

ABSOLUTELY VITAL

A Newsletter of the Toronto Public Library Foundation

Fall/Winter 2015

A prescription to read

“A three-year old boy was referred to the pediatric clinic because he hadn’t yet started to speak. I learned that he had never been read to and that the family didn’t own any books,” recounted Dr. Katie Dorman, Family Medicine, St. Michael’s Hospital. Dr. Dorman helped spearhead the Reach Out and Read collaboration between St. Michael’s Hospital and Toronto Public Library.

During regular well-child checkups for children ages 6 months to 5 years, Reach Out and Read physicians and nurse practitioners talk to parents about the importance of reading aloud to their children. Each

child gets a book at each visit and waiting rooms are stocked with books for preschoolers. Each family receives a kit that includes the *Let’s Get Ready for Reading* resource guide. Toronto Public Library Foundation donors provided funding for 4,000 copies.

“We know that literacy – especially early literacy – is the foundation of learning and life success,” said Cheryl Skovronek, Ready for Reading Manager at Toronto Public Library. “By pairing programs like Reach Out and Read with Ready for Reading, we expand the library’s reach and provide easy access for parents and



Reach Out and Read at St. Michael’s Hospital.

caregivers to tools, resources and simple, everyday activities that help them build early literacy skills in their children.”

Help from the library for a newcomer family

Fleeing violence, Hibo* came to Canada from Ethiopia with her three young children. The family was placed at Birkdale Residence, a family shelter that receives Storytime Outreach from TPL. Storytime Outreach is one of several outreach programs partially funded by donors.

Hibo had her youngest, Ishaar*, attend Storytimes to help him learn English and deal with delayed speech and language. “The friendly librarian who ran the program engaged the children in singing, stories, arts and crafts,” recalls Revi Pereira, the activity organizer at Birkdale Residence. “The staff

could see Ishaar’s participation and confidence improve every week. Although he still struggles with writing, Ishaar is thriving and converses fluently in English with his friends.”

DID YOU KNOW?

Giving Tuesday is December 1. Make a donation to Storytime Outreach.

tplf.thankyou4caring.org/giving-tuesday

*Not their real names.

Your donations bring the joy of the library to Toronto's children

"I've been an avid reader since a very young age," said a library lover. "When I discovered the existence of the library I was completely in heaven. My childhood consisted of weekends walking down to the library with my family and spending time reading in the little corners." You might also have fond childhood memories of visiting the library.

Unfortunately, this isn't the case for all children. With help from donors, Toronto Public Library runs two outreach programs that introduce TPL to young children who otherwise might never visit the library.

Kindergarten Outreach was launched in 2002 with the goal that every child in kindergarten across the city is introduced to TPL and offered a library card. Librarians visit 100% of schools in priority neighbourhoods and 75% of other schools. During the 2014/2015 school year, librarians spoke with 44,000 kindergarten students.

"My little guy was so excited after the librarian's visit that he dragged me into our local library the



Librarians visit kindergarten classrooms across Toronto.

next day. I didn't even know we had a library in our area," said one father.

Grade 4 Outreach reaches children when they are transitioning from learning to read, to reading to learn. The program re-introduces students to TPL and provides parents with information about age-appropriate programs and services. In 2014/2015, donors funded welcome packages for 21,000 Grade 4 students.

Young Voices remains strong after 50 years

Young Voices magazine has been around longer than Canadian Living, Toronto Life and TV Guide.

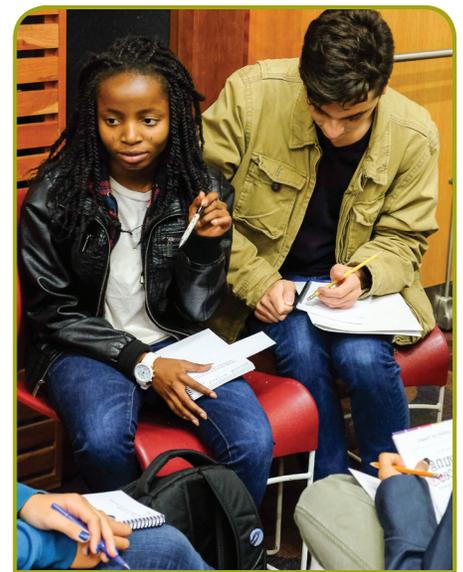
This annual publication, which started in 1965, is a compilation of teen writing and visual art that is selected by an Editorial Youth Advisory Group. "Having my poem featured in *Young Voices* was one of the best experiences of my life. It allowed me to gain confidence in both my writing and myself," said Allanah Lennox, a contributor to the magazine.

