

Strategic Plan Highlights

"Libraries are a vital part of a civilized city. Reading should be encouraged. It enriches one's life and also provides information." Strategic Plan Consultation, 2008

THEME:
Engaging Toronto's Diverse Communities

Highlights

GOAL: Encourage participation in city life

The annual **June Callwood Lecture**, *Justice Denied: the Wrongfully Convicted in Canada* was hosted by broadcast journalist, Linden MacIntyre and featured James Lockyer, a lawyer and social justice activist. The event coincided with the acquittal of Robert Baltovich; Lockyer was counsel for Baltovich. In a fitting tribute to June Callwood's legacy, the lecture offered attendees a unique opportunity to discuss a social justice issue as it was unfolding. The program was supported by the Toronto Public Library Foundation.

With Toronto Public Health, the **Building Physically Active Communities Partnership** was expanded by 6 locations to 18 branches for the loan of pedometers to the public.

A new edition of **St. Clair West in Pictures: A History of the Communities of Carlton, Davenport, Earls court, and Oakwood** was published in partnership with the Regal Heights Resident's Association to coincide with the reopening of the Dufferin/St. Clair Branch.

In a joint initiative with **Heritage Toronto**, commemorative plaques were installed at the Runnymede Branch designed by noted Canadian architect John M. Lyle, and at the Dufferin/St. Clair Branch. Local history walks were part of the celebrations.

GOAL: Promote greater participation in library programs and services

Reading is the cultural activity with the largest participation and supports participation in other cultural activities. The Library's **collection budget** of \$17.4 million was allocated to support strategic plan priorities and local needs.

2006 census data and circulation activity were reviewed to identify demographic changes and use to ensure **multilingual collections** are appropriately located in communities across the city.

Natural Standards.com, an **electronic database** of natural health treatments and remedies from the Harvard School of Medicine was added to the Library's electronic resources. Another new online resource added in 2008 is eCPS, the online Compendium of Pharmaceuticals and Specialties, a useful resource for students, people seeking information about prescription drugs as well as newcomer professionals seeking accreditation.

Over 161,000 **borrower cards** were issued in 2008, a 3% increase over 2007.

The lecture series, **Inspired Lives** provided outreach to new audiences. Featured speakers included Terry Evanshen, a former CFL football star.

Branch staff engaged in **outreach efforts** to meet the needs of local communities; for example, the Northern District Branch, partnered with Canadian Tire corporate offices to launch a program to introduce the Library and its services to its staff. In the Lawrence Heights community, local homework clubs were established through the efforts of the Barbara Frum staff working with the Lawrence Heights Interorganizational Network.

TPL has an official presence on **Facebook and Twitter**. Facebook users can join by "becoming a fan" and receive updates on library programs and events, view photos and videos, and post comments on the "wall" and discussion board.

GOAL: Support Toronto's children in developing early reading skills

Ready for Reading, the core literacy program for children from birth to five years, reached 5,265 participants through family based outreach programs featuring stories, song and rhyming games. The program is supported by the Toronto Public Library Foundation. Two KidsStop interactive literacy centres were introduced at S. Walter Stewart and Dufferin/St. Clair.

