

HoOPLA Newsletter



NEWS & UPDATES FROM ONTARIO PUBLIC LIBRARIES

HoOPLA is a privilege of membership for members of the Ontario Public Library Association. It is issued 4 times per year. Electronic issues are distributed in February, May, August, and November

A message from our opla president

We are speeding towards the 2025 OLA Super Conference and OPLA's Annual General Meeting and with that, this is my final HoOPLA message to you. It has been a pleasure serving as president this year, and I am looking forward to continuing my service on OPLA Council as the Past-President/Treasurer for 2025.

Recognition

The Community Led Committee organized a very compelling Community Led Think Tank in October. Meditations on Community, with Professor David Lankes, had 30 individuals in attendance.

Congratulations to the Child and Youth Committee for selling out the first in-person Child and Youth Expo since the pandemic! I was fortunate to attend and spent the day learning about inclusive service and programming. Kudos to all the planners and speakers for a fabulous event!

OPLA Award Nominations

Do you have an exceptional librarian in your life? Recognize their hard work and contributions to the field through the WJ Robertson Medallion or the OPLA Lifetime Achievement Award. Nominations are being accepted until November 30th. More information is available on the website.

Edna Staebler Award for Creative Non-Fiction

At OPLA Council's last meeting in October, Associate Professor Bruce Gillespie, from Wilfred Laurier University, presented the Council with information about the Edna Staebler Award for Creative Non-Fiction. Intended for Canadian writers who are early in their career, this is the only award available for the creative non-fiction genre in Canada. Previous recipients have included Charlotte Gray, Kate Harris, and Wayson Choy. Mr. Gillespie was seeking feedback on promotion for the award itself through public libraries. More information about the award is [available here](#).

As the days get shorter and darker, I hope that everyone can stay cozy and relaxed as

we head into the winter months. As always, I am happy to answer questions or hear any ideas or feedback, so please feel free to reach out to me at mgarza@markham.library.on.ca.



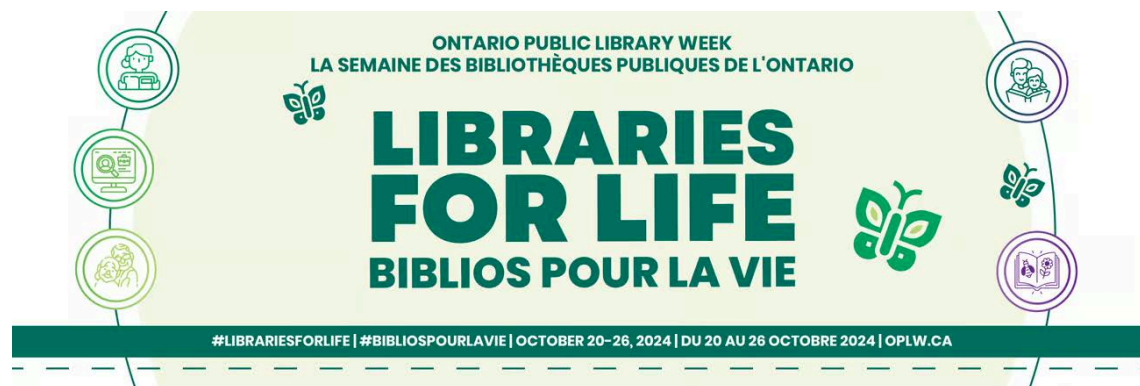
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OPLA President

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What's new

Ontario Public Library Week 2024 (Oct. 20-26)



In October we capped off Canadian Library Month by celebrating Ontario's public libraries during Ontario Public Library Week (OPLW)! This year's theme "Libraries for Life / Biblios pour la vie" was a celebration of libraries as a lifelong institution.

The Ontario Library Association is thankful to the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Gaming for their support of OPLW. OPLW was made possible with sponsorship by Clarivate, Canadian Urban Libraries Council, Whitehots, and Carr McLean.

