number of teens returned to the library because of the coupon. For 2009, the library continues to explore and initiate programs to bring more teens back to the library and attract new users. The Teen Fines and Fees Forgiveness Program will continue to be run at strategic intervals.