

Chair's Report September 21, 2015

Strategic Plan

Public and staff consultation for the **2016 - 2019 Strategic Plan** is underway. On August 18 and 19, a full slate of consultation events kicked off with two very successful “Branch Champions” focus groups held at Deer Park and Fairview branches. Thirty-five members of the public participated, providing thoughtful feedback on what they need and want from their public library. At the beginning of September, sessions were held at S. Walter Stewart and Weston branches. Consultation focus groups will continue throughout September and October. A web page with links to a survey, a schedule of public consultation events, and research is available at torontopubliclibrary.ca/telltpl. Three focus groups for staff, facilitated by master coach Darlene Chrissley, are happening on September 18, 21 and 30 at Scarborough Civic Centre Branch, Bloor/Gladstone Branch and Northern District Branch, respectively. Questions about the consultation can be directed to strategicplanconsultation@torontopubliclibrary.ca.

tpl.ca/telltpl

Partnerships, outreach and other community initiatives

The Game is Afoot! Consulting Sherlock Holmes, on display in the Heritage Court at the CNE, featured 25 items from the Library’s Arthur Conan Doyle Collection. Using facsimiles and reproductions, the exhibit took a look at the evolution of Sherlock Holmes over the years through displays, fun activities and interactive games. Last year over 1.43 million people visited the CNE, and at least half of them ventured into the Heritage Court at some point during their visit. This was a fun and engaging way to introduce a new and diverse audience to the Library’s special collections.

The Library has loaned five original works – four paintings and sketches by William G. R. Hind and one rare book – to the Art Gallery of Ontario for their **Pan American-themed exhibit Picturing the Americas: Landscape Painting from Terra Del Fuego to the Arctic**. The exhibit ran from June 20 to September 20, and will travel to two other venues: the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville, Arkansas (Nov. 6, 2015 to January 18, 2016); and then on to the Pinacoteca do Estado de Sao Paulo, in Brazil (Feb. 27 to May 29, 2016).

City librarian Vickery Bowles was elected to the executive board of the Urban Libraries Council (ULC) in the U.S., and will be joining their Access to Digital Content Working Group. The ULC is a membership association of leading public library systems in the U.S. and Canada that advances the value 21st century libraries provide in areas such as education, lifelong learning, workforce and economic development, public safety, health and wellness and environmental sustainability.

The Simcoe Day long weekend at the beginning of August saw more than 9,000 people descend on Toronto Reference Library for the final two days of a week-long celebration of the unique maker spirit of Toronto. The city's most creative people and their projects

gathered together at the Reference Library on August 1 and 2 for the **Toronto Maker Festival 2015**, to share their latest creations, demonstrate their newest projects and facilitate interactive workshops. Many of the visitors were families and young children who were delighted to experience new technology and the maker culture. From learning about 3D printers, to building robots, to designing wearables, to experimenting with electricity, activities came in the form of workshops, tours, jams, skill-shares, tinker-sessions and more! The Festival is presented by Toronto Public Library in cooperation with the team from Toronto Mini Maker Faire.

Digital Innovation Hubs

Digital Innovation Hub fall 2015 programs at the Toronto Reference Library, Fort York Branch and the new Scarborough Civic Centre Branch will highlight new and emerging technologies, including 3D printing, robotics, wearables and virtual reality, just to name a few. Programs are free and open to everyone. Through the technology services, programs, and staff support offered by the Library's Digital Innovation Hubs, Toronto Public Library supports creativity, encourages collaboration, and sparks experimentation and innovation for creators and entrepreneurs of all ages. The popular **Innovator in Residence program** returns to all three Hub locations, and launching this fall, the **Hub Talks speaker series** will showcase the global impact of new and emerging technologies. On September 26, Toronto Reference Library will host a Speed Mentoring Hangout where guests can network with professionals in the technology and digital media industries for 10-minute one-on-one conversations. And on November 14 and 15, Toronto Reference Library will host the Library's inaugural hackathon, focused on open data. Working with Open Data Institute, the Library will invite developers, data enthusiasts, and idea people/thinkers to work with mentors to learn and understand how to use open data to create concepts and prototypes that address library needs.

tpl.ca/dihprograms

Programs and exhibits

The finalists for the 31st annual **Toronto Book Awards**, announced in August, all have “great stories that enrich our experience of the city,” according to Mayor John Tory. The shortlist includes *Fifteen Dogs* by André Alexis (also a Giller Prize long list finalist), *Stone Mattress* by Margaret Atwood, *All the Broken Things* by Kathryn Kuitenbrouwer, *The Last Hockey Game* by Bruce McDougall and *Station Eleven* by Emily St. John Mandel. The winner will be announced on October 15 at a public gala event held at the Bram & Bluma Appel Salon, hosted by CBC’s Gill Deacon. The Toronto Book Awards are made possible through a partnership between the Toronto Public Library and the City of Toronto.

tpl.ca/tba

Toronto Public Library's showcase of top Canadian books and authors, **the eh List**, returns for its sixth season with a roster of award-winning writers from across the country, including Scotiabank Giller Prize winner Will Ferguson, Governor General's Award winner Nino Ricci, Trillium Book Prize winner Camilla Gibb and RBC Taylor Prize winner Plum Johnson. Also appearing are Canadian curling champion Colleen Jones,

award-winning Canadian science journalist Alanna Mitchell with John Geiger, 2015 Trillium Book Prize winner Kate Cayley and Canadian cartoonist Lynn Johnston.
tpl.ca/ehlist

The Bram & Bluma Appel Salon, Toronto Public Library's signature event space for guests from the world of literature, the performing arts, politics and pop culture brings 24 highly anticipated events to the stage this fall, including Carrie Brownstein, Wab Kinew, Margaret Atwood, Jonathan Franzen, Shilpi Somaya Gowda, Salman Rushdie, Janet Evanovitch, Ian Rankin and John Irving. Earlier this month, the Appel Salon presented Mariel Hemingway, Kathy Reichs and Lawrence Hill to sold out crowds.

