



To: Toronto Public Library Board – May 28, 2001

From: City Librarian

Subject: **Kids @ Computers Scholarship Pilot Project**

Purpose:

To provide the Toronto Public Library Board with background information on the Kids @ Computers Scholarship Pilot Project and the Library's contribution to the project.

Funding Implications and Impact Statement:

There are no direct financial implications for the Library's 2001 operating budget arising from the report.

As a result of exceeding its 1999-2000 Community Placement (CP) targets, the City received one-time funding of \$622,000 from the Province. The Library will receive a portion of that funding to support delivery of the library component of the Kids @ Computers Scholarship Pilot Project.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the Toronto Public Library Board receive the *Kids @ Computers Scholarship Pilot Project* report for information.

Background:

The Toronto Social Services (TSS) has received one-time provincial funding as a result of the City of Toronto exceeding its Ontario Works Community Participation (workfare) targets. This funding will be used to launch an innovative scholarship pilot project called Kids @ Computers. Using the scholarship approach, the project will recognize and reward the achievements of children in low income families and provide them with an opportunity to gain access to computers, educational software and the Internet in their homes. The long-term goals of the project are to:

- ensure that children from low income families have the opportunity to use computers and the Internet in their homes to further their education and interests and effectively compete on a level footing with their classmates; and
- assist children in acquiring knowledge and skills that are increasingly crucial to excelling in the school and the workplace.

TSS has requested the partnership of the Toronto Public Library in the design, development and implementation of this project. The project's approach is not only consistent with the Library's strategic direction for children, but it can benefit from the Library's established experience in delivery of service to children and youth. The role of the Library is to:

- provide computer instruction to these children and their families;
- provide a safe and enriching setting for children to participate in computer-related activities after school; and
- provide the children with additional access to electronic services.

Toronto Public Library staff will deliver an introductory computer and Internet course in three modules. Parents are welcome to participate in all three sessions but the third module will require the participation of both the child and adult family member.

Through the Kids @ Computers pilot project, Toronto Public Library will receive funding which will be used towards construction costs of the Richview and Cedarbrae User Education Centres and to hire staff during the summer months to deliver the program at eight computer education centres across the City.

The pilot project was endorsed by the Community Services Committee at its meeting on May 10, 2001 and has been forwarded to City Council for approval at its meeting on May 30 and 31, 2001. If the Council approves the project, the program will be implemented in the Summer of 2001.

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List of Attachments:

Attachment A: Kids @ Computers Scholarship Pilot Proposal – Report presented to the Community Services Committee at its meeting on May 10, 2001

Attachment B: Map showing libraries and children's priority areas and the proposed locations for Kids @ Computers program