



ONTARIO PUBLIC LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

RYAN MONIZ, PRESIDENT

OPLA

As my time as your OPLA President ends, I would like to thank you for allowing me the opportunity to take on this significant role and represent the many outstanding public library workers across Ontario. It was a privilege to work alongside such a talented council along with all the amazing OLA staff.

Thank you to our HoOPLA editor, Andra Steele, for helping to keep readers updated on the outstanding work of our library peers. Whether it is a large-scale event or your branch sewing club on Tuesday nights, we want to hear about it, so please consider submitting for a future newsletter.

So, what did 2023 look like for OPLA? Let us dive-on-in and find out!

The Best Bets Committee marked a significant milestone by participating in the Festival of Trees at Harbourfront Centre. Engaging with countless parents, educators, and students, committee members operated a table, actively promoting their curated lists. The committee also participated in a virtual panel presentation on Diversity in Children and Youth books at the 2023 Child and Youth Expo. The committee remains resilient and are seeking new strategies to expand their outreach to a wider audience.

Speaking of the Child and Youth Expo, our Child & Youth Services Committee's theme was "Open Doors, Open Minds: Rise Up With Intentional Allyship" with a focus on youth mental health, allyship, student success, along with diversity and inclusion in Canadian children/youth literature. I had the pleasure of attending the virtual expo and while the workshops were outstanding, so was the incredible lineup of speakers, specifically Vikki Van Sickle presentation on period positive libraries.

The Readers Advisory Committee embraced the virtual realm by hosting the RA in a Day conference online in April 2023. The focus was on building non-fiction Readers' Advisory skills, incorporating non-fiction graphic

novels, and exploring programming around non-fiction collections. Themed "Murders, Memoirs, and Mindfulness: Bridging the Gap between Fiction and Nonfiction," the conference featured a compelling keynote address by Jen Sookfong Lee, author of "Superfan: How Pop Culture Broke My Heart."

It was a busy year for our Research and Evaluation Committee as they kicked off 2023 by presenting findings from the 2022 Resilient Public Libraries Survey at the OLA Survey Conference. Following this, a brief follow-up survey in summer 2023 focused on changes in remote work in public libraries, gathering 138 responses from ninety-nine library systems. In Fall 2023, the team initiated the identification of research topics for the 2024 Ontario-wide projects, narrowing down potential subjects with input from the OPLA council to include Employee Safety & Wellbeing, Library Usage Trends, Artificial Intelligence, Municipal Relationships, and Intellectual Freedom.

Accountability and empathy were the focus of the Community-Led Think Tank event in June. Attendees were able to gain a better understanding of care and radical empathy while learning practical tools for empathetic listening, feedback loops, and setting boundaries. As public service has become more challenging in a post-covid world, these strategies are essential for frontline staff.

In just a few days we will have a chance to Get Loud at the OLA Super Conference, either in-person or virtually. An event of this scale is not an easy one to plan so I would like to thank all of the conference planners from across the OLA divisions along with all OLA staff members. The continued success of the super conference is a testament to your commitment to creating Canada's premier library event year after year.

I look forward to collaborating with our President-Elect, Megan Garza, and the OPLA Council as we continue to serve public libraries in 2024.