Spring 2021

absolutely vital

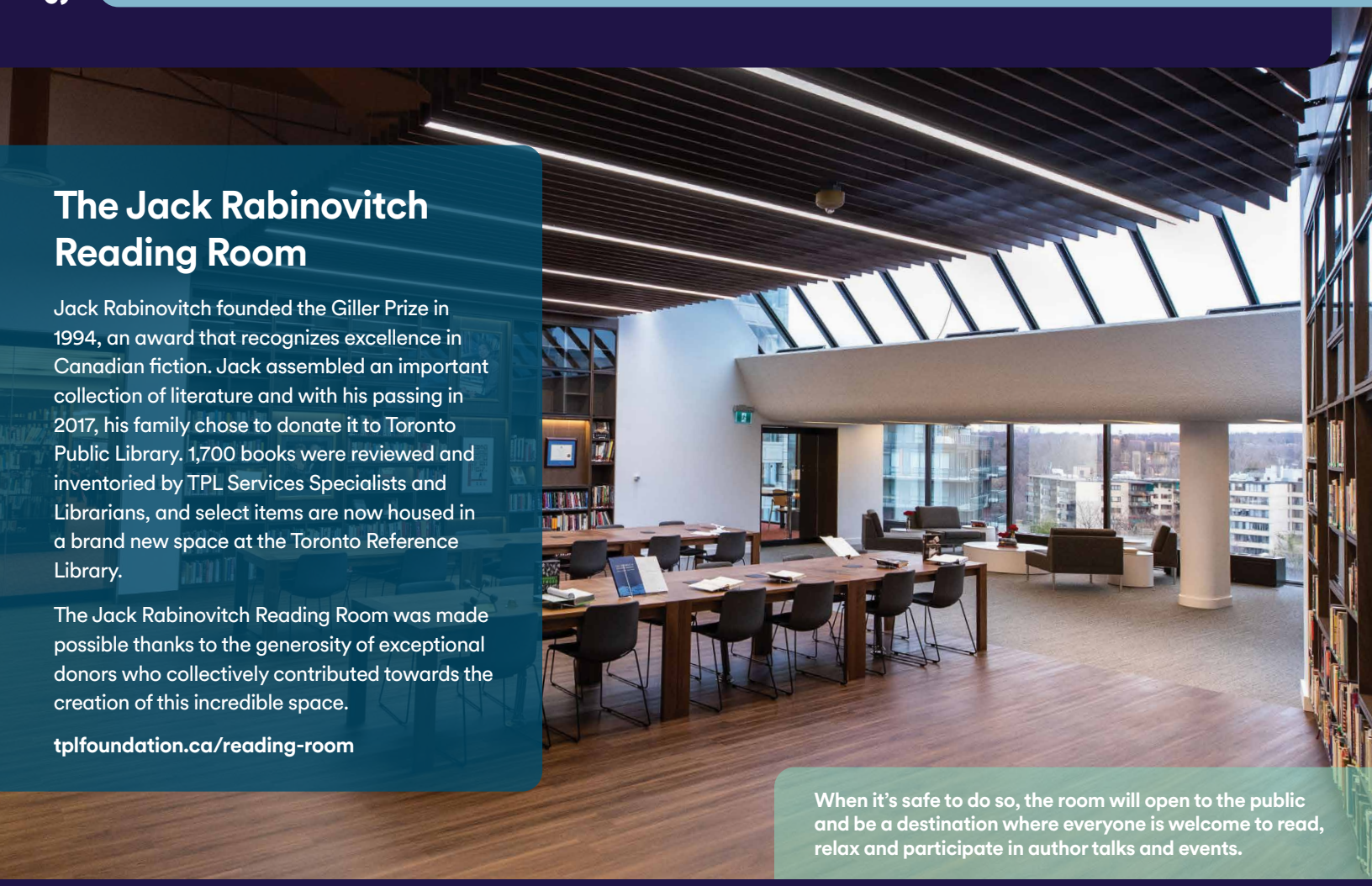
A newsletter from
The Toronto Public Library Foundation

The Jack Rabinovitch Reading Room

Jack Rabinovitch founded the Giller Prize in 1994, an award that recognizes excellence in Canadian fiction. Jack assembled an important collection of literature and with his passing in 2017, his family chose to donate it to Toronto Public Library. 1,700 books were reviewed and inventoried by TPL Services Specialists and Librarians, and select items are now housed in a brand new space at the Toronto Reference Library.