Thank you, Minister Cho, for supporting the important roles that libraries play!
#LibrariesForLife

Here are some highlights from OPLW 2024:

[Talented community members and their adorable displays](#)

[A scavenger hunt for all ages](#)

[An escape for when you need it most](#)

[Read the OPLW press release.](#)



2025 OLA Super Conference



It may not feel like it right now, but the 2025 OLA Super Conference is right around the corner! The full program schedule has been released for both the in-person and virtual conference (though there are always fun socials and extra sessions being added in the lead-up to January).

Take a look at our [Featured Speakers](#) (including Carol Off, Catherine Hernandez, Farzana Doctor, and more!), view the [Full Conference Program](#), and take a peek at our [Super Conference Scholarships](#) to see if you are eligible. We can't wait to Build Bridges with you in January!

[Sign up for conference alerts.](#)

Emily Burns

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Canada's Largest Children's Choice Reading Program – Register Today!



You're invited to participate in Canada's largest recreational reading program!

Register today for Canada's largest children's choice reading program – the [Forest of Reading®](#). Let's get young people excited about reading Canadian books and incorporate our programming into your program.

The [Forest of Reading](#) program is designed to provide quality online literacy and reading engagement activities for public library programming – it is reading for fun! The Forest of Reading is a perfect fit for public library programming from fall through spring, and provides an opportunity to connect with the schools in your neighbourhood.

WHAT IS INVOLVED?

- 100 books nominated each year for [young people](#) and [adults](#).
- 500 Activities for the [nominated titles](#) - minimum 4 per book = Value \$2,500
- 10-20 [Virtual Author Visits](#) (English) = Value \$3,500
- 5-8 [Virtual Author Visits](#) (French) = Value \$1,000
- Additional Presentations from Nominees = Value \$3,000
- Access to all 9 digital award ceremonies in May = Value PRICELESS

TOTAL VALUE = \$10,000+ worth of programming

THE COST FOR PUBLIC LIBRARIES: \$45/branch

*Want to register all your branches? Please email Director, Meredith Tutching directly to inquire about a discount at mtutching@accessola.com.

Get your young patrons excited about reading the newest and best Canadian books. This program gives them a voice when they vote for the books they like.

Website: www.forestofreading.com

Meredith Tutching

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Child and Youth EXPO 2024 – From Big Dreams to Trailblazers



Early November at this year's Child & Youth Expo, we turned aspirations into action through interactive workshops and inspiring talks!

It was so lovely having everyone join us in person once again for #CYE24! Thank you to everyone who joined us for a great day of learning.

We'd like to give another special shoutout to each of our award winners who were presented with their awards at this year's EXPO! Congratulations to:

OPLA Child and Youth Librarian: Susan Hoffman

OPLA Advocacy in Action: Waterloo Public Library Programming Team



PHOTO: Megan Garza, OPLA President, and Susan Hoffman from Newmarket PL.

PHOTO: Claire MacFarland from Waterloo PL, Megan Garza, OPLA President, and Ikhlal Hussain from Waterloo PL.

[Learn more about Child and Youth EXPO.](#)

