

20.



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

Biblio Bash at the Toronto Reference Library – Thursday, April 20, 2023

Date: October 25, 2022

To: Toronto Public Library Board

From: City Librarian

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to place before the Toronto Public Library Board a request from the Toronto Public Library Foundation (TPLF) to hold Biblio Bash at the Toronto Reference Library (TRL) on Thursday, April 20, 2023.

The Foundation's request is described in the attached memorandum. It sets out the anticipated advantages for both the Foundation and the Library in hosting the event at TRL and the impact it would have on service to the public.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Librarian recommends that the Toronto Public Library Board:

1. Approves the request from the Toronto Public Library Foundation to host the 2023 Biblio Bash gala fundraiser at the Toronto Reference Library on Thursday, April 20, 2023, including closure of the second floor and Digital Innovation Hub on the day of the event and full closure of the branch as of 12:30 p.m. on April 20, 2023.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Proceeds from Biblio Bash will be used to enhance and expand library services as per TPL and TPLF's agreed upon fundraising priorities. 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 2023 operating budget.

The estimated revenue projection for Biblio Bash 2023 is \$875,000.

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

ISSUE BACKGROUND

While the landscape of fundraising events in Toronto is competitive, TPLF believes there is a tremendous opportunity to differentiate this event from other not-for-profit galas and deliver a meaningful and memorable evening including hosting it in a unique space: the Toronto Reference Library.

After a two-year hiatus (2020 and 2021) related to the COVID-19 pandemic, Biblio Bash 2022 was met with great enthusiasm, raising over \$837,000 in support of Toronto Public Library with a significant portion of funds raised directed to supporting Internet Connectivity Kits.

- In 2017, \$604,000 was raised with a portion of proceeds supporting digital innovation at TPL.
- In 2018, \$704,000 was raised with a portion of the proceeds allocated to supporting youth programs and services.
- In 2019, \$755,000 was raised with a portion of proceeds directed to two fundraising priorities: after school clubs and a new bookmobile.

This event continues to sell out early and attracts some of Toronto's high-profile philanthropists, bringing in many new and strategic supporters to the Library. 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.

COMMENTS

Holding Biblio Bash at TRL is a unique opportunity for both the Library and the Foundation. It is a chance to showcase TRL as a premier venue destination, and demonstrate in a very visual and experiential way what today's vital and vibrant library is capable of.

The goal of the gala is to:

- increase net funds in support of Toronto Public Library
- design a beautiful, memorable and awareness-building event that connects guests to the Library
- demonstrate the critical role TPL plays in supporting the residents of Toronto and leave attendees wanting to know more about the Library
- generate relevant print and digital media coverage about TPL and TPLF
- attract a new audience of philanthropists, city builders and entrepreneurs in order to provide them with meaningful ways to invest in the Library and the health and well-being of our city
- generate relevant print and digital media coverage.

Service Impacts

Hosting Biblio Bash at TRL will have unavoidable service impacts on Thursday, April 20, 2023 for which the public will be provided with advance notice of the change in hours and reduced services. The Foundation has identified its broadest anticipated needs for space and closures. As more detailed plans are developed, adjustments may be made where possible to further reduce service impacts.

Service Hours

The Foundation has requested that TRL close at 12:30 p.m. on the day of the event in order to complete the set-up for the event itself and ensure there is as little disruption as possible to staff and users. Normally, TRL closes at 8:30 p.m. on Thursday evenings. The early closure will reduce public service hours on the day of the event by 8 hours. In 2019 and 2022, a 12:30 p.m. closure time was approved, as it was a better option than closing the branch at 3:00 p.m. as previously done in 2017 & 2018. Closing at 12:30pm allows all parties the additional time required for an efficient and seamless gala setup. It is also a more suitable TRL staff changeover time, as opposed to mid-afternoon time when many after-school users arrive between 2:00 – 3:00 p.m., and are then requested to leave almost immediately after arriving.

Service Implications

The Foundation has requested that the entire second floor (Humanities and Social Sciences Department) be closed to the public on the day of the event. This is the largest service floor at TRL and is well used by students and genealogists. Study space and computers would be unavailable to the public. Staff would still have access to the floor and would be able to retrieve material from the collections for customers to use on other service floors. Additional security would need to be present to ensure that the public does not access the second floor on the day of the event.

The Foundation has also requested use of the Digital Innovation Hub and for that space to be closed for the full day of the gala for staging and set-up. Eight computers will also be taken offline in the Information Commons for the full day of the event. Although the Atrium and Digital Innovation Hub will be cordoned off, the remainder of the public service areas on the

main floor will remain accessible to the public.

Services will be fully reinstated by branch opening, 9:00 a.m. the following morning, with the exception of the Digital Innovation Hub being restored by 10:30 a.m. and a small number of Terrace computers along with eight computers in the Information Commons being restored by 1:30 p.m.

