

**Biblio Bash at the Toronto Reference Library – Thursday, April 23, 2020**

<b>Date:</b>	October 22, 2019
<b>To:</b>	Toronto Public Library Board
<b>From:</b>	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 23, 2020.

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 2020 Biblio Bash gala fundraiser at the Toronto Reference Library on Thursday, April 23, 2020, including closure of the second floor on the day of the event and full closure of the branch as of 12:30 p.m. on April 23, 2020.

**FINANCIAL IMPACT**

---

Proceeds from Biblio Bash will be used to enhance and expand library services as per the Foundation's fundraising priorities. Branch, venue rentals, digital services and facilities staff are required to support the evening and will be supported by TPL's operating budget. As a result, there may be extra hours offered to staff.

The Foundation will cover all the event costs as well as costs for additional cleaning and additional security.

The Director, Finance and 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. The event continues to gain momentum. In 2017, \$604,000 was raised to support digital innovation at TPL. In 2018, \$704,000 was raised, with a portion of the proceeds allocated to supporting youth programs and services. Last year the event exceeded our goal and raised over \$755,000 for two important fundraising priorities; after school clubs and a new bookmobile. The current estimated revenue projection for 2020 is \$750,000. The past two years the event sold out early and attracted some of Toronto's high-profile philanthropists, who were new supporters of TPL.

The goal of the gala is to increase net funds in support of Toronto Public Library, to design a beautiful and memorable evening connecting guests to the Library, to leave attendees wanting to know more about the Library, and to attract a new audience of philanthropists, city builders and entrepreneurs to connect with this institution that remains as relevant today as it did 100 years ago.

## **COMMENTS**

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

### **Service Impacts**

Hosting Biblio Bash at TRL will have unavoidable service impacts on Thursday, April 23, 2020 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.

Alternate service adjustments will be made at the neighbouring Yorkville branch. Yorkville's regular open hours on April 23, 2020 are 9:00 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. During the full closure of TRL on April 23, additional staff and security will be deployed to

Yorkville in order to manage the increased volume and usage at the branch.

#### 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 eight hours. In 2019 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 and 2018. Closing at 12:30 p.m. allows all parties the additional time required for an efficient and seamless gala set-up. It is also a more suitable TRL staff changeover time, 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 (out of 40) 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.

#### 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. By closing earlier to the public, staff at TRL will have the rare opportunity to do building-wide training and team building on the upper floors. 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 will work in their third floor workroom until 8:30 p.m., and leave by staff exits.

Disruptions to Answerline workspace will be mitigated as much as possible.

#### Safety and other Environmental Issues

Most of the AV and production set-up and take-down 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 23 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 5:00 p.m. the day of the event.

## **CONCLUSION**

With 13 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; Email: [mhoss@tpl.ca](mailto:mhoss@tpl.ca)

## **SIGNATURE**

---

Vickery Bowles  
City Librarian

## **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment 1: Memorandum from Jennifer Jones, Toronto Public Library Foundation dated October 10, 2019 requesting approval to hold the Biblio Bash at the Toronto Reference Library in 2020



**MEMO**

**Date:** October 10, 2019  
**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 TPL Foundation's fundraising gala.

The event would take place on Thursday, April 23, 2020. 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 12:30 p.m. on April 23, 2019.

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.

The gala objectives are:

- Revenue target \$750K
- Attract 40-60 new prospects to the Library
- Create media buzz
- Increase social media followers
- Recruit new senior volunteers for future Biblio Bash gala committees

We will design the event to attract the group of individual philanthropists that represent the diverse audience we serve. This will include the popular Toronto philanthropists and will be expanded to include the 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 2020 plans are not all yet confirmed, we are in the process of exploring ways to highlight major elements of the Reference Library by utilizing them to host components of the event. Last year, cocktails and 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 last year and will be presented again in 2020.

#### 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 Library 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 23, 2020. 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 will be returned to the Library:

#### Tuesday April 21, 2020

- Atrium & 2<sup>nd</sup> floor balconies - AV and production set-up, including rigging and staging install, partial load in of décor; (after 8:30pm)

#### Wednesday, April 22, 2020

- Continue atrium & 2<sup>nd</sup> floor balconies - AV and production set-up, including rigging and staging install, partial load in of décor; (after 8:30pm)
- Bram & Bluma Appel Salon and Beeton Hall – reserved for deliveries, power, storage, etc.; (commencing at 12:00am Thursday, April 23, 2020)
- 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 23, 2020)
- Full closure of the second floor to the public; the second floor would remain accessible to library staff; (commencing at 12:00am Thursday, April 23<sup>rd</sup>)

### Thursday, April 23, 2020

- 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 23, 2020 – 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 24, 2020

- Bram & Bluma Appel Salon, Beeton Hall and public areas on 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 and will be supported by TPL's operating budget. As a result, there may be extra hours offered to staff. The Foundation will cover all the event costs as well as costs for additional cleaning and additional security.

### 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 23, 2020, 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 Toronto Public Library 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.

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 connecting customers and their communities.

The gala goal is to attract the 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  
President, Toronto Public Library Foundation  
416-393-7134 | jjones@torontopubliclibrary.ca