The Jack Rabinovitch Reading Room was made possible thanks to the generosity of exceptional donors who collectively contributed towards the creation of this incredible space.

tplfoundation.ca/reading-room



When it's safe to do so, the room will open to the public and be a destination where everyone is welcome to read, relax and participate in author talks and events.

Meet Fiona

Services Specialist, Languages & Literature Department

Fiona helped select items from Jack's personal collection that now live on the shelves in The Jack Rabinovitch Reading Room. Everything from CanLit to art history to sports and politics – his interests are reflected in every corner of the room. Not only is this a perfect spot for reading, writing and reflecting, it's also home to a new Writers' Suite and office for TPL's Writer in Residence. Fiona has spent over 30 years selecting and curating materials for the Library, so does she have a favourite piece from this new collection? *"I'd have to say the Alice Munro books. They're all signed. She won the Giller for The Love of a Good Woman and Runaway and the Nobel Prize, so the whole world knows what a wonderful Canadian writer she is."*

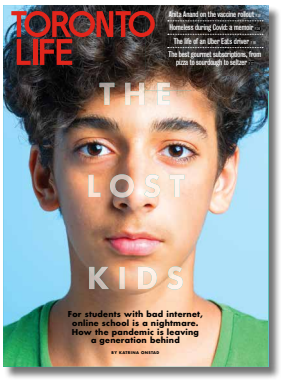
Press Announcement

Partnership between donors and City of Toronto helps TPL eliminate children's library fines

TPL is committed to removing barriers and connecting children to the valuable library resources they need, which is why at a March 2nd press conference, Mayor John Tory announced that TPL is eliminating overdue fines for kids. For some, library fines are nothing more than a minor inconvenience, but for others the burden can drive them away from the library for good, preventing them from taking out library materials or using branch computers. TPL joins 189 library systems in Canada, and hundreds across North America in the growing movement of eliminating overdue fines. TPLF is now raising funds to eliminate fines for teens and adults.

Going fine-free for children was made possible because of a collaboration between the City of Toronto and generous donors. **Our thanks to the Haynes-Connell Foundation, Friends of Toronto Public Library, South Chapter, and other donors who supported this effort.**

Read more at **tplfoundation.ca/prkidsfines**



> City libraries, hubs for free access, have left Wi-Fi on 24/7 since the pandemic began, and it's common to see people sitting outside branches to get access.
>
> March 2021

Toronto Life takes notice of TPL's Internet Connectivity Kit Program

This important cover story focused on the growing digital divide in our city and how libraries are stepping up to help during this uncertain time.

What is TPL's Internet Connectivity Kit Program?

It provides individuals and families in need with a free laptop, Wi-Fi Hotspot and data plan so they can stay engaged and connected.

We're proud to share that thus far, 637 kits have been distributed to vulnerable residents across Toronto.

Thank you to lead donors Google Canada, Moez & Marissa Kassam Foundation, and several other donors who made this initiative possible.

Mark your Calendar!

Don't miss all the spring programs at Toronto Public Library

Explore special collections, enjoy curated reading lists or join free virtual events celebrating **Asian Heritage Month**, **National Indigenous History Month** and **TPL's Pride Celebrations**.

Visit **TPL.ca** for details.

Volunteer Spotlight: Janet McKelvey

Toronto Public Library Foundation Co-Founder Appointed to the Order of Ontario

In 1997, Janet McKelvey, together with Richard Boxer, co-founded the TPL Foundation. She has always been a strong advocate of the Library as well as other important causes she cares about. For many years Janet was on the TPLF Board of Directors and today is a member of our Governors' Council.

We were thrilled to learn that Janet has been appointed to the 2020 Order of Ontario, a well-deserved high honour in recognition of her humanitarian and philanthropic work. Congratulations Janet! You are an inspiration to us all.

Google IT Support Professional Certificate

Google investment provides in-demand skills training to become job-ready

Launched in 2019, the GISPC is the first program at TPL to run exclusively online. Developed by Google, hosted on Coursera and facilitated through TPL and several other Canadian libraries, the collaborative initiative saw 389 people successfully complete the program and graduate with new skills in IT development. **tpl.ca.gisc**

Pre-COVID graduation.

