

**Chair's Report  
December 14, 2015**

**Youth**

Recently opened **afterschool youth hubs at Cedarbrae and York Woods** branches provide a warm and welcoming space where youth in these communities can gather. They create an opportunity for youth to socialize with classmates and make new friends, while playing board or video games. Youth visiting the hubs have access to volunteer tutors, many of whom are teacher candidates from York University's Faculty of Education, to get homework help and to ask advice. The hubs are both well-attended, with numbers continuing to rise, and youth report that they appreciate having a space to call their own and seeing the constant, friendly faces of hub coordinators.

**Partnerships, outreach and other community initiatives**

Toronto Public Library continues to work with spoken word artists to provide youth with mentorship and artistic development opportunities, while allowing them to showcase their poetic talent and develop leadership skills. A **Poetry Slam** held at Palmerston in November packed the house, as the Library partnered with BAM Youth Slam to determine who would be on the BAM team for the upcoming national poetry slam championship. Participants in the Library's poetry slam programs were given the opportunity to see a high calibre live slam and to perform for the accomplished BAM team. Poetry Slam workshop series are ongoing throughout December at seven library branches around the city, offering the city's spoken word artists a chance to come together with some of the finest young poets the city has to offer.

At the November 3 and 4, 2015 City Council meetings, Council adopted **TO Prosperity – Toronto Poverty Reduction Strategy**, which includes the Library's contribution in expanding digital access and literacy. The suite of services provided by the Toronto Public Library, including being the digital lead for the city, makes the Library a strong partner in contributing to prosperity for everyone.

Artists in the Library residencies are now wrapping up in nine library branches. Presented in partnership with the Toronto Arts Council (TAC), people of all ages acquired hands-on creative experience with art and artists in a variety of disciplines. Digital storytelling, puppetry, music, clay sculpture, and theatre programming have all animated library branches throughout the fall from September to December. The year 2015 is the second year of a three-year partnership with TAC to bring artists to branches outside the core of the city. Generously funded by TAC, each artist receives a \$20,000 grant for the term of his or her residency. The Library is deeply appreciative of this partnership and of TAC's commitment to supporting the arts in local communities.

## **Branches**

The **upcoming renovation of Wychwood Branch** is attracting a great deal of community interest. More than 350 members of the public have provided feedback through a public meeting, two open houses, focus groups, interviews and via comment forms. There is a great deal of affection for the branch and a recognition of its important role in the community. Among a range of topics addressed, the most frequently mentioned was the importance of maintaining the historical features of the building. As well, many comments reflected a desire for more space and for designated areas for quiet study, comfortable reading and community meetings and programs.

At a presentation on December 2, 2015 at the IIDEXCanada conference, Canada's national design and architecture exposition and conference, Perkins+Will Canada Inc. and Toronto Public Library received an award of merit from *Canadian Architect* for architectural design excellence for the Albion library plans. In making the award, jurors considered response to the program, site, geographical and social context, and evaluated physical organization, structure, materials and environmental features. Award-winning projects will be featured in the December 2015 issue of *Canadian Architect*.

## **Innovation**

**Toronto Public Library hosted its first hackathon** on November 14 and 15 at Toronto Reference Library in partnership with Open Data Toronto and Open Data Institute of Toronto. Over 50 participants and mentors worked together in teams to create concepts to improve library service. Participants were asked to align their concepts with the draft priorities of the new strategic plan. The youngest participant, who registered with his dad, was 12-years old and attended the event to get experience presenting to an audience. The oldest participant was a 75-year-old retired programmer who wanted to improve access to information about library programs and classes. Library user Sacha Chua won Best Idea for her "Exploring Library Neighbourhoods" concept, which proposes to add a "Visualize" link to search results pages on the Library's website to map the number of search results by branch.

On December 5, the Digital Innovation Hub at Toronto Reference Library hosted a **Hand-a-Thon**, the first of its kind in Canada, in partnership with a U.S.-based organization called Enabling the Future. The thrust of the Hand-a-Thon was to show students the social benefits of technology and innovation, with a focus on the process of creating prosthetic hands using 3D printers. Students from Jarvis Collegiate worked with local elementary school students from Jackman Avenue Public School, under the guidance of adult mentors, to create the hands. The prosthetic hands completed at the event went to Enabling the Future to be matched with recipients.

