



Trans and Pride rainbow-wrapped pillars outside Yorkville Branch, home to TPL's Pride Collection.

## Pride Alliance

Established in 2012, TPL's Pride Alliance is an employee resource group that helps to build an inclusive environment for 2SLGBTQ+ employees and allies. Members of this group serve as advocates and resources for TPL staff and services for 2SLGBTQ+-related issues.

# 2SLGBTQ+ initiatives

Toronto is home to the largest Two-Spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer or questioning (2SLGBTQ+) population in Canada and is one of the largest 2SLGBTQ+ communities in North America. TPL has developed an extensive service plan focused on the goal that all members of this community feel welcome and represented in our spaces and by our programs, services, collections and staff.

## focus on equity:

TPL is committed to ensuring that spaces, collections and services reach and reflect 2SLGBTQ+ communities to help engage and amplify queer voices.

*"I just love that TPL is making great efforts to embrace and share about 2SLGBTQAI+ lives."*

– 2SLGBTQ+ program attendee

## 2021 initiatives at a glance



**1300%**

increase in use of online and print 2SLGBTQ+ collections



**187%**

increase in visits to the Pride Collection website



**3,477**

participants attended 32 2SLGBTQ+ online programs



Atmos Fierce reads to a group of children at Parkdale Branch as part of TPL's Drag Queen Storytime program.

# here's a look at some of what we've done, and what we've got planned over the life of our 2020-2024 Strategic Plan

## programs

- Developing programming to educate and support 2SLGBTQ+ communities in areas such as social supports and trans and non-binary health and wellness
- Increasing programming online and in-person to reflect and celebrate the 2SLGBTQ+ community through an intersectional lens

## collections

- Continuing to build the Pride Collection — the largest circulating in Canada — and expanding our collection of 2SLGBTQ+ book club sets
- Highlight 2SLGBTQ+ authors and voices by creating reading lists for all ages and showcasing relevant, engaging content in our collections and online

## spaces

- Making our spaces more inclusive and welcoming to 2SLGBTQ+ customers with displays and showing our pride and support during Pride Month
- Honouring Two-Spirit and Indigenous peoples first by adopting 2SLGBTQ+ as the new acronym for all relevant programs, services and collections

- Create welcoming and inclusive spaces by developing and implementing a gender-inclusive washroom policy, which includes training for all staff; year-round 2SLGBTQ+ displays in library branches; and a distinctive look and feel for 2SLGBTQ+ services at TPL

## technology

- Identifying specific 2SLGBTQ+ customer experience issues or barriers in using TPL technology systems, including the TPL website, Digital Privacy initiatives and data collection and data use

- Expand access to anonymous internet browsing software in more branches, which enables members within the 2SLGBTQ+ community to seek out information or resources without fear of judgment or reprisal

## staff

- Building staff skills to support the development and delivery of accessible and informed library services to 2SLGBTQ+ Torontonians, including mandatory Positive Spaces training for all staff

- As part of the new Collective Agreement, introduced up to 70 hours of paid time off for transitioning staff; in 2021, began offering a Trans-Affirming Care benefit providing up to \$5,000/year to access physical or psychological trans-affirming care or medical procedures.

- Working with Pride Alliance to observe and celebrate days of significance with library staff

- Revise job postings to reflect gender-inclusive language; create staff brave spaces and conversation circles for National Coming Out Day; and introduce an annual staff 2SLGBTQ+ symposium with discussions, speakers, and staff-generated ideas for improving service delivery



Staff at Maria A. Shchuka Branch show their support for the community during Pride Month with a dynamic window display.





A painting on display at the Toronto Reference Library, gifted to TPL by Ojibway artist Sam Ash (1951-2021)

## Indigenous Advisory Council

TPL's Indigenous Advisory Council (IAC) was established in 2018. The IAC is comprised of community members from diverse Indigenous communities in Toronto and representatives from Indigenous service providers across the city. They provide feedback and guidance on the direction of Indigenous Initiatives at TPL.

# Indigenous initiatives

As part of our response to the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's \(TRC\) 94 Calls to Action \(PDF\)](#), TPL established [Strategies for Indigenous Initiatives \(PDF\)](#) in consultation with Indigenous communities. The strategies outline our commitment to Reconciliation through indigenizing our physical and online spaces, incorporating Indigenous content into our collections and programs, and educating our customers and staff on Truth and Reconciliation, residential schools and treaty relationships. TPL is a committed partner in helping the City of Toronto achieve the goals of its [Reconciliation Action Plan \(2022-2032\)](#).

## focus on Reconciliation:

TPL is committed to improved relationships with Indigenous communities to better understand our obligations and responsibilities, and to take active steps towards Reconciliation.

*"The library can help through bringing in Indigenous leaders, writers, activists, artists for Indigenous folks and settlers to see and hear and learn from. Your library work matters extremely in the promotion of justice and knowledge of Indigenous people."*

— Indigenous community member, Strategic Council Survey

## 2021 initiatives at a glance



**2000+**

participants attended 43 Indigenous programs



**143%**

increase in holds on 'Read Indigenous' titles



**65%**

of TPL staff completed Indigenous Cultural Competency Training

# here's a look at some of what we've done, and what we've got planned over the life of our 2020-2024 Strategic Plan

## spaces

- Honouring Indigenous peoples and culture by activating branch spaces with displays, and online spaces with Indigenous content
- Recognizing our presence on Indigenous land and responsibilities to Indigenous communities by establishing TPL's Land Acknowledgement statements, including child-friendly and French versions



A poem by Marilyn Dumont (Cree and Métis) adorns the wall at St. Clair/Silverthorne branch; one example of our six branches incorporating Indigenous placemaking features.



