



**STAFF REPORT
ACTION REQUIRED**

11.

Toronto Public Library Celebrates Reading Award

Date:	February 9, 2009
To:	Toronto Public Library Board
From:	City Librarian

SUMMARY

In 2001, the Toronto Public Library Board approved the creation of an annual award, the Toronto Public Library Celebrates Reading Award. The goals of the Award are to raise the profile of the Library, promote reading and raise the profile of Canadian literature.

The Award was also developed to be a highlight of an annual fundraising event in support of the Toronto Public Library Foundation. In 2006, 2007 and 2008 the recipients were announced and the award presented at The Book Lover's Ball. Previous recipients attended "A Novel Afternoon".

Toronto Public Library has undertaken a number of initiatives since the Award was created which have similar goals to the Toronto Public Library Celebrates Reading Award. New initiatives begun in 2008, Keep Toronto Reading One Book and organizing and hosting the Toronto Book Awards further establish the Library as a place for creativity and culture. The support of these new initiatives requires significant staff time and resources. The relevance and continued need for the Toronto Public Library Celebrates Reading Award was evaluated in relation to these major corporate initiatives and The Book Lover's Ball. The Committee concluded that the Award should now be discontinued.

RECOMMENDATION

The Toronto Public Library Celebrates Reading Award Nominating Committee recommends that the Toronto Public Library Board:

1. discontinues the Toronto Public Library Celebrates Reading Award in consideration of the number of cultural and literary events that successfully achieve the goals originally identified for the Award.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There is no financial impact. The \$2,500 award amount is part of the operating budget used to support the Library's various cultural and literary events.

The Director, Finance and Treasurer has reviewed this Financial Impact Statement and is in agreement with it.

DECISION HISTORY

At the May 15, 2006 meeting, the Board directed staff to review the Toronto Public Library Celebrates Reading selection process. The selection process was reviewed and while it was felt to be viable and sound, the Committee recommended to the Board on May 20, 2008 that the Award be deferred and re-evaluated and that the Committee report back to the Board after a 2008/2009 programming review had been undertaken.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

In 2001, the Toronto Public Library Board approved the creation of an annual award, the Toronto Public Library Celebrates Reading Award. In June 2004, the Board approved the selection process and criteria and established a \$2,500 prize. The selection process was further revised and approved by the Board in April 2006. Award winners have been:

2001	Paulette Bourgeois and Brenda Clark
2002	Kenneth Oppel
2003	TV Ontario
2004	Dennis Lee
2005/2006	Margaret Atwood
2007	Robert Sawyer
2008	Peter Robinson

The Award was developed to be a highlight of an annual fundraising event in support of the Toronto Public Library Foundation. In 2006, 2007 and 2008, the recipients were announced and the award presented at The Book Lover's Ball. Previous recipients attended "A Novel Afternoon". However, over time the Award became less of a fit in supporting the fundraising initiatives of the Foundation, and the Library took on other major initiatives that have similar goals to those of the Award.

The Committee met in early 2009 to evaluate the Award and review cultural and literary programming initiatives at the Library (see Attachment 1). The Committee noted that the current environment in which the award is being presented has changed significantly from when it was introduced. Toronto Public Library is now engaged in a number of initiatives that have similar goals to the Award. These initiatives include Keep Toronto Reading, Keep Toronto Reading One Book as well as hosting and promoting the Toronto Book Awards, which the Library has undertaken with the City of Toronto.

Toronto City Council established the Toronto Book Awards in 1974 to honour authors of books of literary or artistic merit that are evocative of Toronto. Prize money in the amount of \$15,000 is associated with these Awards. In 2007, the Library served as a venue for the announcement of the winner of the Toronto Book Awards. On October 17, 2008 the Library hosted the Toronto Book Awards gala event. Approximately 250 guests attended this event with Master of Ceremonies Mary Ito. The Library also hosted a group-reading of the nominated authors and individual readings at Library branches. The Toronto Book Awards were also a significant feature of Library programming at Word on the Street. Toronto Public Library is now established as the major organizer of these awards, and is significantly involved in the promotion of the award and related events.

After a thorough evaluation of the literary and cultural initiatives on the organization's resources and on the achievement of the goals of raising the profile of the Library, promoting reading and raising the profile of Canadian literature, the Committee recommends the discontinuation of the Award.

COMMENTS

In October 2008, the Board was provided with an overview of a number of programs and initiatives that the Library undertook in 2008 and highlights of 2009 plans for such initiatives as Keep Toronto Reading, One Book and the Library's involvement and support of significant city-wide programs such as the Toronto Book Awards, Nuit Blanche, Lit City and Luminato. Also in 2009, the Library will launch the Toronto Reference Library's new event space with a significant suite of programmes. These activities are significant vehicles for achieving the Library's strategic plan focus of supporting creativity and culture.

The recommendation to discontinue the Award has been discussed with the Toronto Public Library Foundation, and the Foundation is in agreement with this approach.

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Toronto Public Library – 2009 Corporate Programming and Strategic Initiatives