Why I choose to give back to Toronto Public Library

"The pandemic has really underlined **the incredible contributions** TPL makes to the lives of Torontonians. **I wanted to take some** portion of the value I personally get from library services and **reinvest it back into this amazing institution.**"

- Katherine, a first-time donor

Ultimate online hub for summer fun

TD Summer Reading Club is back

The TD Summer Reading Club will take place online and allow kids and families to participate from the comfort and safety of home. Kids can read any books they like and earn virtual badges to celebrate their progress. There are plenty of fun games and activities, including a Battle of the Books, story and review writing, joke-making, weekly trivia, fun workshops and more. **Sponsorship for this popular annual program is provided by TD Bank Group.**

Program launches June 14th!
tpl.ca/reading-club

With thanks to Chris M. Reid for his generous gift to TPL

TPL's On Civil Society series shines a spotlight on the role libraries play in the life of a city and explores complex issues through the lenses of democracy, the media, wellness, urbanism, equality, and more. Thanks to a donation from Chris M. Reid, new funding will allow for expansion of the program and facilitate more workshops and speakers.

Join us for the next On Civil Society virtual event at **tpl.ca/civilsociety**

TPL's Career Coaches in Residence

Empowering young adults as they transition into the workforce

The CCIR program offers remote career counselling and workshops to younger adults as they navigate the current labour market. Youth unemployment is at an all time high in Toronto, so the program connects those experiencing barriers to employment to job and career resources at the Library, and beyond. More than 778 participants have benefitted since the program was virtually launched in 2020.

Career Coaches in Residence is generously supported by the RBC Foundation and Friends of Toronto Public Library, South Chapter. Learn more at **tpl.ca/careercoach**

#ImLibraryPeople

ask an expert

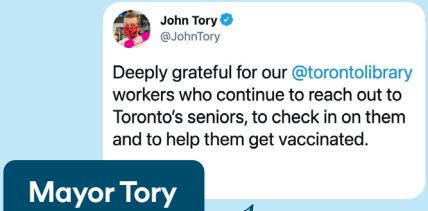
Kim Huntley
Manager, North York Central Library

Q: TPL staff began making Wellness Check-in calls to seniors – can you tell us more?

A: When branches were forced to close, TPL quickly saw the isolating effect that the loss of library service was having on our senior customers. We thought it was important to connect with them to check on their well-being, ease concerns and respond to their information needs. This is especially true for those who do not have access to the Internet. It's a great way to stay connected with our customers and more than 20,000 calls have been made to date.

Q: The initiative has expanded! TPL is now supporting the City of Toronto's efforts and helping seniors register for the vaccine – how's that going?

A: We're calling customers over 80 years of age and it's going well. They are so pleased to hear from us. We're taking an "all hands on deck approach" to ensure seniors have the information they need to make a booking. We're not scheduling vaccines, but the team is doing what they do best - providing a valuable information service. More than 150 staff are trained and have made 3,000 calls. Our plan is to reach 35,000 residents!



Mayor Tory on Twitter!

Now is a great time to support your Toronto Public Library

Donations made before July 31st will be matched

tplfoundation.com/matchmygift or call 416-393-7123

Donations help Toronto Public Library provide free access to library information and resources that Torontonians need for:

- **Education**
- **Lifelong Learning**
- **Employment**
- **Culture and Entertainment**

When you give today, we'll immediately double your donation thanks to a Matching Campaign and direct your gift to where the Library needs it most during the pandemic.

Literary Circle

Membership Update!

Donors who join Literary Circle invest in the Library's highest priority needs while enjoying access to virtual events that feature fascinating authors, story-tellers and thought-leaders. In the coming months we have exciting updates to share about the program so that we can better serve our members.

To learn how you can support Toronto Public Library and become a Literary Circle member visit **tplfoundation.ca/literary-circle**

Literary Circle guest authors Mohamed Fahmy and Susan Orlean

Join Heritage Society

There are many ways to give back to Toronto Public Library

When you include TPL in your will or other estate plans, you ensure your Library thrives today and for generations to come.

To learn more call **647-213-1539** or visit **tplfoundation.ca/heritage-society**

Join the conversation

#ImLibraryPeople