A moccasin workshop hosted by one of TPL's first Elders in Residence.

## programs

- Facilitating opportunities to build cultural awareness through year-round programming with Indigenous-led content and speakers

- Create welcoming and inclusive spaces for Indigenous communities by incorporating Indigenous names, design and placekeeping into new and renovated branches in collaboration with members of the Indigenous community in Toronto



A glance at must-read titles from our annual 'Read Indigenous' campaign

- Include Indigenous voices across TPL program series (for example, featuring Indigenous speakers in the Environmentalist in Residence program)

## collections

- Helping customers discover Indigenous content by increasing collections in all 100 branches and improving their visibility
- Decolonizing TPL's cataloguing practices by adopting inclusive and Indigenous terms

## staff

- Building staff awareness and capacity to support engagement with Indigenous communities through cultural awareness and training
- Advocating for Indigenous initiatives across the organization through the establishment of the Indigenous Initiatives Service Committee

### what's planned

- Provide flexible and innovative learning opportunities (for example, virtual tours of Mohawk Institute Residential School)

### what's planned

- Support Indigenous suppliers and grow our collections to recognize different Indigenous groups (for example, curating Anishinaabemowin collection at Spadina Road branch)

## technology

- Making available Wi-Fi Hotspots and Internet Connectivity Kits to support digital access of Indigenous community members



# **TPL Board Education** **service area spotlights**

Toronto Public Library Board Meeting  
December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2022

Pam Ryan & Linda Hazzan



# service area spotlights

- Continuously working to improve service and initiatives for equity-deserving groups
- Shares a view of work done to date, planned and underway
- First two spotlights: TPL's 2SLGBTQ+ Initiatives and Indigenous Initiatives

# service area spotlights

- Highlight TPL's commitments, key accomplishments and upcoming initiatives supporting equity-deserving groups
- Resource for staff and can be shared with partners, and during outreach and community events
- Available on the TPL website for the public to access, to see a high-level view of our work in these areas
- Updated every year to include new accomplishments, incorporate upcoming projects, and reflect our evolving service plans



# truth & reconciliation



A painting on display at the Toronto Reference Library, gifted to TPL by Ojibway artist Sam Ash (1951-2020)

## Indigenous initiatives

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### Indigenous Advisory Council

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- **Focus on Reconciliation** – TPL's commitment to improved relationships with Indigenous communities and to better understand our obligations
- **Summarize progress on TPL's 2017 Strategies for Indigenous Initiatives**, part of our response to the TRC Calls to Action
- **Community Connection: Indigenous Advisory Council recognition** for all their support, guidance and direction of Indigenous Initiatives at TPL
- **Yearly statistic highlights: Communicating scale and reach**, including programming, collection service use, and staff training



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A poem by Marilyn Dumont (Cree and Métis) adorns the wall at St. Clair/St. Lawrence branch; one example of our six branches incorporating Indigenous placemaking features.



A moccasin workshop hosted by one of TPL's first Elders in Residence.

### what's planned

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# truth & reconciliation

- Describing services by TPL service pillars: Spaces, Technology, Programs, Collections, and Staff
- Featuring what we've done and what is planned over life of 2020-2024 Strategic Plan

# 2SLGBTQ+ initiatives



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# 2SLGBTQ+ initiatives



Amos Pierce reads to a group of children at Parkdale Branch as part of TPL's Queer Storytime program.

## spaces

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- ▶ Honouring Two-Spirit and Indigenous peoples first by adopting 2SLGBTQ+ as the new acronym for all relevant programs, services and collections

### what's planned

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- ▶ Developing programming to educate and support 2SLGBTQ+ communities in areas such as social supports and trans and non-binary health and wellness
- ▶ Increasing programming online and in-person to reflect and celebrate the 2SLGBTQ+ community through an intersectional lens

### what's planned

- ▶ Implement year-round online and in-person 2SLGBTQ+ programming for all ages, presented in collaboration with local 2SLGBTQ+ community organizations and agencies

## collections

- ▶ Continuing to build the Pride Collection — the largest circulating in Canada — and expanding our collection of 2SLGBTQ+ book club sets
- ▶ Highlight 2SLGBTQ+ authors and voices by creating reading lists for all ages and showcasing relevant, engaging content in our collections and online

### what's planned

- ▶ Improve cataloguing practices, including the review of subject headings, to ensure they are sensitive towards 2SLGBTQ+ communities, identities and issues



Staff at Maria A. Shchuka Branch show their support for the community during Pride Month with a dynamic window display.

## staff

- ▶ Building staff skills to support the development and delivery of accessible and informed library services to 2SLGBTQ+ Torontonians, including mandatory Positive Spaces training for all staff

- ▶ As part of the new Collective Agreement, introduced up to 70 hours of paid time off for transitioning staff; in 2021, began offering a Trans-Affirming Care benefit providing up to \$5,000/year to access physical or psychological trans-affirming care or medical procedures.

- ▶ Working with Pride Alliance to observe and celebrate days of significance with library staff

### what's planned

- ▶ Revise job postings to reflect gender-inclusive language, create staff brave spaces and conversation circles for National Coming Out Day; and introduce an annual staff 2SLGBTQ+ symposium with discussions, speakers, and staff-generated ideas for improving service delivery



## next steps

- Develop spotlights for other service areas
- Create online and in-branch tools to better communicate service area initiatives and accomplishments

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# Questions?