Melissa Macks

Director, Member Engagement

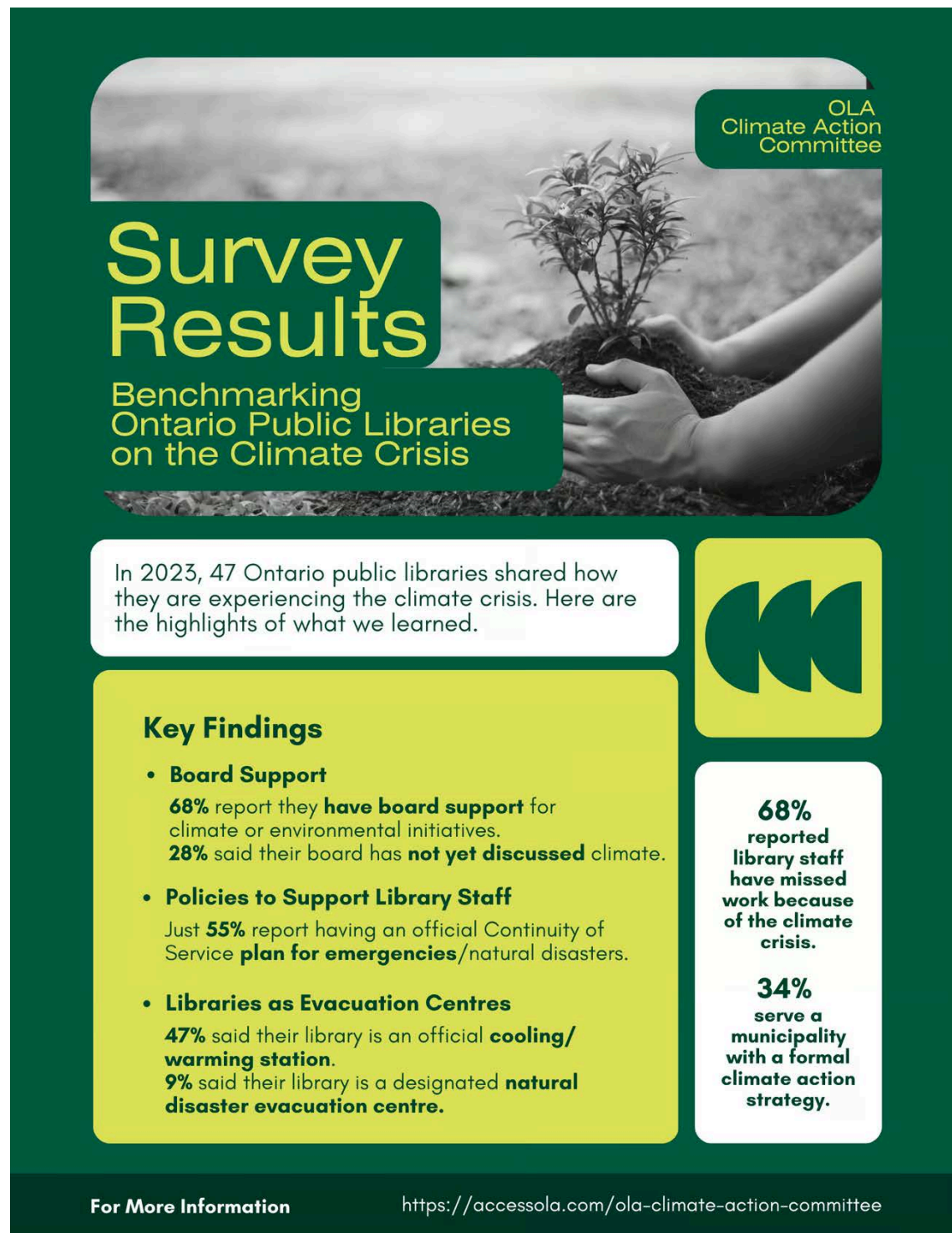
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Survey Results – Benchmarking Ontario Public Libraries on the Climate Crisis

In the Spring of 2023, OLA's Climate Action Committee created its first climate benchmarking survey. As the survey was the first of its kind in Ontario, we hoped it would capture the current climate affecting the library landscape, and how libraries were responding to these challenges. It is our hope that this survey will shed light on those challenges, provide a road map forward, and celebrate the work already being done.

[Read the full survey report here.](#)

A graphic with a dark green background. At the top, a black and white photo shows hands planting a small tree. The OLA Climate Action Committee logo is in the top right. The title 'Survey Results' is in large yellow font, followed by the subtitle 'Benchmarking Ontario Public Libraries on the Climate Crisis'. A white box contains introductory text. A large yellow box lists 'Key Findings' with three bullet points. To the right, a yellow square contains a stylized 'K' logo. Further right, two white boxes highlight specific statistics: 68% of library staff have missed work due to the climate crisis, and 34% of municipalities have a formal climate action strategy. The bottom of the graphic has a dark green bar with contact information.

OLA
Climate Action
Committee

Survey Results

Benchmarking Ontario Public Libraries on the Climate Crisis

In 2023, 47 Ontario public libraries shared how they are experiencing the climate crisis. Here are the highlights of what we learned.