Staffing Implications

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, and given two weeks' notice, staff schedules could be adjusted to have staff relocated and/or to work a day shift finishing by 5:00 p.m. at the latest. 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. Pages and part-time staff normally scheduled to work that evening and not able to work during the day could have their hours rescheduled at an alternate and mutually agreed upon time. Staff would also be able to use vacation for all or part of the period of closure if that was their preference. Staff in the Answerline Department could continue to work onsite until 8:30PM and leave by staff exits, or will work offsite on this date as much as feasible. Disruptions to Answerline workspace will be mitigated as much as possible. All event plans that could impact Answerline services are subject to approval from the Manager of TRL.

Safety and other Environmental Issues

Most of the AV and production set-up and takedown that would be most disruptive to service would take place during the evening preceding and following the gala when the library is closed. However, there will be significant set-up and preparation required during the day on April 20th in the areas where the gala activities are to be held. Early and partial closures of these public service spaces 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 along with other possible impacts not yet fully determined throughout the day. Where possible, measures will be taken to reduce/minimize impact on public service and customers. Environmental impacts to Answerline and any other staff spaces will be tested and any issues mitigated before 5 p.m.

the day of the event.

All staff, volunteers and contractors, will be required to show proof of vaccination before entering the TRL as per TPL's vaccine policy.

CONCLUSION

With 14 years of experience hosting this event (Book Lovers' Ball and Biblio Bash), TPLF and TPL staff anticipate that the gala will achieve the outcomes of attracting current and new philanthropists, raising both funds and awareness of the brand, and creating an enchanting 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 stated in this report and look forward to a successful gala.

CONTACT

Moe Hosseini-Ara; Director, Branch Operations & Customer Experience;
Tel: 416-397-5944; E-mail: mhoss@tpl.ca

SIGNATURE

Vickery Bowles
City Librarian

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Memorandum from Will Scott, Toronto Public Library Foundation dated October 25, 2022 requesting approval to hold the Biblio Bash at the Toronto Reference Library in 2023.

MEMO

Date: October 25, 2022

To: Vickery Bowles, City Librarian

From: Will Scott, Chief Executive Officer, 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 20, 2023. For set-up purposes, the Toronto Public Library Foundation (TPLF) would require 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 20, 2023.

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; to demonstrate it is a critical civic institution that plays an essential role in the health and prosperity of this city; to showcase TPL as the great equalizer where everyone has free and equitable access to library resources to maximize their economic and social potential; to highlight TPL's impact in helping the city re-build post-pandemic.

The gala objectives are:

- Revenue target \$875,000
- Attract 40-60 new donor prospects to the Library
- Create local and national 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 2023 plans are not all yet confirmed, we aim to highlight major elements of the Reference Library by using them to host components of the event. In 2022, the cocktail reception 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.

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 Venue Rentals staff. At this 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 20, 2023. 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 18, 2023

- 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 8:30 p.m.)
- Space to be determined with TRL where to best store AV equipment overnight.; (after 8:30 p.m.)

Wednesday, April 19, 2023

- 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 8:30 p.m.)
- Limited décor and dinner set-up (approximately 18 round tables) in main area of Atrium (after 8:30 p.m. to be stanchioned off until full library closure on Thursday, April 20, 2023), ensuring access to service points, collections, washrooms and exit/entrances remains unaffected, and a clear exit path for customers is defined.
- Bram & Bluma Appel Salon – reserved for deliveries, power, storage, etc. of AV equipment and 2nd floor furniture; setup of Prologue and Novella for volunteers and room for gala guests and staff to observe Ramadan; (after 8:30 p.m. and following any teardown of events booked earlier on this date)
- Learning Centre #1 next to DIH – to be used for AV storage; (available all day)

Thursday, April 20, 2023

- Full closure of the 2nd floor to the public; the 2nd floor would remain accessible to library staff and access to collections unimpeded; (commencing at 12:00 a.m.)
- Bram & Bluma Appel Salon – reserved for the day deliveries, power, storage, etc.; volunteer and Ramadan prayer space for gala guests and staff

- 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
- Learning Centre #1 next to DIH – to be used for AV storage; (available all day)
- Beeton Hall, Founders Room, and Sonnet Room are reserved for the day by TPLF
- 12:30 p.m. on Thursday, April 20, 2023 – full closure of the Toronto Reference Library to the public with signage posted at least one week in advance advising patrons of the change.
- Administration area – to be used by catering team to transport food from shipping/loading dock to Beeton Hall; extra security to accompany catering team at all times

Friday, April 21, 2023

- Bram & Bluma Appel Salon and public areas on 1st and 2nd floor cleaned and restored by 6:00 a.m.
- Beeton Hall to be cleaned and restored by 6:00 a.m.
- 1st and 2nd floor info desks to be restored to normal by 9:00 a.m.
- DIH to be restored to normal by 10:30 a.m.
- Computer terrace and Information Commons computers restored to normal by 1:30 p.m.

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 2023 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 20, 2023, 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 \$2.9 million in support of TPL.

While TPL and the TPL 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's goal is to attract current and new philanthropists to the event; design a beautiful and memorable evening that showcases TRL; enable a powerful connection to TPL; leave attendees wanting to know more about the Library and its future; secure media coverage to help build local/national awareness about giving to TPL; 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.

Will Scott
Chief Executive Officer
Toronto Public Library Foundation
416-407-1322 | wscott@tpl.ca