

City Librarian's Report

Below is my report for the November 20, 2017 Toronto Public Library Board [meeting](#), summarizing key activities in support of the priorities outlined in our [strategic plan](#). This report covers items that are not part of the Board agenda package.

Breaking Down Barriers to Access, Driving Inclusion

Indigenous Initiatives Update

Keepers of the Stories, a workshop for staff from TPL and libraries across Ontario, gave participants an opportunity to learn about Indigenous authors and stories from Turtle Island (North America). The event featured activist [Stephanie Pangowish](#), elder [Jacqui Lavalley](#), musician Josh Smoke, author [Lee Maracle](#), actor and playwright [Falen Johnson](#), artist and educator [Jenny Kay Dupuis](#) and researcher Nancy Cooper, and was recorded for use in future TPL staff training.

TPL's One Book campaign in October saw 850 customers take advantage of unlimited downloads of the ebook version of [Unsettling Canada](#), an account of the modern struggle for Indigenous rights in Canada.

Connecting with Civic Campaigners and Activists

TPL presented information about services and resources that support civic campaigns and local activist groups at the November 18 [Democracy XChange](#) Conference, Canada's first civic campaign and technology summit. The conference also gave TPL the opportunity to engage with community groups, including not-for-profits, civic tech startups, grassroots activists, public engagement professionals, citizens and public servants.

Digital Learning Workshops Build Confidence Among Older Adults

In an effort to build confidence among older job seekers needing to brush up on digital technology skills, Albion, Cedarbrae, Northern District and S. Walter Stewart branches recently offered workshops showcasing some of the library's key digital learning resources, such as [Lynda.com](#), [BrainFuse](#) and [Gale Courses](#). Delivered as part of [Workforce Development Month](#), in partnership with [Toronto Employment and Social Services](#) (TESS), the workshops were well attended and feedback was overwhelmingly positive. The success of the workshops, which also acted as a professional development opportunity for TESS staffers, demonstrates the value of library services to vulnerable individuals.



Job seekers learn about library resources

TPL Celebrates Library Settlement Partnerships

[Celebration 150+](#), a series of 12 events to highlight the Library Settlement Partnerships (LSP), took place at TPL branches around the city in October. Screenings of National Film Board shorts and a demonstration by Culinary Historians of Canada were part of the fun, and speakers from [Passages Canada](#) and visits from citizenship judges rounded out the events. Funded by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, the LSP program involves partnerships with eight local settlement agencies, providing year-round information, referrals and group activities for newcomers at [16 library branches across the city](#).

Financial Literacy Month Programming for Individuals with Disabilities

November is Financial Literacy Month and this year, with support from VISA, TPL is able to offer expanded [Personal Finance programming](#), including more [programming for individuals with disabilities](#).

Expanding Access to Technology and Training

Hour of Code Comes to TPL

During [Computer Science Education Week](#) (December 4-10), the library is offering free, hands-on coding and robotics workshops to people of all ages at our [Digital Innovation Hubs](#), [Pop-Up Learning Labs](#), [Youth Hubs](#) and at [branches](#) across the city. Part of the [Hour of Code](#) initiative, the workshops aim to encourage people to learn more about computer science.

Downsview Digital Innovation Hub Officially Launched

A variety of technology demonstrations, 3D-printed prizes, speeches and an official ribbon cutting ceremony marked the official launch of the new Digital Innovation Hub (DIH) at [Downsview Branch](#) on October 21. While the Downsview DIH has been operational since July, the launch gave staff a chance to introduce customers to the variety of services and workshops offered. City Councillor Maria Augimeri's support in securing funding for the DIH, as well as for the branch's KidsStop, was also acknowledged at the launch.



Innovator in Residence Derek Quenneville does a 3D demo

Establishing TPL as Toronto's Centre for Continuous and Self-Directed Learning

Business Colleges Learn about TPL Resources

When TPL visited six business college campuses in September, students were astounded that they could access so many free resources with their library cards. Organized by TPL's Community Outreach and Engagement team together with the Multicultural Services Committee, the outreach effort promoted TPL services and resources at post-secondary business and trades schools across the city. Outreach staff also registered 112 people for library cards using new staff wifi hotspots.