Key Findings

- **Board Support**
68% report they **have board support** for climate or environmental initiatives.
28% said their board has **not yet discussed** climate.
- **Policies to Support Library Staff**
Just **55%** report having an official Continuity of Service **plan for emergencies**/natural disasters.
- **Libraries as Evacuation Centres**
47% said their library is an official **cooling/warming station**.
9% said their library is a designated **natural disaster evacuation centre**.

68% reported library staff have missed work because of the climate crisis.

34% serve a municipality with a formal climate action strategy.

For More Information <https://accessola.com/ola-climate-action-committee>

Around the province

The Coulson Family Bracebridge Library: A New Chapter in Muskoka



PHOTO 1: Bracebridge Library staff in advance of the big opening.



On October 8, 2024, the Coulson Family Bracebridge Library proudly opened its doors to an enthusiastic crowd lined up outside, welcoming over 3,000 visitors on its first day alone. Nestled inside the Muskoka Lumber Community Centre, this new 23,000 sq. ft. facility is nearly triple the size of the former Carnegie building, providing the Bracebridge community with a space that is truly *anything but ordinary*.

The expanded library boasts innovative features, including a makerspace equipped with multiple 3D printers, a laser cutter, hand tools, robotics, a professional-grade recording studio for creators, and a dedicated local history room to celebrate the region's rich heritage. With multiple meeting rooms and public event spaces available, the library has quickly become a vibrant community hub.

The grand opening celebration featured activities for all ages, including a children's scavenger hunt, an expanded youth area for craft sessions, interactive story times and a live concert by Cam Galloway. Tours of the welcoming, modern space allowed patrons to explore the exciting new amenities, leaving them eager to engage in the library's future offerings.

CEO and Chief Librarian, Crystal Bergstrom, credited the tireless efforts of staff in preparing for this momentous day. "The journey to get to this point has been a lot of work, but seeing the joy and excitement on the faces of our patrons made it all worthwhile," she said.

More than just a new building, the Coulson Family Bracebridge Library embodies the spirit of innovation and community -- ensuring that it will continue to be a place where imagination and learning thrive.

PHOTO 2: L to R: Joanne Wolochatiuk, Library Board Vice-Chair; Crystal Bergstrom, CEO & Chief Librarian; Barb Hutchinson, Library Board Chair.

Crystal Bergstrom

CEO & Chief Librarian

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Brampton Public Library's Popular Indigenous Storytime for All Ages



PHOTO 1: Left to right: Puppeteer Chad Solomon, Brampton Public Library Board Member Desiree Jones, The Honourable Member of Parliament for Brampton North, Ruby Sahota, and Brampton Library staff pose after the Rabbit and Bear Paws Indigenous puppet show at Cyril Clark Lecture Theatre.

Just ahead of Canada's National Day for Truth and Reconciliation on September 30th, Brampton Library hosted Rabbit and Bear Paws Puppeteer Chad Solomon for a special Indigenous storytime on Friday, September 27th, at the Cyril Clark Branch Library and Lecture Theatre.



Nearly 150 youth and their families participated in the interactive presentation, sharing the story of Turtle, who carries the world on her back, and a tiny muskrat, which succeeds in giving all of us the greatest gift -- a place to call home -- Turtle Island. To learn more, please visit rabbitandbearpaws.com.

The Honourable Ruby Sahota, M.P. for Brampton North, attended the event and presented Brampton Library with recognition for its Indigenous programming.

PHOTO 2: Puppeteer Chad Solomon and Federal Minister Ruby Sahota pose with Bear Paws and Strawberry.

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Caledon Public Library Showcases Local Artists During Ontario Culture Days



Caledon Public Library (CPL) partnered with the Town of Caledon to launch the inaugural Caledon Studio Tour as part of Ontario Culture Days.

The Library showcased 13 artists in six of its branches across the Town of Caledon. With over 25 artists and 18 stops in total, the self-guided,

weekend-long studio tour invited participants to meet artists and learn about their creative processes. Many attendees supported local creatives by purchasing one-of-a-kind works and all were eager to celebrate Caledon's rich landscapes and culture.

Since 2017, CPL has supported local artists, authors, musicians and studios through its Artful Caledon program. To learn more, please visit the [Artful Caledon](http://ArtfulCaledon) website.



