

Biblio Bash at the Toronto Reference Library – Thursday, April 7, 2022

Date:	December 6, 2021
To:	Toronto Public Library Board
From:	City Librarian

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to seek Toronto Public Library Board approval to close the Toronto Reference Library (TRL) at 12:30 pm on April 7, 2022, in order for the Toronto Public Library Foundation (TPLF) to hold its annual fundraising gala, Biblio Bash.

In the event that Biblio Bash cannot take place on Thursday, April 7, 2022 due to COVID-19 health and safety regulations, TPLF would postpone the event until October 20, 2022. Approval for this alternate date is also requested.

The Foundation's request to the Library Board is in the attached memorandum, which describes the anticipated advantages of hosting the event at TRL.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Librarian recommends that the Toronto Public Library Board:

1. approves the Toronto Public Library Foundation request to host Biblio Bash at the Toronto Reference Library on Thursday, April 7, 2022, which includes closure of the second floor and Digital Innovation Hub on the day of the event and full closure of the branch at 12:30 p.m.; and
2. approves the closure of the second floor and the Digital Innovation Hub on the day of the event and full closure of the Toronto Reference Library at 12:30 p.m. on Thursday, October 20, 2022 in the event Biblio Bash cannot take place on April 7, 2022.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

TPLF will cover all the costs for putting on the event, including costs for additional cleaning and security.

Net proceeds from Biblio Bash will be used by TPLF to fund some of the Library's fundraising priorities. Over 2017-2019, funds were raised to support TPL's digital innovation programs, youth programs and services, after school clubs and a new bookmobile.

The Director, Finance & Treasurer has reviewed this financial impact statement and agrees with it.

DECISION HISTORY

At its December 12, 2016 meeting, the Library Board approved the Foundation's request to launch its renamed fundraising gala, Biblio Bash, at the Toronto Reference Library, including an early closure to allow for set-up.

<https://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/content/about-the-library/pdfs/board/meetings/2016/dec12/15-biblio-bash-at-trl-2017.pdf>

At its October 23, 2017 meeting, the Library Board approved the Foundation's request to hold Biblio Bash at the Toronto Reference Library, including an early closure to allow for set-up.

<https://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/content/about-the-library/pdfs/board/meetings/2017/oct23/13-biblio-bash-at-trl-2018-combined.pdf>

At its November 18, 2018 meeting, the Library Board approved the Foundation's request to hold Biblio Bash at the Toronto Reference Library, including an early closure to allow for set-up.

<https://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/content/about-the-library/pdfs/board/meetings/2018/nov19/14-biblio-bash-at-trl-combined.pdf>

At its October 22, 2019 meeting, the Library Board approved the Foundation's request to hold Biblio Bash at the Toronto Reference Library, including an early closure to allow for set-up.

<https://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/content/about-the-library/pdfs/board/meetings/2019/oct22/20-biblio-bash-at-trl-2020-combined.pdf>

Note: Biblio Bash was cancelled in April 2020 due to pandemic restrictions.

At its June 22, 2020 meeting, the Library Board approved the Foundation's request to hold Biblio Bash at the Toronto Reference Library in November 2020, including an early closure to allow for set-up, pending reopening and the lifting of pandemic restrictions. <https://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/content/about-the-library/pdfs/board/meetings/2020/jun22/15-biblio-bash-trl-wed-nov-11-2020-combined.pdf>

Note: Biblio Bash was not held due to ongoing pandemic restrictions.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

For 10 years the Book Lover's Ball was the Foundation's premier fundraising event. Following its 10th year, a decision was made to skip a year to consider its future. In 2016, the Foundation renamed its annual fundraising gala as Biblio Bash, and made a request to the Library Board to hold the event at the Toronto Reference Library.

The Foundation believes that holding Biblio Bash at TRL helps to differentiate this gala fundraiser from other not-for-profit galas by delivering a meaningful and memorable evening in a unique space. After a two-year hiatus (2020 and 2021) due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there is great enthusiasm for resuming this event in 2022.

For the last few years prior to the pandemic, this event sold out early and attracted some of Toronto's high-profile philanthropists, who were new supporters of TPL. Given the positive profile of TPL over the course of the pandemic, there is an opportunity to build on this momentum and attract even more supporters to the Library.

The goals of the gala are to raise funds and awareness for the Library, design a beautiful and memorable evening that connects guests to the Library, and attract a new audience of philanthropists, city builders and entrepreneurs to support TPL.

COMMENTS

Service Implications and Staffing

The Foundation has requested that TRL close at 12:30 p.m. on the day of the event in order to set-up for the event. Normally, TRL opens at 9 a.m. and closes at 8:30 p.m. on Thursdays. The early closure will reduce public service hours by eight hours on the day of the event.