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88% of kindergarten classes (42,221 children) were reached through the 2008 Kindergarten Outreach Program with high participation in priority neighbourhoods. A redesigned package was translated into 19 languages to meet the needs of newcomer children and their families. Over 9,100 children received new library cards through this program in 2008.
Laugh Out Loud (LOL) The TD Summer Reading Club featured work by Patricia Storms, a Toronto based cartoonist. 34,373 children registered for the program, an 8% increase over 2007. Outreach included Toronto Community Housing and Parks, Forestry and Recreation day camp programs. Support is provided by the Toronto Public Library Foundation. The Grade 4 Outreach program was launched as an adjunct to the summer reading club. 363 classes with 7,574 students were reached.
Dial-A-Story was expanded to 11 languages with addition of stories in Gujarati with support from the Foundation. Young listeners enjoyed stories celebrating Black History and Asian Heritage Month as well as a featured story for the TD Summer Reading author Katherine McGreechan.
GOAL: Support youth in ways their educational achievement as a foundation for success
148 schools and 19,678 students were reached through The High School Outreach Program which highlights important resources for students including electronic databases, research materials, and popular reading selections.
Homework Help for Teens was offered at 6 branches with attendance of 970.
Toronto Public Library is a founding partner in the Transitional Intervention Program for Suspended Students sponsored by the Toronto Catholic District School Board. The program provides one on one mentoring to suspended students in library branches and is being considered as a model by the province. Over 1,000 at risk students benefited from the program.
A number of innovative programs were offered to encourage youth to read including a pilot Teen Summer Reading Club featuring art work and reading suggestions by youth; 17 branches supported participation from 800 youth Literacy Through Hip Hop , and the Young Voices Conference provided support and inspiration for young authors.
The Library supports students in a number of ways; 23 school placements were completed at multiple branches including a job shadowing program at the Spadina Road Branch for Aboriginal students. Staff proctored 221 exams. The Library partnered in the highly successful Pathways to Education Program.
GOAL: Engage our youth in ways that are meaningful to them, with emphasis on leadership skills and social integration
Youth Advisory Groups were created at the Burrows Hall, Flemingdon Park and Weston branches bringing the number of groups to 39.
Teen graphic book collections were expanded by 25 percent with the result that use increased 75%.
The first Newcomer Youth Orientation Week (NOW) was offered in partnership with Citizenship and Immigration Canada and local settlement agencies. Newcomer youth were partnered with a peer mentor for the last week in August to pave the way for a smooth transition into their new high school. 18 branches hosted the students for a day introducing library service and volunteer opportunities; 585 students benefited from the program.
The Teen Forgiveness Fines and Fees Waiver Program was offered for a second year, to support the Library's ongoing commitment to providing barrier free service. 2,594 coupons were redeemed and 359 cards renewed over the 3 month period.
The 3rd Annual Teen Volunteer Fair attracted 282 visitors to the North York Central Library.

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Many branches provided programs of interest to local youth including after school time programs, focusing on leadership, community empowerment and violence prevention. Sample programs include: an after school drop in program at the Jane/Dundas Branch offered in partnership with Four Villages Community Health Centre; **Your Road to Success** a mentorship program for youth who have been involved with the criminal justice system; **Theatre for Peace**, a 2 week intergenerational project, focusing on building community capacity and violence prevention at Albion; and **Settin' Stone** a literacy and art program where youth created a 3-D Poem at the Maria A. Shchuka Branch.

GOAL: Enhance older adults' quality of life and access to lifelong learning

In June, the first annual, **Grey Matters Series** celebrated Seniors' Month. Engaging speakers discussed current affairs, activism, and personal and cultural growth in the second phase of life. All programs were well attended with a lecture on Canada's role in the war in Afghanistan being one of the most popular.

Unabridged audiobooks were expanded by 13 percent with a corresponding increase in use of 14 percent.

TPL @ Your Fingertips Series offered computer training and Internet searching for seniors in learning centres across the city; popular sessions included keyboarding basics, online health, travel information and memoir writing.

Many branches offer unique seniors' programs, for example, Lillian H. Smith partnered with **CareFirst Seniors** to host a Chinese New Years Festival for 200 seniors. Local youth members baked and served cookies.

Results	Total	% Increase (over 2007)
TD Summer Reading Club	34,373	8%
Youth Programs Offered	2,799	50%
Attendance at Youth Programs	59,555	82%
Seniors' Programs Offered	524	21%
Attendance at Seniors' Programs	9,141	7%

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"Even through I was 60 years old, I wanted to read books and to fill out my own forms and to write my own messages...I wanted to be independent." Hortense McCarthy, TPL Adult Literacy Program participant and winner of a 2008 Canada Post Community Literacy Award. Shelf Life, September, 2008.

THEME:
Addressing the Growing Income Gap

Highlights

GOAL: Address the needs of vulnerable individuals and neighbourhoods, working in partnership with others

Staff continued to be strong partners in the City's **Neighbourhood Action Teams** in 13 priority communities.

Employment Support

Library use increases during periods of **economic downturn** and Toronto Public Library is experiencing this trend. Many more people are visiting library branches to access computers, the Internet, email and word processing applications, to read newspapers and magazines, consult reference books, and to ask staff for assistance. Business and Urban Affairs at the Toronto Reference Library delivered 50 programs on finding a job to 750 participants; through the Newcomer Information Service, 500 job seekers received an orientation to the Toronto Reference Library and individual appointments are offered for job seekers.

Outreach

The **Working Together Project** explored best practices for providing service to the socially excluded. The project concluded in 2008 with the publication of *Community-Led Libraries Toolkit*. The project was a partnership between Vancouver, Halifax, Regina and Toronto Public Libraries and Human Resources and Social Development Canada, and focused effective methods to involve targeted communities in service planning to remove barriers to access.

The **Story Time Outreach** initiative, a program supported by the Foundation, reached 1,776 adults and 2,530 children with 233 new library cards being issued, an increase of 32%. Emphasis was placed on providing programming in convenient community locations, including work places, to reach caregivers and children.