PHOTO 1: Artist Derek Germano.

PHOTO 2: Artist Patrick Stephenson.



PHOTO 3: Misha Cat Studios.

Melanie Alderfer-Mowat

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Clearview Public Library Showing Its True Colors in Red and Purple



The Purple Hills Arts Festival (PHAF) runs annually during the first weekend of October and Herald, Clearview Public Library (CPL)'s house dragon, took this opportunity to play at the Stamp & Ink Event, which was held in CPL's Creemore Branch. Beth Harte, the host artist, engaged young printers in using traditional ink, quills and postcards stamped with vintage stamps to learn about other methods of communication that existed prior to the age of the Internet.

The Discover Library Days host, Elaine Hamerton, was also on site to introduce and promote "all things library" in her mobile booth that travels between the community

halls in Clearview Township on Sundays. With perfect weather and record attendance at the PHAF, that first Sunday in October will forever be etched in Herald's dragon memory as one of the more spectacular days he has experienced!



PHOTO 1: Young printers hard at work with ink, quills, postcards and vintage stamps. It was unanimously determined that using an ink-dipped quill to write a few words is quite the challenge!
PHOTO 2: Emma takes a moment or two to read to Herald the Library Dragon. They are old friends, having met when Emma was a baby.
PHOTO 3: Discover Library Days (DLD) - a mobile travelling booth promoting "all things library".

Michele McKenzie
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Community Foundation Grant extends London Public Library/CMHA Partnership

Since 2022, London Public Library (LPL) has partnered with CMHA Thames Valley Addiction and Mental Health Services (CMHATV) to provide a qualified Transitional Case Manager (TCM) at its Central Library. What began as an 18-month pilot program has proven to be incredibly valuable, offering essential support to individuals dealing with mental health challenges, addiction issues, and homelessness. We are thrilled to announce that thanks to a generous \$280,000 Community Vitality Grant from the London Community Foundation, LPL can continue to offer these crucial services through 2027.

The TCM program provides a range of support services, including referrals for housing, legal assistance, and mental health counseling. Each month, the TCMs engage with potential clients at the Library, offering a range of crucial help and resources, from helping individuals fill out online forms to providing crisis intervention, all while focusing on understanding each person's unique needs.

The Community Vitality Grant ensures that London Public Library can continue to support individuals visiting the library who need these services.

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Celebrate & Connect: Ontario Public Library Week 2024 at North Perth Public Library

The North Perth Public Library (NPPL) hosted week-long events across its three branches to recognize Ontario Public Library Week. Celebrations included:

- A photo area equipped with a balloon arch and biodegradable confetti,
- A visit from Pete the Cat,
- The launch of NPPL's new library cards,
- Gift basket draws (with library-branded mugs!),
- Library swag giveaways (buttons, colour changing pencils, temporary tattoos),
- A Friends of the Library table featuring the Dolly Parton Imagination Library,
- A storywalk around the perimeter of the Listowel Branch, showcasing a local author's work,
- A self-directed scavenger hunt with well-known picture book characters,
- A self-directed "dot" activity, where the public could fill out "dots" sharing their favourite things about libraries, with the dots then displayed in the Library's spaces.



Library staff engaged with 406 individuals through these events and activities, and all week long, patrons were encouraged to switch their old cards to the newly designed cards at no charge. The Library continued to weave its fresh branding into all elements of the week's celebrations, including the photo area and the dot activity.

Pete the Cat was a huge hit with kids and adults alike! The beautiful weather and NPPL's downtown location attracted the attention of passersby during the event (with some drivers doing U-turns to get a photo with Pete!).

PHOTO: Pete the Cat posing with thumbs up in front of the designated photo area.

Allie Fallis

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Oshawa Public Library's Annual Haunted House Was Frightfully Fabulous!





PHOTOS 1 & 2: OPL Teen Advisory Group's Haunted Lab – Scary Science!

Just in time for the spooky season, Oshawa Public Library (OPL)'s Teen Advisory Group (TAG) transformed the McLaughlin Branch auditorium into a horrifying haunted lab.