The annual Young Voices Writers' Conference was held October 10 at North York Central and drew 145 participants. This free, full-day conference provides aspiring young writers with practical guidance through workshops

on a variety of topics including how to produce a comic, how to become a playwright and how to use language to its best effect.

"Writing is so private and it has been hard for my daughter to find others who express themselves through writing," said a mother of one of the participants. "She's really happy for the opportunity to learn and support each other."

Young Voices is supported by Deloitte and the Daniels brothers in honour of their mother, Norine Rose.



The Young Voices Writers' Conference is free to all youth.

3D printing has valuable medical applications

Grade 8 student Jacob designed and built a prototype for a prosthetic leg using skills he learned at the Digital Innovation Hub (DIH) at the Toronto Reference Library.

“I thought by creating a 3D design of a leg, professionals in South Africa could print prosthetic legs,” said Jacob. “The process of building a leg using a 3D printer is faster than using the traditional method.” This is one of the examples of the amazing creations made possible through the library’s three Digital Innovation Hubs (at Toronto Reference Library, Fort York, Scarborough Civic Centre).

IBM Canada Ltd. and Google are helping make new digital technology accessible to all Torontonians - particularly those with limited means. IBM is helping fund equipment at the new DIH at the Scarborough Civic Centre branch. Google is supporting the 2016 Innovator in Residence programs. Innovators in Residence are industry experts in areas such as video editing, coding, music production or sound editing. The Innovators conduct free workshops and make themselves available for one-on-one appointments.



Grade 8 student Jacob built a prosthetic leg using one of the library’s 3D printers.

Improve your brain at the library

“Exploring new ideas at the intersection of health and technology” is the theme of The Cutting Edge - a combination of health-related programs and curated collections. This new offering is generously supported by Krembil Foundation.

The Cutting Edge signature program will be on November 25

at The Bram & Bluma Appel Salon at the Toronto Reference Library. Chris Eliasmith, the creator of “Spaun,” the world’s largest brain simulation, will explain how new models of the brain are enabling researchers to explore more personalized health care. You can see the live stream at tpl.ca/cuttingedge.

The in-branch programs are on now and have been drawing capacity crowds. Upcoming lectures include topics on new frontiers in mental health and the mathematics of infectious diseases. See the full line-up of branch programs in the current issue of *What’s On* magazine.

Simplify your holiday gift-giving

A great gift for readers is a donation to Toronto Public Library in their name. With a minimum donation of \$10 you can have a card mailed or emailed. It’s also a great way to send holiday wishes to staff and clients. Visit tplfoundation.ca/give-in-honour-or-memory.



DID YOU KNOW?

TPL has a complete set of John James Audubon’s *Birds of America*. See the exhibit at the TD Gallery in the Toronto Reference Library until November 29.

Hush Hush was a scream

The Bloor/Gladstone branch was stormed by partying zombies, vampires and witches on Halloween night for the third annual Hush Hush fundraiser.



Hush Hush was held on Halloween at the Bloor/Gladstone branch.

Almost 300 people haunted the stacks and fed on oysters, street food and specialty cocktails. More than \$60,000 was raised for library programs and services.

Hush Hush is hosted by New Collection, the Foundation's young patrons' membership program (ages 19-45). Members get exclusive access to the city's vibrant literary scene. For more info, contact Michelle Fong at mfong@torontopubliclibrary.ca or visit tplfoundation.ca/new-collection.

"Books. Books. Books. Cheap. Cheap. Cheap."

That was the Twitter message for the August clearance sale at the Toronto Reference Library, which went viral and drew the largest crowd ever for a Book Ends sale.

The clearance sale was followed by the Treasures sale in September, which also achieved record sales.

With this success, the Friends of the Library South Chapter are donating \$90,000 back to the library this year - the highest amount ever. The Friends have chosen to support Elementary School Outreach, Storytime Outreach, Young Voices and Family Literacy Day.

Help make the next sale a success by dropping off your used books at North York Central Library or the Toronto Reference Library. Don't miss the holiday sale November 19-21 at North York Central Library and November 26-28 at the Toronto Reference Library.



The Treasures Sale in September raised more than \$18,000.



Liana Colacci and Liz Aldous from the Toronto Public Library Foundation.

\$7,800 raised in the Scotiabank Charity Challenge

On October 18, 29 people ran or walked for the library in the Scotiabank Charity Challenge - part of the massive Scotiabank Toronto Waterfront Marathon. Thank you to all our participants and their sponsors for raising \$7,800. Congrats to Liana Colacci, who raised the highest amount.



Absolutely Vital is issued twice a year to donors to the Toronto Public Library Foundation.

Our mission is to inspire giving to Toronto Public Library in support of exemplary collections, ground-breaking programs and services, and innovative community spaces.

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