



ONTARIO PUBLIC LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

ERIKA HEESSEN, PRESIDENT

OPLA

2020 OPLA Membership: 1,233

It has been an honour to serve OPLA Council as President this year. And what a year it was! OPLA Council has had a busy 2020 rapidly adjusting our membership engagement and services to meet the changes demanded by the global pandemic. For myself personally, I returned to work in September following parental leave. It is quite a different world from the one I left. I think it's important to remember that we are all doing best, and we are doing OK. I am grateful for the camaraderie both at work and in the broader library world.

Here is a snapshot of the council's activities this year.

Nicole Zummach's work with *HoOPLA* has continued to highlight how public libraries have adapted during this time. As the editor, she has solicited stories on your strategies for working from home, innovative ways that you are reaching out to patrons, and the heroes in your world.

While RA in a Day was postponed for 2020, the Reader's Advisory Committee is hard at work looking at ways to bring RA in a Day online in 2021. In December 2020, the Committee ran Connecting with Readers During COVID-19, a webinar that shared ways in which their libraries have been providing Reader's Advisory in these extraordinary times.

The Best Bets Committee, as ever, has been hard at work reading to award the 2020 Top Ten Best in Canadian Fiction and Non-Fiction for children and teens. Check out their "Book Tasting" session during the Super Conference for their picks!

The OPLA Child and Youth Services Committee and OLA staff did an incredible job with the first completely digital Child & Youth Services Expo. Feedback was excellent, and we will use the lessons learned in future digital events.

The Research and Evaluation Committee supported the COVID19 library services survey administered in Spring of 2020 and assisted with the data analysis for the [Ontario Public Library Response to COVID-19 Report](#). The OREC also presented two webinars, for library staff and boards, on data collection and analysis during COVID-19. Be sure

to attend their Super Conference session "What's Your Data? Choosing, Analyzing, and Using Your Library Data for Advocacy and Decision-making".

Northern outreach and engagement have been an ongoing OPLA focus area. Dayna DeBenedet and Ardis Chedore have created a Facebook group for northern library workers to discuss areas of common interest.

With FOPL, OLA has continued to regularly advocate for public library services and funding, particularly during this precarious time. Members and supporters are encouraged to reuse the content in our [letters](#) as they see fit.

This year's re-imagined, virtual Super Conference 2021 (*Clever Minds & Human Hearts / esprits brilliants et coeurs bienveillants*) will bring us together (even when we are apart) – a connection that I am looking forward to. I am delighted to continue to work with OPLA Vice-President (and 2022 President) Douglas Davey and the entire OPLA Council to connect with the public library community and meet their changing needs this year. Thank you to OPLA Super Conference Planners, Hamid Printer and Ashleigh Dronyk, for their tireless efforts in working with the OLA staff and Super Conference Team in building a program for our new reality. Have a great Super Conference!