Each year, TAG members, possessing the flair-to-scare, select a frightening theme and bring it to life as a fun, interactive exhibit which is open to the public. This year, they scared us with science.

The public's response was overwhelming, with a record-breaking number of people visiting the annual Haunted House event, eager for eerie experiments, ghastly demonstrations and spine-chilling surprises. Varying levels of spookiness were available upon request, resulting in many laughs and more than a few screams of delight (and just the right amount of fright!).

Dina Pen

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Digitization of Perth County Newspapers

Stratford-Perth Archives has created a new way for the public to access historic newspapers from Perth County. One can now browse over 8,000 issues of 17 different publications in a free digitized newspaper database, making these rich sources of local history information keyword searchable and fully accessible.

Pre-1950 issues scanned so far are available for online access via the OurDigitalWorld website, a discovery portal that brings together content from archives and libraries across the province. Post-1949 issues scanned so far are available to browse and search in the same manner on public computers in the Archives' reading room. Not all Perth County newspapers at the Archives have, however, been digitized, but new publications and issues will be added to the database each year.

These 12 publications are now available online and on the public computers in the Archives' reading room:

- Atwood Bee, 1890-1923.
- County of Perth Electioneering Monitor, 1863.
- County of Perth Herald, 1863-1864; 1905.
- Listowel Banner, 1920-1927.
- Listowel Standard, 1878; 1888; 1893-1899; 1902-1911.
- Milverton Sun, 1891-1919.
- Monkton Times, 1907-1921.
- Stratford Advertiser, 1881; 1887; 1889.
- Stratford Examiner, 1860; 1863.
- Stratford Mirror, 1923-1946.
- Stratford Times, 1876-1891.
- Stratford Weekly Herald, 1882.

More current issues of the Listowel Banner, Mitchell Advocate, Mitchell Times, Stratford Beacon Herald, Stratford Gazette and Stratford Times are available as well, but only on public computers in the Archives' reading room.

Stratford-Perth Archives is grateful to the Perth County Branch of Ontario Ancestors for their generous contribution to this project. The Archives would also like to thank its summer students for their diligent work digitizing and uploading newspapers over the last three summers. The scanning project will continue, and more issues and titles will be added to the database each year.

The Stratford-Perth Archives digital newspaper database can be found [here](#). We are excited to see what you find!

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Fan Fest Brings Magic and Connection to Stouffville Library

In a town where community spirit shines, Stouffville Library's Fan Fest has quickly become a cherished event, sparking imagination and togetherness. On October 19th, families, friends, and fans gathered to celebrate the characters and stories that inspire wonder.

From the first smiles to the final goodbyes, Fan Fest was filled with joy and laughter, as Spider-Man, Disney's Elsa, and the Star Wars Stormtroopers made their appearance, sparking awe and delight. The library buzzed with activity as each corner

hosted something special, including a Harry Potter escape room and Frozen-themed crafts in the Makerspace, bringing fans of all ages together to celebrate their favorite stories.

At the heart of Fan Fest was a dedication to making everyone feel part of the story. Parents and children alike joined in on a scavenger hunt, while others showcased their creativity in a lively costume contest, revealing the talents and enthusiasm of the

Stouffville community.

Fan Fest is not just an event, but a celebration of the bonds that connect us. With support from the Town of Stouffville and local organizations, Stouffville Library was thrilled to provide a day where community, creativity, and fandom met in perfect harmony.

PHOTO: Families and fans gather at Stouffville Library's Fan Fest, sharing joy with beloved characters like Spider-Man, Elsa, and Stormtroopers.

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Stratford Public Library's "Reader's Retreats"

In 2023, Stratford Public Library (SPL) began a series called the Reader's Retreat. It runs twice annually, focusing on readers' advisory (RA) and on relationship-building with patrons. Staff set up a cozy area off the main floor, with comfortable seating and snacks, and encourage patrons to settle in for a 20-minute chat with a librarian about their reading. Each patron leaves with a list of at least five titles to follow up on, either noted on a branded bookmark or emailed to them.