tpl.ca/appelsalon

Fall is a great time of the year for creative teens as Young Voices initiatives ramp up. **Young Voices magazine celebrates its 50th anniversary** with the launch of the 2015 issue on October 7 at North York Central Library. The location of the launch is appropriate, as *Young Voices* was first published in 1965 by the former North York Public Library system. The **2015 Young Voices Writers Conference** follows hard on the heels of the magazine launch. Also at North York Central Library, the conference on October 10 is a full-day opportunity for teens to meet with their peers and to work with professionals on their creative endeavours. And straddling both these events, starting September 23, the **2015 Young Voices electronic writer in residence**, Eve Silver, will be working one-on-one by email with Toronto teens who have submitted their creative writing. She will also be posting writing exercises and tips and advice on the tpl teens blog until the completion of her residency in early December.

tpl.ca/teen | tpl.ca/youngvoices | tpl.ca/yvconference

Library resources for small business entrepreneurs, available year round, are highlighted in the fall with the publication of the Library's annual booklet *Starting a Small Business?* Featured in the booklet is: information about the Library's entrepreneur in residence Mike Brcic; Business Inc., a partnership with the City of Toronto and the Toronto Business Development Centre that sees small business start-ups learning from professionals and qualifying for potential small business loans; and a range of programming that features experts talking about diverse topics such as taxation, social media, business plans, and much more.

tpl.ca/entrepreneur | tpl.ca/businessinc | tpl.ca/smallbusiness

The TD Gallery will be hosting a new exhibit starting September 26 and running to the end of November: **John J. Audubon's Birds of America** will feature life-size images of birds from Toronto Public Library's copy of Audubon's groundbreaking *Birds of America*, one of only five copies in Canada.

tpl.ca/tdgallery

The Library welcomed **the Pan Am/Para Pan Am Games** with over 70 branches offering Games-related programming. Over 11,000 people attended Spectator Jams held at Malvern and Thorncliffe branches, with York Woods and Jane/Sheppard branches sharing the responsibility as the third site. The Library also participated in eight torch relay events with a total attendance of over 2,700. Highlights included Premier Wynne

coming out to the first day of the torch relay at Thorncliffe. The Human Library was held at Parkdale and North York Central branches on May 30 and focused on youth. This event featured people working in the sports industry, including a hockey scout, sports lawyer, an author who has written about older track athletes and the Director of the opening and closing ceremonies for Pan Am.

Awards

Fort York Branch was chosen as one of 11 honourable mentions in ***Library Journal's New Landmark Libraries competition***, this year featuring public libraries completed between 2010 and 2014. Over 80 submissions from libraries large and small across the United States and Canada were received. Designed by KPMB Architects, Fort York will be among the library branches profiled in the September 15 issue of *Library Journal*. tpl.ca/fortyork

Toronto Public Library is one of three “demonstration projects” put forward as part of the City of Toronto’s submission for the prestigious Singapore-based **Lee Kwan Yew World City Prize**. The Prize is a biennial international award that honours outstanding achievements and contributions to the creation of liveable, vibrant and sustainable urban communities around the world. City Planning and Waterfront Toronto are the other two demonstration projects in Toronto’s submission, which has succeeded in making it to the next stage, which involves Prize delegates touring each project on October 1 and 2. Toronto Public Library Foundation Governors’ Council member Joe Berridge has been leading the charge to nominate Toronto for this award.

Foundation

The Toronto Public Library Foundation is one of the official charities in the **Scotiabank Charity Challenge** this year – part of the Scotiabank Toronto Waterfront Marathon. More than 20 people have signed up to run or walk for the Library on October 18. Funds raised will go toward KidsStop interactive learning centres, Leading to Reading, Digital Outreach, Home Library Services and other priority programs. Board members are encouraged to sign up or support a participant and help spread the word.

On August 27, the Foundation hosted a free public event in the atrium at the Toronto Reference Library, **celebrating the life and literary legacy of the late Helen Weinzweig** in the centenary year of her birth. Organized with Daniel Weinzweig, Helen’s son, the event also marked the reissue of her seminal work, *Basic Black With Pearls*, published by House of Anansi Press. To show her gratitude to Toronto Public Library stretching back to her arrival in Canada as a young immigrant, prior to her death Weinzweig established an endowment with the Foundation that funds youth programming.

A number of major gifts have recently been announced:

- **The RBC Foundation**, which has been helping fund programming at the Youth Hubs at Sanderson and Centennial branches since 2013, will continue its support with a recently announced donation of \$50,000.
- The Digital Innovation Hub at Scarborough Civic Centre will benefit from a \$10,000 grant from **IBM Canada Ltd.** to go towards digital technology and equipment as well as towards the creation of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) programs for Scarborough youth.
- **The Usha Kanakaratnam Endowment Fund**, established by her family with an initial donation of \$10,000 in honour of her love of reading, will support Ready for Reading.
- Kumon Math and Reading Centres is supporting the new ***Great Read for Kids series*** with a \$35,000 donation. The first booklet to be published by the Library, aimed at parents, is expected in September and will feature books recommended by our librarians for children ages six to 12 years old. A number of articles, on subjects such as the importance of reading aloud and building a literacy-rich environment, will also be spread throughout the booklet. Over the course of the next year, subsequent genre-based, seasonal *Great Reads* booklists aimed at children will also be released. In addition to being available in library branches, *Great Reads* will be available in Kumon Centres, as part of an outreach package introducing families to Toronto Public Library.

Prepared by Toronto Public Library staff