



Biblio Bash 2025 Raises Over \$1M for Toronto Public Library Youth Programs

Programs and partnerships supporting teen social health and mental wellness to be expanded

Toronto, ON (April 4, 2025) - Last night, the Toronto Public Library Foundation (TPLF) made history, raising an extraordinary \$1,070,100 in support of TPL and surpassing its fundraising targets. Co-presented by **Fitzrovia** and **CIBC**, Biblio Bash 2025 hosted 425 guests and 37 of Canada's notable authors for a sold-out black tie gala. Together, Toronto's business leaders, philanthropists, city builders and library lovers raised unprecedented funds for programs and partnerships that support teen social health and mental wellness.

With rising reports of poor mental health among Toronto teens, there is a growing trend in healthcare to invest in programs that focus on social connectedness. The Toronto Public Library's network of over 100 branches provides safe, welcoming spaces that offer social activities like book clubs and spoken word workshops, alongside specially designed teen spaces and after-school Youth Hubs. At a time when resources in our city are limited, teens need the Library more than ever.

Guests heard from Arden, a registered nurse, who credits the Library's Teen Council volunteer program with helping him overcome anxiety and realize his career aspirations. He attended the gala alongside TPL Librarian Claire Argyropoulos, and their story was artfully told in a short film supported by Community Sponsor **The MacNamara Family**.

The evening's host, journalist, author and CBC commentator **Elamin Abdelmahmoud** spoke to the significance of libraries in the lives of young people and how important they are to community building. Biblio Bash Co-Chairs, **Claire MacNamara** and **Farah Nasser** reiterated their gratitude to guests in the room for their generosity and for giving back to the biggest and busiest public library system in North America.

Toronto's Public Library's **City Librarian, Vickery Bowles**, took a bow for her decades of service and underscored the invaluable contribution of the TPL Foundation in supporting critical library programs, "I can tell you over the years I have witnessed first-hand the difference donors and sponsors make in the lives of the residents we serve. You simply cannot underestimate the importance of having access to a public library and its services – particularly for Toronto's young people."

The night sky and stars evoked a sense of wonder and the theme "Written in the Stars" took guests on the journey of nightfall, completely transforming the Toronto Reference Library space. Sipping cocktails in the second floor book stacks courtesy of Cocktail Sponsor **Mantella**

Corporation, guests were transported to a time of epic tales, magical myths and literary legends. In the atrium, each table welcomed a notable guest author, thanks to Author Host Sponsor, **Bazil Developments**. John Irving, Emma Knight, Karl Subban, Zalika Reid-Benta, Carley Fortune, David A. Robertson, Scaachi Koul, Robert Rotenberg, Jane Urquhart and Ian Williams were among the buzz-worthy authors in attendance at the sold-out gala. To see a full list, visit bibliobash.ca.

In keeping with the gala's tradition, interactive experiences offered guests unique momentos to take home, such as bespoke poems by the talented artists at **Posey**, a printed photo in the iconic stacks sponsored by **Air Canada**, and sore feet from dancing the night away to **Supersonic Hearts Band**. **Layne, the Auctionista** had guests bidding up courtside Raptors tickets and an exclusive "Dinner in the Stacks" with best-selling author and Academy Award-winner John Irving.

Celebrity photographer **George Pimentel's** always-popular Portrait Studio was back, capturing the stylish crowd in their "night star" attire. The evening's Media Sponsor was longstanding TPLF partner, **Toronto Star**.

Foundation CEO **Will Scott** underscored the Library's impact on providing safe and welcoming spaces for Toronto's youth, "As a former middle school teacher, and the father of a teenage daughter, I know how *tough* it is to be a teenager these days! Loneliness rates have doubled and middle and high schoolers report significant levels of psychological distress. Libraries play a vital role in fostering a sense of belonging and connection. They can truly change lives and uplift entire communities. We are so grateful for the support here tonight."

For anyone wishing to give to TPLF's Spring Campaign, all public donations are now being doubled up to \$50K until June 13th thanks to a matching gift. Go online to give now at: tplfoundation.ca/match

Biblio Bash 2025 Sponsors: Co-Presenting Sponsors: Fitzrovia & CIBC, Community Sponsor: The MacNamara Family, Author Host Sponsor: Bazil Developments, Cocktail Reception Sponsor: Mantella Corporation, Airline Sponsor: Air Canada, Media Sponsor: Toronto Star.

Biblio Bash 2025 Committee: Claire MacNamara and Farah Nasser, Co-Chairs; Alyssa Ages, Amanda Alvaro, Amanda Aquino, Sarah Aranha, Erin Bennett, Amy Burstyn-Fritz, Jen Grant, Jane Halverson, Lily Latner Otis, Marissa Kassam, Lindsay Mattick, Claire McIntyre, Erika Rodrigues, Carmen Steinberg, Vanessa Yeung.

A special thank you to our partners this year – Canopy by Hilton (Hotel partner); PMA Canada, Writers' Tears Whiskey and The Schlaepfer Family (Beverage partners); The Printing House (Printing partner).

For more information about the gala, links to photo albums, videos and the complete list of authors in attendance, please visit bibliobash.ca and #bibliobash and #imlibrarypeople on social media. Photography by George Pimentel.

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