



ONTARIO PUBLIC LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

ERIKA HEESSEN, PRESIDENT

OPLA

2021 OPLA Membership: 816

It has been an honour to serve OPLA Council as President again this year. While we had high hopes, we continue to cope with the global pandemic. We have all become very adept at changing directions and services as needed to meet people where they are, either virtually or physically. OLA has continued to advocate the value of public libraries to the provincial government by showcasing ongoing stories about public library work such as our response to the provision of vaccine certificates.

Here is a snapshot of Council's activities this year.

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

This year, the Reader's Advisory Committee brought RA in a Day online for an incredible learning experience in April 2021. Topics included Anti-Racist Library Services, Bibliotherapy, Diversity and Inclusion Titles and Indigenous Representation.

The Best Bets Committee, as ever, has been hard at work reading to award the 2021 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!

Community-Led Libraries launched a popular series of online conversations about equity, engaging online storytimes, and Discord for teens.

The OPLA Child and Youth Services Committee and OLA staff hosted a phenomenal Child & Youth Services Expo. This year's online event ran for two days, with a focus on different voices and representation matters, and had overwhelmingly positive feedback.

Are you part of a public library that's gone fine-free? Still thinking about it and trying to make your pitch? The OPLA Research and Evaluations Committee (OREC) has handy infographics and a myth-busting slide deck that you can customize and use for your library. Download here: <https://accessola.com/fines-free-libraries/>. OREC also began preparatory work for a 2022 survey around resilience and the future of libraries.

With the Federation of Ontario Public Libraries (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 any of our advocacy resources: <https://accessola.com/public-library-advocacy/>

This year's [Super Conference](#) theme (Gather / Se rassembler) strikes a particular chord - I must admit, I am very much looking forward to gathering with the library community, even if it must be virtually! The Super Conference will be such an important time for us as a community to come together, to share, to learn, to revitalize our work and to continue to build towards a better future. 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!