Each Reader's Retreat has a different theme, allowing the program to be marketed in a fresh way each time, and focus on different areas of reading. From Stretch Reads to Bibliotherapy, staff have had fun with it! Patrons have been going directly from their chats with staff to the stacks, with some returning for more RA help during regular hours. These are fun events for staff and patrons alike and have been showing very promising results!

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Makerspace Opening Soon at Timmins Public Library

Local youth in the Timmins area will soon be able to enjoy a new free space for creativity, learning, and connection, thanks to the upcoming VIDMAR Makerspace at the Timmins Public Library (TPL).

Set to launch in January 2025, this newly renovated space will accommodate small group sessions and one-on-one programs geared to older teens and young adults. The makerspace will include new and exciting technology, including a 3D printer, sewing and Cricut machines, robotics equipment, a podcasting station, specialized software such as Adobe Creative Suite, with more to come as the space develops.

The makerspace has been funded by the Government of Canada's Building Safer Communities Fund through the City of Timmins and by the Library's reserve funds. Former City of Timmins Engineering Department employee, Branimir "Branko" Vidmar

(1913-1992), designated funds from his estate to be allocated towards facilitating the construction of TPL's new library building in 2005. His donation also included a stamp and coin collection, which were, as per his wishes, sold by auction. The funds from that auction were used for the development of the makerspace project, with the room now being named in his honour.

The Timmins Public Library strives to be a dynamic community hub and is thrilled to soon be opening this makerspace, which will provide a welcoming environment where youth can unleash their creativity, develop new skills, and connect with like-minded peers as they discover the diverse range of equipment and technology available.



PHOTO: Digital Creation Station in the Timmins Public Library's new VIDMAR Makerspace.

Janna Lizotte

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Celebrating Health Literacy Month at Vaughan Public Libraries (VPL)

This October, Vaughan Public Libraries proudly celebrated Health Literacy Month, connecting its community with vital health information and resources to help residents make informed decisions for themselves and their families. Through partnerships with over 10 health organizations, including Boomerang Health, powered by SickKids, Mackenzie Health District Stroke Centre, Canadian Mental Health Association, and Alzheimer Society of



York Region, VPL has gathered a comprehensive range of expertise and support.

Community members of all ages were invited to visit VPL's Resource Libraries: Bathurst Clark Resource Library, Civic Centre Resource Library, and Pierre Berton Resource Library. There, they had the opportunity to meet with representatives from these organizations, learn about their services, and access valuable health resources tailored to their needs. This initiative offered something for everyone, from health tips for children to specialized resources for seniors.

The response was overwhelmingly positive, as customers expressed gratitude for the chance to connect with health resources in their community.

Health Literacy Month was a resounding success, highlighting the importance of accessible health information and empowering individuals to thrive.

PHOTO: Rachel, VPL's Health Literacies Specialist (left), with Central East Stroke Network York District's placement student, Merlin Kuriakose and Anna Sewell (right), the District Stroke Coordinator.

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Live Well, Learn More! Whitby Public Library Launches New Seniors' Wellness Series



There has never been a better time to get connected. The Whitby Public Library (WPL) has created a new Seniors' Education and Wellness Series focusing on nurturing a sense of wellbeing and belonging for older adults. Thanks to a community grant from the Government of Ontario, WPL's enthusiastic staff have designed 14 customized programs and workshops for seniors. The series encompasses a wide range of opportunities for social engagement from retirement planning to gentle yoga, computer basics, and more.

Seniors from the community are also part of an advisory committee that provides ongoing feedback on WPL's programming. It is crucial for WPL that its patrons see themselves reflected in the Library's programs and services.

The series features a range of experts who share information and ideas with attendees, but each workshop also emphasizes socializing with one another.

The timing for this exciting new series is important given that WPL hears regularly from

experts that connectedness and healthy active living for seniors is vital to combatting isolation.

The series will run until March 2025.

PHOTO: Whitby Public Library older adult patrons taking part in a gentle yoga workshop.

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Next Issue

The deadline for submissions for the Winter edition of HoOPLA is February 1, 2025.

Please send submissions to HoOPLA Editor, Andra Steele:

hooplaeditor@accessola.com. For more information, you may visit the [editorial guidelines](#) listed on the OLA site.

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