Many branches partner with **Early Years** centres to provide innovative programs, for example, Mount Dennis offered a Creative Expressions program for 500 children and caregivers resulting in a whimsical art show; Maria A. Shchuka offered *Move and Groove*, an active play program for parents and preschoolers and the Weston Branch offered a popular puppetry program.

Through Community Access Program Brighter Futures funding, Eatonville staff offered a **Reading Circle program** at the George Hull Centre. The program targeted at-risk children in the East Mall community.

Many branches provide **outreach visits to local shelters**; for example, the Lillian H. Smith staff went to the Evergreen Youth Shelter, Eva's Phoenix Youth Shelter and Yonge Street Mission.

Newcomers

The **Library Settlement Partnerships (LSP)** was expanded from 7 to 19 branches providing more than 5,000 newcomers with access to settlement services in their local community. An additional 2,600 newcomers received service through the summer program.

559 newcomer children participated in **English Can be Fun** at 25 locations. The program is supported by the Toronto Public Library Foundation.

The Library partners with **ServiceOntario** to provide access to Ontario government information on library computers expanded to 25 branches.

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Through the **Kids@Computers** Program, 900 children received a computer, educational software, home Internet access and computer training.

GOAL: Focus on supporting literacy and educational goals for adults

The Adult Literacy Program celebrated 30 years of services, an inspiring library success story enabling many adults to achieve a fundamental life skill. Nine branches offer one on one tutoring with over 170 learners assisted in 2008. 52 branches have adult literacy collections.

Popular **User Education** Sessions were offered at branches across the city including: *Web Basics* and *Email Made Easy* Access. Free computer training at the Library continues to be an important support in many communities. Over 12,000 participants received hands on computer training.

Results	Total	% Increase
New Registrations	161,764	3%
Literacy Programs Offered (Children, Adult, Teen)	930	4%

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"The Library has always stayed abreast with the latest technology to make its services very user friendly."
Strategic Plan Consultation, 2008.

THEME:
Expanding Access to Technology and Online Services

Highlights

GOAL: Create an outstanding virtual library

TPL staff members made well received presentations at the City of Toronto's **Web 2.0 Summit** in November. The focus on the conference was enhancing municipal services and resident engagement through the successful adaptation of new technologies.

Access to electronic databases became easier with the launch of a new **Article Search**, offering enhanced usability; searchers have many more options including choosing specific magazines, full text articles only and grouping search results by topic.

A **new catalogue** was launched in February. A related blog allows users to submit questions and recommendations to Library staff.

A project to **redesign the Library's website** and implement a more powerful search engine was initiated to improve access, interactivity and promotion of content.

GOAL: Ensure access to technology for all

Wireless access was expanded to 33 locations and received very positive comments on a number of blogs.

Youth focussed **media labs** are being planned by youth in partnership with funding from the City of Toronto and the Youth Challenge Fund including Malvern's The Spot (Success, Power, Opportunity, and Teamwork).

Funding for an innovative **Joint Internet Mentoring (JIM)** program was received by Richview Branch from New Horizons Seniors Grant Program. Seniors and youth mentor each other in sessions focusing on life skills information, social networking and research, using the Library's computer resources.

As part of the Library Settlement Program, Victoria Village Branch offered a 5-session **ESL User Education** program for Arabic-speaking women. Topics included: Introduction to the TPL Website, searching the library catalogue, placing holds and Toronto Fun online. A total of 28 participants attended the program.

Gaming programs have been introduced at a number of branches. Malvern held weekly **Computer Gameathon** sessions for teens on Saturday afternoons in its Le@rning Centre; programs were also held at Weston and Albion.

A computer drop in program for seniors was introduced at Richview.

GOAL: Build virtual content

The number of **ebooks, eaudiobooks and evideos** was greatly expanded by 22% with a 64% increase in usage. Access to **Safari Books Online**, a database of current, technology manuals, receives favourable mentions on computer related blogs.

Web 2.0 social networking tools were engaged to communicate, collaborate and engage. Blogs, YouTube, Delicious and Twitter are examples of some of the tools used and incorporated into the delivery of programs.

The Ontario Time Machine won the 2008 Ministry of Culture Award for Innovation. Developed in partnership with the Kingston Frontenac Public Library and the Hamilton Public Library, this innovative, classroom-ready educational website provides Ontario history students in grades 7 and 8 with engaging primary source material from the Library's special collections.