Staff members Karolina Majka (left) and Ranald Krolman (right) talk to students

Food Sustainability and De-Extinction Part of Our Fragile Planet Series this Fall

The fall session of the [Our Fragile Planet](#) series is underway with an offering of engaging environmental programs led by authors, researchers, storm chasers and green experts. Topics include food sustainability, pipeline politics, de-extinction and more. The series is supported by the TD Friends of the Environment. All Fragile Planet programs are [Bullfrog Powered](#) with 100% green electricity.

The Man Who Loved Libraries

Andrew Carnegie, who established more than 2,500 libraries worldwide, is the subject of a new children's non-fiction picture book, [The Man Who Loved Libraries](#), by Toronto author [Andrew Larsen](#). This October, Larsen visited the seven [Toronto Carnegie libraries](#) that are still operating as TPL branches. He talked to visiting elementary classes about Carnegie, and provided a little history about each branch he visited. He also discussed his life as an author and showed off some of his early homemade books.

Creating Community Connections through Cultural Experiences

Young Adult Book Festival Connects YA Authors and Readers

BookShout! Festival of Books and Reading for Young Adults (YA), held on October 22 in the [Bram & Bluma Appel Salon](#), featured a day of book programming and activities aimed at young and new adult readers (ages 15-25). The program connected enthusiastic young readers with their favourite authors in a format and setting that is new to Canada. It also opened the door to making the Appel Salon, which is a well-established premiere venue for international authors with adult audiences, a sought-after destination for young adult programs as well. BookShout! featured

appearances by superstar local and international authors, including [Kelley Armstrong](#), [Elly Blake](#), [S.K. Ali](#), [Richard Scrimger](#), [Teresa Toten](#), [Vicki Grant](#), [Melanie Florence](#) and more.



Author S.K. Ali signs books for her fans

Vinyl Revival Brings Record Swap to Toronto Reference Library

A recent purchase of about 100 new vinyl records marks the first time in about three decades that [Toronto Reference Library](#) (TRL) has added to its vinyl collection. At about [15,000 records](#), it stands as the largest public library record collection in Canada. A recent [record swap](#) hosted by the TRL Arts Department in collaboration with Special Collections gave staff the chance to show off the library's music collection, including vintage concert posters, band photos, books, scores and of course, records. The 35 vinyl enthusiasts in attendance at the swap traded records, checked out the collections and learned about [the library's Discogs.com account](#), our [Instagram samplings of record artwork](#) and our [Reddit.com r/vinyl board](#). The vinyl resurgence at TRL has resulted in great media coverage with articles in [Toronto Life](#), [NOW](#), the [Toronto Star](#), [CBC](#) and on [Indie88](#).



Customers check out the library's music-related resources

Transforming for 21st Century Service Excellence

We're in This Together: Conversations about Our Communities

An upcoming training initiative, coordinated through a partnership between TPL and three City of Toronto divisions – [Community Development](#), [Public Health](#) and [Crisis Response](#) – aims to support public service workers in their efforts to engage with Toronto residents and community agencies. Through information sharing and interactive discussions, TPL and City staff will explore the [Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy 2020](#), learn from each other and develop strategies for maximizing resident engagement in [Neighbourhood Improvement Areas](#).

Communities of Practice: A New Way to Learn

A community of practice (CoP) is an informal network of staff who share a common service concern or interest, and come together, mostly virtually but also in person, to achieve professional goals and to learn. CoPs focus on the timely sharing of information and best practices; on group problem solving and support; and on the creation of new knowledge to advance professional and service developments. TPL began looking at the CoP model because it fills a gap and has the potential to tap into staff expertise, connect staff across the system regardless of location, and build understanding and capacity in areas of service and expertise. TPL's first formal experiment with Communities of Practice (CoPs) saw the library team responsible for selection of electronic materials interacting with more than 35 staff members from a diverse range of job categories and divisions.