Located in the Digital Innovation Hub, the Toronto Reference Library's recently opened **Green Screen Room** provides a quiet environment to film a movie, shoot a commercial, record a song or create a podcast. Equipped with a workstation preloaded with audio production software, as well as a wide range of high-end studio equipment, such as cameras, lights and microphones, the space is meant for all things production.

## **Staff training, enrichment and other enhancement opportunities**

The third round of the Library's **Staff Innovation Program** launched in October. Started in 2013 by the Digital Content & Innovation Steering Committee, the Staff Innovation Program aims to support and encourage Toronto Public Library staff to share and test their innovative ideas, big or small. Of the 18 ideas submitted this round, three have been selected by the committee to move forward. Two staff members, Norine Lee and Alison Harris, will be exploring geocaching, which is essentially the world's biggest treasure hunt. With millions of caches hidden around the world, geocaching encourages people to explore and "go on a quest" to find these caches. The idea of developing promotional screensavers to promote branch programs and library services on express check-out and public computer stations will be explored by staffer Angela Wong. And staff member Elsa Wong will investigate the idea of using library pop-ups to offer library services outside of branches, at busy street corners, malls, fairs and just about anywhere in the city where people congregate.

At the **2015 Staff Recognition Luncheon** in The Bram & Bluma Appel Salon at Toronto Reference Library on November 18, more than 150 staff celebrated together as they were honoured for reaching 25-, 30-, 35- and 40-year milestones as library workers. The Toronto Public Library Foundation presented the sixth annual Pauline Hinch Memorial and Peter J. Bassnett awards, both funded by donors who value the great work of librarians and staff at Toronto Public Library. The \$1,000 Peter J. Bassnett Award for Professional Development recognizes the late, former CEO of the Scarborough Public Library and was awarded this year to Mabel Ho and Hamid Printer for outstanding achievement in their studies and professional work. The \$3,500 Pauline Hinch Memorial Award for Staff Development, established by Gordon Hinch in memory of his late wife, a former North York Central Library manager, was awarded to Eunice Rodrigues, for demonstrating a strong commitment to public librarianship through her efforts at the Library and in her Masters of Information Studies.

## **Foundation**

The Toronto Public Library Foundation ran a public thank-you campaign and produced a video showcasing children participating in the TD Summer Reading Club (TDSRC), shown to the Board at the November meeting, as a means of celebrating the Library's most generous corporate partner, **TD Bank Group**, which has reached an impressive and unprecedented milestone cumulative gift of \$10 million. TD is a long-standing supporter of the Library and has been title sponsor of the TDSRC since 1996. Through the TDSRC, almost three million children at 2,112 libraries across Canada have experienced the joy of reading and the worlds that reading opens. The Foundation is thrilled to confirm that TD has renewed their support of this program for three more years.

Toronto Public Library has launched **The Cutting Edge**, a combination of health-related programs and curated collections funded by Krembil Foundation. The inaugural Cutting Edge signature lecture was held on November 25 in The Bram and Bluma Appel Salon and featured Chris Eliasmith, the creator of Spaun, the world's largest simulation of a

functioning brain. In addition to the Cutting Edge keynote lecture, Krembil Foundation's donation of \$225,000 over three years will support health-related lectures in branches across the city. The donation will also enrich the specialized health collections at Toronto Reference and North York Central libraries, adding new works at all reading levels. Finally, it will provide for staff training in health literacy, so that Toronto's librarians can guide people to the most reliable and up-to-date sources of health information.

The Foundation is currently promoting **Tribute Giving** for the holiday season. Library lovers are encouraged to make a donation in honour of friends, family, colleagues or clients. With a \$10 donation, the sender can choose to mail or email a card to their honouree. Donations help fund programs and services that introduce children to the joy of reading, help students succeed in school, provide newcomers with employment resources, keep the elderly engaged, and much more.

**[tplfoundation.ca/give-in-honour-or-memory](http://tplfoundation.ca/give-in-honour-or-memory)**

Prepared by Toronto Public Library staff.