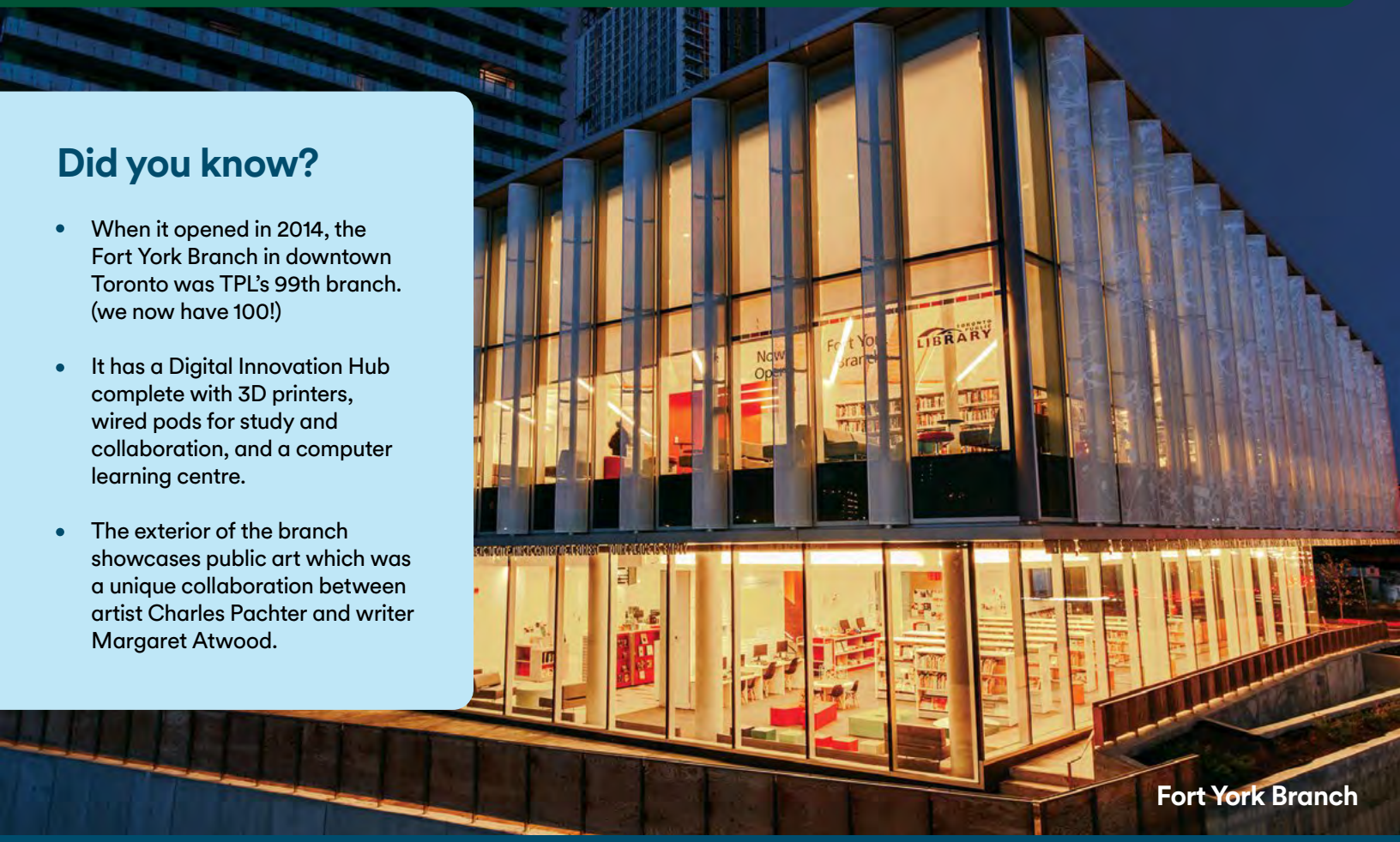
Winter 2020

absolutely vital

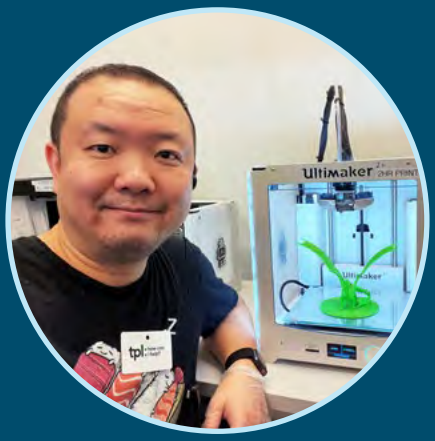
A newsletter from
The Toronto Public Library Foundation



Fort York Branch

Did you know?