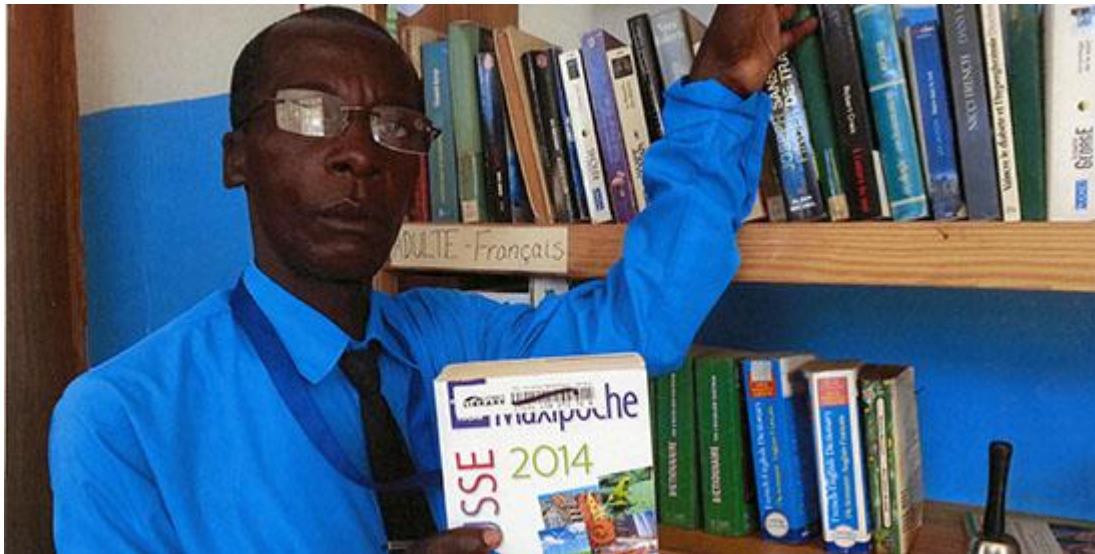
TVO Celebrates Ontario Public Library Week

As part of Ontario Public Library Week, City Librarian Vickery Bowles spoke to TVO's Steve Paikin on "The Agenda" as part of a panel on [Our Changing Libraries](#) that aired on October 20.

Also on the panel were Carolyn Doyle from London (ON) Public Library and Brian Masschaele from Elgin County Library. The episode focused on the evolution of public libraries to meet changing societal needs and adapt to the digital age, and highlighted library offerings including newcomer services, 3D printers and mental health services.

Penniless Philanthropist Delivers TPL Books to Haiti

Kate Danvers calls herself the Penniless Philanthropist and spends much of her time living and working to improve the situation in Cité Soleil, an extremely impoverished community in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. She recently visited staff in the Languages and Literature Department (LL) at Toronto Reference Library to speak to them about how the library's contributions are making a difference in Haiti. For about three years, staff in LL have been supplying Kate with withdrawn ESL books to deliver to libraries in Cité Soleil.



Julien in the library he oversees in Haiti, holding a book from TPL

Staff Innovation Fair Focuses on Game-Based Learning

The library's annual staff innovation fair, held on November 9, featured inspirational speakers and fun demos that spotlighted new and emerging technology. The focus of this year's fair was gaming, and guest speakers from [SpongeLab](#), [Twenty-One Toys](#) and [*no campfire required](#) touted the effectiveness of game-based learning. TPL staff who have successfully developed and delivered gaming programs also shared their ideas and experiences.

Richview Renovation to Enhance Spaces and Increase Access to Digital Resources

[Richview Branch](#) closed in October for a [renovation](#) of the upper level of the building. There will be a phased reopening, with the lower level and first floor opening in late 2017 and the remainder of the building opening in spring 2018. Staff will continue to provide outreach

services such as Kindergarten Outreach and visits to schools, child care centres and after school programs.

Amesbury Park Branch Reopens After Six-Month Renovation

[Amesbury Park Branch](#) reopened at the end of October after a six-month renovation that included upgrades to the exterior walkways and parking lot, additional barrier-free access, improved washroom facilities, new shelving, carpeting and furniture, and a relocated program room and service desk.