The Foundation has also requested that the entire second floor (Humanities and Social Sciences Department) be closed to the public on the day of the event including the collections, study space and computers. However, staff would still have access to the floor and would be able to retrieve material from the collections for customers. Customers will still have access to study space and computers on other floors.

The plan is for the Digital Innovation Hub to be closed for the full day due to its proximity to staging and set-up. Although the Atrium and Digital Innovation Hub will be cordoned off, the remainder of the public service areas on the main floor, as well as floors 3 to 5 will remain accessible to the public until closure at 12:30 p.m.

The public will be provided with advance notice of the change in hours and reduced services. Service adjustments will be made at the neighbouring Yorkville Branch to accommodate increased use at that location. Yorkville's regular open hours on Thursdays are 9:00 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. All services at TRL will reopen at 9 a.m. the following morning.

Some staff would normally be scheduled to work until 8:30 p.m. on the proposed night of the gala. Within the provisions of the Collective Agreement, staff schedules could be adjusted to have staff relocated and/or work a day shift finishing by 5:00 p.m. While staff would not be serving the public after 12:30 p.m., there are many activities they could usefully perform after the Library closes at 12:30 p.m.

Safety and Other Environmental Issues

Most of the AV and production set-up and takedown that would be most disruptive to service will take place when the library is closed. However, there is still significant set-up and preparation required during the day on April 7th in the areas where the gala activities are to be held. Early and partial closures of these public service areas will contribute to a safer environment for the public and staff as they will not be in areas where set-up is occurring. There will be noise, movement of furniture, and additional use of the elevators. Where possible, measures will be taken to reduce/minimize impact on service delivery, customers and staff.

If, at the time of the gala, TPL's mandatory vaccine policy is still in effect, all staff, volunteers, contractors, and guests related to the gala will be required to show proof of vaccination before entering TRL.

Alternate Date for Biblio Bash

In the event Biblio Bash is unable to take place on Thursday, April 7, 2022 due to COVID-19 health and safety regulations, TPLF would postpone the event and hold it on Thursday, October 20, 2022.

CONCLUSION

With 13 years of experience hosting this event (Book Lovers' Ball and Biblio Bash), TPLF and TPL staff anticipate that the gala will raise funds and awareness for TPL, attract new donors, and create a beautiful and memorable experience for all. TPLF and TPL staff will be working in concert to ensure that there is minimal impact on service beyond what is outlined in this report, and look forward to a successful gala.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

Vickery Bowles
City Librarian

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Memorandum from Jennifer Jones, Toronto Public Library Foundation dated December 6, 2021 requesting approval to hold the Biblio Bash at the Toronto Reference Library in 2022

MEMO

Date: December 6, 2021

To: Vickery Bowles, City Librarian

From: Jennifer Jones, President, Toronto Public Library Foundation

RE: **Toronto Reference Library as venue for Biblio Bash**

SUMMARY

This Memo requests that Toronto Public Library approve the use of the Toronto Reference Library branch as a venue for Biblio Bash - the Foundation's annual fundraising gala.

The event would take place on Thursday, April 7, 2022. For set-up purposes, the Toronto Public Library Foundation (TPLF) 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 12:30 p.m. on April 7, 2022.

In the event the gala cannot take place on Thursday, April 7, 2022 due to COVID-19 health and safety regulations, the event would be postponed until Fall 2022 and take place on October 20, 2022 and would also require early closure.

Hosting *Biblio Bash* at the Reference Library provides an opportunity to tell a compelling story of the transformation that Toronto Public Library is going through from being 'just' about books to being a library of the future and attracting philanthropists and city builders to connect with this institution that remains as relevant today as it did 100 years ago.

BENEFITS OF HOSTING BIBLIO BASH AT THE TORONTO REFERENCE LIBRARY

The goal of this fundraising event is to elevate the TPL brand amongst philanthropists and city builders and demonstrate it is a critical civic institution that plays an essential role in the health and prosperity of this city; that it is the great equalizer; that it bridges the gap between the have and have-nots and ensures all Torontonians have the opportunity to maximize their economic and social potential. This message resonates now more than ever.

The gala objectives are:

- Revenue target \$724K
- Attract 40-60 new prospects to the Library
- Create media buzz
- Increase social media followers

We will design the event to attract the group of individual philanthropists that represent the diverse audience we serve. This will include well-known Toronto philanthropists and will be expanded to include new Canadian communities, entrepreneurs in technology and health and leaders in business. Hosting the event at the Toronto Reference Library also provides the opportunity to showcase its spaces and collections, and to highlight what donor support helps make possible, thereby encouraging potential future donations.

