

ABSOLUTELY VITAL

A Newsletter of the Toronto Public Library Foundation

Spring/Summer 2016

Music to our users

A sweet-sounding new collection arrived at the Parkdale branch in April. The branch is now home to Toronto Public Library's first musical instrument lending library with a collection of guitars, trumpets, violins and other instruments.

Bravo to Sun Life Financial for making this pilot program possible with a donation of \$155,000 and 100 musical instruments. Thanks to their generous support, music students, recreational musicians, professionals and library users of any age can check out an instrument at no cost.

"This new program is a natural extension of our support of music education," said Paul Joliat, assistant vice-president of philanthropy and sponsorships at Sun Life Financial. "We wish to help bring the joy of music to more people's lives."

The collection will greatly benefit people in the high-needs Parkdale area. "We know how much music enriches life, but many Torontonians don't have ready access to musical instruments for financial



Thank you to Sun Life Financial for funding the new Musical Instrument Lending Library.

reasons," said Joliat. "Programs such as this one break down those barriers and connect people to wonderful opportunities."

The launch on April 7 included appearances from musicians Chantal Kreviazuk and Raine Maida (from Our Lady Peace), who kicked-off a month-long instrument drive to grow the collection.

Mazel tov, Max!

Young library-lover Max Rosen turned 13 recently. The voracious reader asked his bar mitzvah guests to make charitable donations, raising \$1,100 for Toronto Public Library.

Reading is a tradition in Max's family: his book-loving mother and grandmothers encouraged his early use of the library. As a youngster, Max would take home two large bags of books every three weeks.

Max's gifts will help engage young children and teens in the joy of reading. A portion will be put toward the purchase of puppets for the Thorncliffe branch. The remainder will support a program of teen authors speaking at the Deer Park branch.

Thank you and mazel tov, Max!



Max Rosen's bar mitzvah donation funded puppets for the Thorncliffe branch.

The success of the library's new strategic plan depends on donor support

The goal of the library's ambitious 2016-19 strategic plan is to expand access, increase opportunity and build connections. The plan states that "partnerships and private sector funding will be key to the success of this plan."

Read on to learn how donors are already making tremendous strides toward helping the library reach its goals.

Learning labs pop up at library branches

"Is that a 3D printer!?"

This was the reaction from many people when they visited a Pop-Up Learning Lab (PULL) at the Northern District branch recently. PULLs are one of several initiatives funded by donors that bring learning and opportunities to Torontonians.

Library patrons who have been to the Digital Innovation Hubs at Toronto Reference Library, Fort York or Scarborough Civic Centre branch are familiar with 3D printers and other technology. However, many people can't make it to these



Kids at the Pop-Up Learning Lab learned how a banana can conduct electricity.

locations, and for them the library has introduced three mobile Pop-Up Learning Labs that travel to branches across the city.

Workshops and demonstrations introduce people of all ages to robotics, game development, circuit building and of course, 3D printing. The PULLs have caught the interest of entrepreneurs, designers, engineers and seniors.

One woman said, "I have lots of time on my hands after retiring, so why not learn about 3D printing?" Even seven year olds are learning 3D technology - imagine what they will create when they're adults!

With the help of donors, the library and Foundation hope to secure funding to launch three more PULLs in 2016 as part of the library's goal to increase digital literacy.



Leadley Francis plans to make a 3D bust of his grandson after taking a 3D certification class at the Pop-Up Learning Lab.

Retirement planning for people living on a low income

Planning for retirement can be a challenge - especially for people on a low income. The Rotary Club of Toronto has donated \$15,000 to expand Retirement Planning on a Low Income, a financial literacy program at Toronto Public Library.

This initiative provides seniors living on a low income with free access to expert advice on the best strategies for long-term retirement planning. Sessions start this fall at branches across the city.

Inviting Syrian newcomers to experience Toronto's arts and culture



Sun Life Financial Museum + Arts Passes in Arabic are being distributed to families newly arriving from Syria.

Syrian families recently received a warm welcome with a special program at the North York Central Library. Guests received an invitation to explore Toronto's culture with a specially designed Sun Life Financial Museum + Arts Pass (MAP) written in Arabic.

In collaboration with participating venues, Sun Life Financial and TPL are distributing 1,000 MAP passes to Syrian newcomers. The free passes enable families to visit some of Toronto's leading attractions including the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto Zoo, and the Art Gallery of Ontario.

Pick up a great new booklet for great reads

Whether you have a child who loads up on books at every library visit or one that needs some encouragement to read, the new *Great Reads for Kids* booklet and seasonal pamphlets are for you. Thanks to a sponsorship of \$35,000 from Kumon Math and Reading Centres, children six to 12 now have a reading list curated by the library's expert staff. The booklet also includes simple activities and practices parents can use to build a lifelong love of reading for their children.



Great Reads booklets and pamphlets are available at all branches.

A resounding legacy for Lilly Q

Visually impaired people will soon have access to more e-audio books thanks to an extraordinary gift of \$650,000 from the estate of the late Lilly Q.

Lilly's eyesight began to fail near the end of her life, making her aware of the needs of the visually impaired. She included

the Toronto Public Library Foundation in her will with a designation to use the funds to help people whose poor eyesight made reading regular books impossible. Lilly's gift will bring entertainment and learning to thousands of library patrons, particularly seniors who use Home Library Service.

DID YOU KNOW?

Librarians have a hotline to translators so that all library customers - regardless of what language they speak - can get immediate help.

Recent Patron Events



Heritage Society patrons viewed some of the library's rare treasures last January.

Heritage Society members tour the library's special collections

This past January, patrons of the Heritage Society were treated to a private tour of the remarkable Marilyn & Charles Baillie Special Collections Centre at the Toronto Reference Library.

Patrons of the Heritage Society have included the Foundation in their will or estate plans. To learn more, contact Liza Fernandes at 416-397-5924 or lfernandes@torontopubliclibrary.ca.

Library patrons enjoy the company of Yann Martel

In February, patrons of the Literary Circle attended an intimate reception with Man Booker Prize-winning author Yann Martel prior to his public talk at the Appel Salon. The author of *Life of Pi* was at the Toronto Reference Library to promote his newest book, *The High Mountains of Portugal*.

The Literary Circle is a group of donors who demonstrate their commitment to Toronto Public Library by donating \$1,000 or more in a year. Learn more at tplfoundation.ca/literary-circle or contact Julie Flynn at 416-393-7225 or jflynn@torontopubliclibrary.ca.

Inside a refugee camp with City of Thorns author Ben Rawlence

On April 8, members of New Collection met *City of Thorns* author Ben Rawlence to discuss the desperate situation faced by residents of the Dadaab refugee camp in the Kenyan desert.

New Collection is a membership program for young Torontonians (ages 19-45) who are interested in the city's vibrant literary scene. Learn more by contacting Ashley Boucher at 416-393-7073 or aboucher@torontopubliclibrary.ca.

On June 12, run or walk for Home Library Service

You can enrich a senior's life by joining the Toronto Public Library and Foundation in the Toronto Challenge. All money raised will support the library's Home Library Service that delivers library materials to 3,000 elderly and house-bound people.

You don't need to be a marathon runner to participate - the course is an easy 5k run, 5k walk or 1k walk in downtown Toronto. Contact Liana Colacci at 416-393-7089 or lcolacci@torontopubliclibrary.ca to register.



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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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