



## MEMO

**Date:** April 20, 2015

**To:** Vickery Bowles, City Librarian

**From:** Heather Rumball, President, Toronto Public Library Foundation

**RE:** **Toronto Reference Library as venue for 2016 Book Lover's Ball**

### SUMMARY

On February 5, 2015 and for the first time ever, Toronto's library fans and book lovers gathered in the stacks of the Toronto Reference Library to celebrate the 10th anniversary of *The Book Lover's Ball*. Also to mark the occasion, The Book Lover's Ball extended the night with After Dark, the official after party.

The evening was a resounding success, raising \$565,000 in support of ground breaking programs and services, exceptional book collections and innovative community spaces at Toronto Public Library. In anticipation of the Library's soon-to-be 100 branches, guests were invited to adopt their favourite branch or bid on exclusive auction items including private book clubs with an author raising a total of \$85,000 for the 100 branches.

Over 800 guests explored the 38-year-old branch after hours, making it the largest party ever held in the Library. An evening unlike any other, the Ball allowed guests to clink glasses and dine amongst the books with top authors including Conrad Black, Elizabeth Renzetti, Joseph Boyden, Jamie Kennedy and Maureen Jennings.

Guests also were able to explore new library spaces including the Meet Up, the Digital Innovation Hub, and the second floor Idea Garden. Most notably, over 200 guests took the opportunity to explore the Arthur Conan Doyle Room and other special collections in The Marilyn and Charles Baillie Special Collections Centre on the fifth floor.

The 2015 Book Lover's Ball was a tremendous success and the Foundation received rave reviews from many guests and donors, particularly about the having the event take place in the Library. As intended, the event showcased the Library beautifully to a primarily new audience and in a very meaningful way connected guests to the Toronto Public Library.

Due to the success of the 2015 event and based on guest response, the Foundation is requesting that Toronto Public Library approve the use of the Toronto Reference Library branch as a venue for the Book Lover's Ball on Thursday, February 4, 2016.

For set-up purposes, the Toronto Public Library Foundation would require partial closure to the public of select spaces during opening hours as well as full closure of the Toronto Reference Library as of 2:00 p.m. on February 4<sup>th</sup>, an hour earlier than the 2015 closure.

## **BENEFITS OF HOSTING THE BOOK LOVER'S BALL AT THE REFERENCE LIBRARY**

Hosting *The Book Lover's Ball* at the Reference Library will allow us to capitalize on the success and word-of-mouth promotion of the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary Book Lover's Ball and once again provide a unique opportunity for guests to experience the library like never before.

Benefits of hosting the event at the Reference Library include the opportunity to:

- Introduce non or lapsed users to today's vibrant Library
- Directly connect guests to Toronto Public Library and to the services their support of the event helps enable
- Meet demand to make the *The Book Lover's Ball* more accessible to a broader and new audience through the "after party", tickets for which will be more widely affordable (approximately \$100 instead of \$750)
- Re-engage **re:vitalize** – Toronto Reference Library Campaign donors
- Gain additional event sponsorship support

As in 2015, hosting the event at the Library also provides the opportunity to showcase its unique spaces and collections, and to highlight what donor support helps make possible, thereby helping to encourage potential future donations. We heard from guests that they loved exploring the Library after hours and were stunned by its offerings.

The Foundation will once again explore ways to showcase major elements of the Reference Library by utilizing them to host components of the event. Areas of the Library that we are considering showcasing include the TD Gallery, Idea Garden, Meet Up, Study pods, Learning Theatre, Listening and Learning Labs, Digital Innovation Hub, the Marilyn and Charles Baillie Special Collections Centre and The Bram & Bluma Appel Salon.

## **SERVICE IMPACTS**

On the day of the event we will make every effort to minimize any service impacts while also balancing the cost implications, in order to ensure the greatest possible amount of fundraising revenue from the event will be returned to the Library. Set up for and hosting of an event of this scale will necessitate partial closure to the public of select spaces during open hours as well as full closure of the Toronto Reference Library as of 2:00 p.m. on February 4, 2016, an hour earlier than requested for the 2015 event.

With multiple suppliers trying to set up the reception area simultaneously, and in some cases one supplier needing to complete their set up prior to another being able to start their set up (example, drape needed to go up behind main desk bar prior to caterer being able to set up bar), only having 2.5 hours to complete everything created a very stressful environment for all the vendors. In addition, guests of The Book Lovers Ball actually began arriving at 5:30pm, 30 minutes prior to official doors and we were still

doing final touches and some sound checks. The additional hour would enable us to accommodate the needs of suppliers and to ensure that doors open by 5:30 p.m.

Based the 2015 event, we are confident the public service impacts detailed in the following staged set-up will be the maximum required:

Wednesday, February 3, 2016 / 8:30 p.m. - 7:00 a.m.

- Atrium - AV and production set up including rigging and staging install, partial load in of Décor

Thursday, February 4, 2016 / 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

- Atrium:
  - 9:00 a.m. 2:00 p.m. – window area in the browsery or volunteer area
  - 1 p.m.– begin set up in main area of Atrium
  - Throughout the day, all other areas will be accessible to the public
- Second Floor:
  - 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. – full closure of the second floor to the public; the second floor would remain accessible to library staff
- Third Floor:
  - 1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. - closure of study tables (north and south)
  - Throughout the day, all other areas will be accessible to the public
- Entire Branch
  - 2:00 p.m. – full closure of the Reference Library to the public

Friday, February 5, 2016 / 1:00 am – 6:00 am

- Atrium, Second and Third Floor – dismantle event

## **FINANCIAL IMPACTS**

There will be no financial impact to the library, as the Foundation will cover all the event costs as well as costs for cleaning, security and additional staff needed on site for the event.

## **REQUEST**

It is requested the Toronto Public Library:

1. approve, in principle, full closure of the Toronto Reference Library as of 2:00pm on February 4<sup>th</sup>, as well as partial closure of select other spaces during open hours as detailed in this report.

## BACKGROUND

*The Book Lover's Ball* is the premier fundraising event of Toronto Public Library Foundation. Through this event, the Foundation raises money in support of Toronto's Library. As well, there is a focus on friend raising and awareness raising. Since the inaugural event in 2006, the Foundation has raised over \$4m through sponsorship, table/ticket sales and onsite fundraising, all in support of programs and services, collections and community spaces at Toronto Public Library.

The Book Lover's Ball is has been recognized as a must attend event in Toronto and has received many awards over the years including:

Winner of 2 international and 1 national award:

- 2013 Special Events Magazine Gala Award for Best Fundraising Event – BLB 2013 (international)
- 2013 International Special Events Society Esprit Award for Best Event for a Non-Profit Organization (Over \$200,000) – BLB 2012 (international)
- 2013 Canadian Event Industry Award for Most Outstanding Event (\$100,000-\$300,000) – BLB 2012 (national)

Nominated for numerous national and international awards:

- 2014 Canadian Event Industry Awards for Best Fundraising Event, Best Event for a High Profile Charity, Best Entertainment Production, Most Outstanding Event (Over \$300,000) – BLB 2013 (award ceremony is March 27)
- 2013 National BizBash Event Style Award for Best Event Entertainment Act – BLB 2013 (North American)
- 2013 Canadian Event Industry Awards for Best Entertainment Production, Best Fundraising Event & Best Event Produced for a High Profile Charitable Organization – BLB 2012 (3 national nominations)
- 2013 International Special Events Society Esprit Awards for Best Social Event and Best Entertainment Production – BLB 2012 (international)

## SIGNATURE:



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