While our 2022 plans are not all yet confirmed, we are in the process of exploring ways to highlight major elements of the Reference Library by using them to host components of the event. In 2019 (the last year we were able to host Biblio Bash), cocktails and a silent auction were hosted on the second floor of TRL and dinner and entertainment took place in the atrium, and a popular photo studio was housed in the Digital Innovation Hub.

TRL STAFF OPPORTUNITY

As a result of closing at 12:30pm, the TRL staff are able to use the afternoon for staff development as outlined by branch manager, Gillian Byrne. This was successfully tested in 2019 year and will be presented again in 2022 should provincial regulations permit it.

SERVICE IMPACTS

The Foundation appreciates the importance of minimizing the service impacts of hosting a major event in the Reference Library and has consulted with senior Library management and Appel Salon staff. At the same time, we are striving to contain event set-up costs and are in the process of consulting with outside suppliers. 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 12:30 p.m. on April 7, 2022. Based on our explorations to date, we are confident the public service impacts detailed in the following staged set-up will be the maximum required in order to contain costs and ensure the greatest possible amount of fundraising revenue from the event:

Tuesday April 5, 2022

- Atrium & 2nd floor balconies - AV and production set-up, including rigging and staging install, partial load in of décor, ensuring access to service points, collections, washrooms and exit/entrances remains unaffected; (after 8:30pm)

Wednesday, April 6, 2022

- Continue atrium & 2nd floor balconies - AV and production set-up, including rigging and staging install, partial load in of décor, ensuring access to service points, collections, washrooms and exit/entrances remains unaffected; (after 8:30pm)
- Bram & Bluma Appel Salon – reserved for deliveries, power, storage, etc.; (commencing at 12:00am Thursday, April 7, 2022)
- Limited décor and dinner set-up (approximately 18 round tables) in main area of Atrium (after 8:30pm to be stanchioned off until full library closure on Thursday, April 7 2022), ensuring access to service points, collections, washrooms and exit/entrances remains unaffected, and a clear exit path for customers defined;
- Full closure of the second floor to the public; the second floor would remain accessible to library staff and access to collections unimpeded; (commencing at 12:00am Thursday, April 7th)

Thursday, April 7, 2022

- Throughout the day, computer terrace will be accessible to the public with the exception of 8 computers;
- Full closure of the Digital Innovation Hub to the public; will remain accessible to library staff
- 12:30pm on Thursday, April 7, 2022 – full closure of the Toronto Reference Library to the public with signage posted at least one week in advance advising patrons of the change.

Friday, April 8, 2022

- Bram & Bluma Appel Salon, Beeton Hall and public areas on 1st and 2nd floor cleaned and restored by 6:00am
- All staff computers and DIH restored to normal by 9am.
- And computer terrace computers restored to normal by 10:30am

FINANCIAL IMPACTS

Branch, venue rentals, digital services and facilities staff are required to support the evening event and will be supported by TPL's operating budget. As a result, there may be extra hours offered to staff.

The TPL Foundation will cover all the event costs as well as costs for additional cleaning and additional security (as needed) other than the direct TPL staffing costs including branch, venue rentals, digital services and facilities staff who will be required to support the event. Costs for these staff, including extra hours or overtime as required, will be paid for by TPL from the approved 2022 operating budget.

REQUEST

It is requested that the Toronto Public Library Board:

1. Approve, in principle, full closure of the Toronto Reference Library as of 12:30 p.m. on April 7, 2022, as well as partial closure of select other spaces during open hours as detailed in this report.

BACKGROUND

For 10 years the Book Lovers' Ball was the premier fundraising event of the Foundation. Since the inaugural event in 2006, the Foundation has raised over \$4 million through sponsorship, table/ticket sales and onsite fundraising, all in support of Toronto Public Library.

Following its 10th year, a decision was made to skip a year and pause to consider its future and the event was re-imagined with a re-invigorated volunteer committee and in 2017, the first Biblio Bash was held at the Toronto Reference Library. To date Biblio Bash has raised over \$2 million in support of TPL.

While TPL and the Foundation will always honour the legacy of books (and the continued love of books!) we are looking forward to celebrating the future of libraries and the role that technology and other innovative programs and services play in serving the needs of our customers and their communities. In the context of the pandemic's impact on vulnerable communities, this message is ever more important.

The gala goal is to attract current and new philanthropists to the event; design a beautiful and memorable evening; enable a powerful connection to TPL; leave attendees wanting to know more about the Library and its future; turn attendees into advocates and/or donors,



and attract philanthropists and city builders to connect with an institution that remains as vibrant and relevant as ever.

Jennifer Jones

Jennifer Jones

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