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Book Buzz , the Library's online book club has 900 members. Virtual author visits were offered with authors including Toronto Award-winning poet Glen Downie, Professor Robert Wright (Three Nights in Havana) and Audrey Niffenegger (The Time Traveler's Wife).
The Merril Collection of Science Fiction, Speculation and Fantasy is fully catalogued – all 40,000 fiction, non-fiction and anthology titles are accessible through the Library's online catalogue. Many of the materials are rare and unique.

Results	Total	% Increase
Workstation Users	5,499,603	7%

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"A 'cultured person' is literate, unblinkered and has breadth of vision - the Library can open many doors to art, music, architecture, poetry, world travel." Strategic Plan Consultations, 2008.

THEME:
Supporting Creativity and Culture

Highlights

GOAL: Support city-wide and local cultural expression

The Toronto Reference Library hosted **Nuit Blanche** attracting over 5,900 people. An innovative light installation transformed the atrium into a night time forest, while the TD Gallery featured an exhibit on the history of the circus with delightful interactive storytelling by the Rosedale Heights High School Improv Team. Activities continued on the outdoor streetscape all night.

The Library partnered in the **Toronto Book Awards** to host the awards ceremony and profiled nominated authors with programming at a number of locations. With Mayor David Miller announcing the 2008 winner and the CBC's Mary Ito hosting, the awards ceremony highlighted established and emerging authors in Toronto, and their contributions to the city's culture and beyond. Library staff championed authors providing online reviews to complement comments by official judges. Video clips profiling the short listed authors were linked on the Library's website using YouTube.

The Canada Council Heritage Series: Hindsight highlighted the recent work of some of Canada's most interesting writers of historical fiction including Katherine Govier, Helen Humphreys, André Alexis, Alissa York and Micahael Crummy among others.

The Canada Council Heritage Series: Foresight explored science fiction and speculative writing and provided the opportunity for the Library to promote its world-renowned Merrill Collection of Science Fiction, Speculation and Fantasy.

The 4th edition of **Great Reads** was launched at **Word on the Street**. The title is recognized and asked for by name and many inquiries are received about the publications through Answerline in advance of the release date.

The Pen Canada Freedom to Read Week at the Library featured silenced writers Hrant Dink, Anna Politkovskaya and Chris Abani.

The Library partnered in the **Luminato Festival of Arts and Creativity 2008** with programming celebrating the art of the short story with programs featuring eight authors, six collections of stories and four Library locations across the city.

The **3D Stories Partnership** with Lakeshore Arts expanded to include a successful session with author Loris Lesynski at Sherway Gardens.

108 local artists exhibited at 11 prime branch locations as part of Toronto Public Library space for **Toronto Public Library's Art Exhibits** program.

Build the Library's role in providing original and accessible cultural programming

The Sun Life Financial Museum and Arts Pass, MAP, was available in priority branches offering passes to many popular Toronto museum and cultural venues including the ROM and Ontario Science Centre. 21,041 were circulated from branches in priority neighbourhoods. The program is supported by the Toronto Public Library Foundation.

Keep Toronto Reading, a month-long event was held in partnership with Heritage Toronto, Toronto Archives, City Museums, CBC, Spacing and the Toronto Star. 47 events were offered in 25 locations. A new stream of programming, Keep Toronto Reading for Kids, featured Gisele from TVO, as well as programs sponsored by the Royal Ontario Museum, the Science Centre, the National Film Board and the City of Toronto.

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The first ever **Keep Toronto Reading One Book** featuring Michael Redhill's *Consolation* brought Torontonians together in a variety of real and virtual forums to share ideas and opinions on this unique historical story of Toronto. The virtual site allowed users to click on words in an annotated chapter and view historical photos, maps from the Library's collections and read annotations from staff. Redhill was featured on Book Buzz, throughout the month of February. Four Toronto high schools read the book and participated in the launch event. 2,000 copies of *Consolation* circulated peaking at over 400 holds in February.

The Uptown/Downtown author series featured 27 literary events for 1856 participants. Speakers included James Bartleman, the former lieutenant governor, journalist Jan Wong, Gail Bebee, an investment counsellor, David Adams Richards and Elizabeth Hay winners of the Governor General's Award.

The Library celebrated a number of heritage festivals including **Asian Heritage Month**. The launch event, **Between Two Worlds: Embracing the New, Connected to the Old**, hosted by CBC TV's Suhana Meharchand featured Asian music, literature, art and dance. **Black History Month** was also launched at the Toronto Reference Library and the North York Central Library held a conference for black youth. **National Aboriginal Day** was also celebrated through a week of special programming in partnership with Native Canadian Centre.