- When it opened in 2014, the Fort York Branch in downtown Toronto was TPL's 99th branch. (we now have 100!)
- It has a Digital Innovation Hub complete with 3D printers, wired pods for study and collaboration, and a computer learning centre.
- The exterior of the branch showcases public art which was a unique collaboration between artist Charles Pachter and writer Margaret Atwood.



Meet Alex

Digital Design Technician at Fort York

If you're curious about 3D printing, video and photo editing or computer programming, then you need to meet Alex. He works in one of TPL's eight **Digital Innovation Hubs (DIH)** where valuable digital resources, including computers, specialized software, a recording studio and 3D printers are available for anyone to use. "Recently, I've been impressed with people using the Library to explore new business ideas. One customer came to the DIH to prototype a model for a better breathing apparatus for face coverings. The best part of my job though is showing kids that they can use our computers to create cool things from their imagination, and then we make them a reality on the 3D printers."

Thank You to Biblio Bash and Hush Hush Supporters

Annual fundraisers cancelled due to COVID-19

We had high hopes of hosting **Biblio Bash**, our annual black tie gala, as well as **Hush Hush**, our popular #PartyInTheStacks, but sadly both were cancelled this year. We are grateful to our dedicated volunteer committees, our ticket and table purchasers as well as sponsors for their willingness to stay involved with TPL and continue to support our fundraising efforts. We look forward to the day we can welcome all our guests back to the Toronto Reference Library.

Guests celebrating at last year's Biblio Bash gala and Hush Hush party.

Natalie Jenner

Phuc Tran

Author to Author Virtual Event

Presented by Literary Circle

When in-person events were cancelled, the Foundation got creative and launched our first Author to Author virtual conversation. Writers Natalie Jenner and Phuc Tran interviewed each other and talked about what it's like to be debut authors, their unique career path pivots, and shared some favourite quarantine takeaways.

Watch the discussion anytime on TPLF's YouTube channel. **youtube.com/TPLFoundation**

Honouring Author Joy Kogawa

Plaque unveiled in the Toronto Reference Library

Celebrated Canadian writer Joy Kogawa's powerful book *Obasan* recounts her personal experience of the evacuation, relocation, and dispersal of Canadian citizens of Japanese ancestry during the Second World War. Many of you have read the powerful book, but what you may not know is that Joy wrote *Obasan* at the Toronto Reference Library.

To acknowledge Joy's achievements, and her strong **connection** to TPL, a plaque has been installed on the 5th floor of the branch. This special honour was made possible thanks to a generous donation from Nancy Ruth.

Volunteer Spotlight

We are thrilled to welcome three new directors to the **Toronto Public Library Foundation Board.**

Victoria Davies is a strategic and financial advisor working with growth-oriented clients and not-for-profit boards.

Malik Martin is a partner at Rueters LLP, where his practice focuses on civil and corporate/commercial litigation.

Dr. Bruno Vendittelli is an orthodontist at Forest Hill Orthodontics and on staff at The Hospital for Sick Children.

The Sorbara Family makes $100,000 gift to support North York Central Library

"The Library has such a strong community presence that every generation can benefit from. I am impressed with how TPL has successfully evolved in an increasingly digital age and continues to be so relevant to so many people. As a large multi-generational family, with a longstanding philanthropic partnership with the Toronto Public Library Foundation, we are proud of this donation and all the opportunities TPL provides for its users."
- Christina Sorbara

Partial funds from **The Sorbara Family** gift were used to match donations made to TPLF's October Community Campaign. Thanks to their generous support, the Foundation was able to hit its fundraising target.

The Sorbara Family gift will support NYCL, TPL's busiest circulating branch.