The TD Gallery featured four exhibits with related programming including *Art Under Cover; From Hanga to Manga: The Graphic Art of Japanese Storytelling; The Circus Comes To Town An Exhibition of Circus Images* and *Local Flavour: Eating in Toronto 1830-1955*. Nearly 8,000 visited the gallery.

Screenwriter Sugith Varughese, creator of the television show *Fraggle Rock* and the crime drama *Blue Murder*, and Karen Connelly, winner of the Orange Broadband Prize for New Writers were Toronto Public Library's 2008 **Writers In Residence**. They reviewed 112 manuscripts participated in Book Buzz, and offered several programs.

Anne of Green Gables: Celebrating 100 Years in Print was created by the Osborne collection to commemorate one of Canada's best-loved children's books. Lucy Maude Montgomery served on the board of the Swansea Library.

Results	Total	% Increase
Circulation	29,800,619	3%
French Circulation	333,465	5%
Programs	26,469	9%
Program Attendance	686,116	6%

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"A community is judged by the quality of its library."
Budget Consultation, 2008.

THEME:
Supporting a Sustainable Library

Highlights

GOAL: Promote environmentally sustainable practices

Sixteen **State of Good Repair** projects to increase the efficiency of buildings were completed. Upgrades included windows, roofs, HVAC systems, and landscaping.

A new learning centre was created at the Albert Campbell District Branch by reusing materials from Cedarbrae.

GOAL: Engage in leadership and advocacy for the essential role of the public library in the community

The Library launched **Our Shared Stories: Writing the Future of Toronto's Library, Toronto Public Library Strategic Plan 2008 - 2011 in the fall**. The plan was created through extensive consultation with the public, stakeholders and staff. Consultations were offered in several languages, online and in many community locations; over 2,000 people participated.

Board Chair Kathy Gallagher Ross, City Librarian, Jane Pyper and Director, Linda Mackenzie participated at a Queen's Park reception organized by the **Federation of Ontario Public Libraries** for Members of Provincial Parliament to advocate about the importance of public libraries and provincial funding to support them.

A Board Retreat took place in October to begin to discuss the Strategic Plan and 2009 work plan.

re:vitalize, the Toronto Reference Library capital campaign was initiated by the Foundation as a complement to the **Absolutely Vital campaign** to support the Library. The Foundation secured \$10 million in provincial funding to support the Toronto Reference Library expansion.

Through the **Federation of Canadian Municipalities**, two Toronto Public Library staff completed a library development project in Indonesia raising awareness of the value of library projects in international development work.

Albion Branch supported the **Canadian Urban Libraries Council** study examining social inclusiveness in libraries. Somali youth provided feedback on a social inclusion audit tool.

GOAL: Ensure sustainability of the budget, staff resources and infrastructure

Staff Resources

122 staff training sessions were offered with attendance of 2636. Training sessions support strategic plan priorities; for example, programming for seniors, *Everyone Serves Youth*, community development and roving.

The **Information Services Team** spring lecture focused on technology trends and the importance of innovation in libraries. 80 staff listened to guest speaker Jesse Hirsh, technology commentator, researcher, and President of OpenFlows Communication.

A full-day **Annual User Education Conference** in October focused on the needs of older learners. Sandra Kerr, Director of Prime Time Learning at Ryerson spoke to staff on essential strategies for engaging seniors.

Staff are using **Web 2.0 technology** to enhance library service. A new readers' advisory wiki features booklists, staff suggestions, and links to useful for reference tools.

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Infrastructure

All usage measures increased at renovated branches upon re-opening with average increased circulation exceeding 20%.

The reopening of **Jane/Dundas** in February provided new spaces for children, teens and adults, wireless Internet access, 11,000 new items and an elevator to increase accessibility. 1,555 visitors attended the opening.

Cliffcrest was relocated in April to a much larger space in the same plaza. The design promotes a new accessible approach to promote browsing.

S. Walter Stewart reopened in May with a glass-sheathed entrance allowing natural light into the interior. Extra room created through the renovation allowed the branch to double the number of public computers; add a café, computer learning centre, quiet study area, teen zone and introduce a KidsStop interactive preschool literacy centre.

Dufferin/St. Clair reopened its doors in October after renovation. The central feature of the renovation was the restoration of historical murals by Toronto artists and the introduction of a KidsStop.

Public Consultations for capital building projects were conducted at Brentwood and Kennedy/Eglinton with over 500 in attendance. Open houses, focus groups and online discussions maximized input received from neighbourhood residents.

Site selection for the new **Scarborough Centre Branch** at 150 Borough Drive was finalized to address a gap in library services in the eastern part of the city.