TPL and Google Canada committed to bridging the digital divide in Toronto

When TPL branches closed in the Spring due to the pandemic, many who rely on Toronto Public Library to access computers and the Internet in order to stay connected and engaged were without these critical resources. With a $50,000 grant from **Google Canada**, the Library has been able to help families in need by offering them an **Internet Connectivity Kit** which includes a free laptop, Wi-Fi hotspot and unlimited Internet access for two years.

Neighbourhood Tech Kits support digital access and literacy

Thanks to a generous donation from **Bank of America**, the Library will be launching a new Neighbourhood Tech Kit (NTK) at the Mimico Centennial Branch. TPL's NTK network provides communities with vital access to technology, digital literacy training, workshops and resources, and supports branches that do not have a Digital Innovation Hub. Funding will help expand programming for youth and other vulnerable groups at Mimico and five other branches currently using NTKs.

NKT program participants

Meet Andrés Jiménez Monge, TPL's current Environmentalist In Residence.

Environmental education available through online programming and residency

Toronto Public Library understands the importance of ensuring equitable access to environmental education. Thanks to continued support from **TD Friends of the Environment Foundation**, TPL's popular Our Fragile Planet (OFP) series enables Torontonians to learn about relevant environmental issues like conservation, green energy, recycling and wildlife protection. As part of the Fall OFP series, our Environmentalist in Residence led engaging virtual programs, workshops and consultations to support communities in their green pursuits.
Learn more: **tpl.ca/fragileplanet**

#ImLibraryPeople

ask an expert

Diane Banks
Manager, Children's Services

Q: What is Leading to Reading?

A: **Leading to Reading** is a service that supports children (Grades 1-6) who are struggling with reading by pairing them with volunteers for weekly learning sessions at a library branch. Under the supervision and guidance of staff, volunteers provide a fun and positive experience for kids to further develop their literacy skills and confidence. This year, TPL purchased iPads for this service to facilitate physically-distanced learning and reading.

Q: Why during the pandemic, is it so important for TPL to introduce digital resources like iPads to support this reading program?

A: Equipment like iPads offer many benefits. They allow children and volunteers to read the same digital book together, while being physically-distanced. Unlike print books, iPads are easy to sanitize and don't require several days of quarantining. Children can also use a variety of educational apps to build their literacy skills, and fun features like voice recording to practice and improve their oral reading levels. Tools and resources that build digital literacy skills in children are important for future success.

Thank you

The Leading to Reading iPads Program is generously supported by the Moez & Marissa Kassam Foundation and the David and Stacey Cynamon Family Foundation.

200 piece #ImLibraryPeople puzzle features all 100 TPL branches!

Exclusive I'm Library People Puzzle in support of Toronto Public Library

Puzzles are popular, so we've added this one to our merchandise collection of t-shirts, tote bags and notebooks. There are very limited quantities, so grab one while you can! Each purchase includes a donation to TPL and they are available now at Page & Panel in the Toronto Reference Library or online at **imlibrarypeople.ca/merch.**

Make a charitable gift in your will

It's so important to have a will in place and to keep it current. A well-planned will benefits you, your family and the charities you care about. If you'd like to learn more about including Toronto Public Library in your will or estate plan, please call **416-397-5924** or visit **tplfoundation.ca/plannedgift.**

Hugh's book sale in support of TPL

You're never too young to fundraise for TPL

Hugh is 4 years old, and we heard from his mom Lauren that her son had a socially distanced book sale and wanted the proceeds to go to Toronto Public Library, "to continue to share his love of reading with other young children." Lauren also assured us that there were a few dollars left over to buy ice cream. Amazing job Hugh!

We do love to hear from donors, so if you have a Library story to share, **please stay in touch.**

This holiday season, donate to Toronto Public Library and make a meaningful difference in your community.

- ✓ Give online at **imlibrarypeople.ca/holiday**
- ✓ Make a tribute gift in honour or memory of someone special at **tplfoundation.ca/tribute**
- ✓ Join Literary Circle and enjoy a years' worth of benefits. **tplfoundation.ca/literary-circle**

Donate today or call 416-393-7123

Join the conversation

#ImLibraryPeople