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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 as soon as possible following the submission deadlines at the beginning of February, May, August, and November.

A message from our opla president

Summer months in public libraries are often some of the busiest, as our spaces play host to summer reading programs, camps, and homes away from home for many people. I hope that you are all managing to find some time to breathe amidst the busyness! While the OPLA Council is taking a break for the summer, here are some things that I would like to highlight in the meantime.

Save School Libraries!

As a former children's librarian, I have long believed that school libraries and the librarians within them are our natural partners in building literacy in our youngest community members. I was very concerned to learn that the Ministry of Education has removed protected funding for school libraries from their funding model. I am therefore encouraging you to act to support our school libraries and ensure that all children have access to valuable learning resources.

Councillor Vacancies & 2025 Elections

We have several council seats and OPLA's Vice President/President Elect position open for 2025. Please consider nominations (either for yourself or someone else) in the fall. The Vice President/President Elect position was my first experience volunteering with OLA beyond convening at Super Conference and I am enjoying connecting with, and hearing from, other library folks from all over Ontario. Please come join us in 2025!

OPLA Bylaw Review

OPLA is in the process of reviewing the bylaw governing its division. The major change being considered is how the “at-large” council representation is elected. Currently representation is by geographical regions, however we are finding it difficult to elect and maintain a full council within these parameters. The priorities of the sub-committee engaged in this work are for equity of representation geographically as well as from traditionally underrepresented groups. OPLA wants to ensure that it reflects all of Ontario and that diverse perspectives are brought to the discussions in council. I would like to thank Jennifer LaChapelle, Grant Munroe, Leah Ruchetto and Tracey Sinclair for engaging in this work with me over the summer. The recommended changes will be ready to be voted upon at OPLA's AGM in the new year.

Ontario Public Library Staff: Mental Wellbeing Survey

The Research and Evaluation Committee (OREC) is in the process of seeking participants for its bi-annual survey. This year, after feedback gathered at Super Conference and from OPLA Council, the topic will be mental health and wellbeing, which we know is an urgent priority in the sector. To sign up your library to participate, please fill out the form available further below, under “OPLA's 2024 Employee Wellbeing Survey”.

Super Conference Proposal Site Opens August 2024

The call for proposals for Super Conference 2025 (January 29 - February 1) is out and the site opens on August 20, 2024. OPLA's Super Conference planners have already been consulting with Council and together have identified topics that they would like to prioritize as part of 2025's Breaking Walls, Building Bridges theme. These include equity and anti-oppression work, wellbeing in public service, organizational development, advocacy and leadership.

As always, I am happy to answer questions or hear any ideas or feedback that you may have. Please feel free to reach out to me at mgarza@markham.library.on.ca.



Megan Garza

OPLA President

Senior Manager, Organizational Transformation

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What's new

Best Bets Committee Looking for New Members!

The OLA Best Bets Committee is currently looking for new members to fill vacancies. The Best Bets Committee highlights excellence in Canadian literature for children and young adults by reading and evaluating Canadian books that were published within a given calendar year and selecting the best to present at the OLA Super Conference.

For 2024, Best Bets is specifically looking for voracious readers of young adult fiction. Prospective applicants must be currently employed by a library, be a member of the OPLA division of OLA, and be actively involved with children and/or youth, whether that be in service delivery, management, collection development or some form of equivalent experience. Applicants must also be available to attend virtual meetings which are held once a month, except for in July and August.

The application form is available [here](#).

Please contact Theresa Power or Kara Miley if you have any questions or concerns, at olabestbets@gmail.com.

Theresa Power

Content & Access Librarian

Centre for Equitable Library Access (CELA)

OPLA's 2024 Employee Wellbeing Survey

Curious about your staff's well-being?

[Register your library now](#) to take part in OPLA's *2024 Employee Wellbeing Survey* to gain valuable insight into your staff's wellbeing and view links to actionable strategies to help address psychological health and safety at work. [Learn more](#). **Deadline to register is September 13, 2024.**

Nominations Open for Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Gaming's Ontario Public Library Service Awards

We would like to remind you that the due date for the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Gaming's Ontario Public Library Service Awards is just 5 weeks away on September 13. This is your opportunity to shine a spotlight on any great initiative that your library has implemented.

Please submit your application through the [online submission form](#) (new this year).

Upcoming Forest of Reading® Dates



The Forest of Reading® is Canada's largest recreational reading program! To encourage a love of reading and to create a meaningful experience for your readers, we encourage you to keep the following important dates in mind.

September 1-30: Voting for the Evergreen Award program (Winner announced during Ontario Public Library Week, 3rd week of October)

October 1: Registration opens for the 2025 program

October 15: Nominated lists for the school-aged programs are announced

October 22: Evergreen Winner Announced

November 15: Password portion of the website open for 2025 registered participants

January 29-February 1, 2025: OLA Super Conference

April 1-30: Voting for school-aged programs

April 23: Official Forest Voting Day for school-aged programs (World Book Day)

May 13-14: Forest of Reading Festival - Toronto - in-person and digital experience both offered

May 15: French Event (location TBD) for French-language award

For more information on what's involved and how to participate, we invite you to visit: www.forestofreading.com.

Meredith Tutching

Director, Forest of Reading®

Ontario Library Association

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Council Vacancies: Call for Nominations

The OPLA and OLBA councils are seeking members who are enthusiastic, dedicated and interested in being part of positive change for libraries. Volunteering on council is not

just an opportunity to give back to the library community, but also a chance to grow personally and professionally, expand your network and develop new skills.

If you are interested in fulfilling one of the positions below, please reach out to mmacks@accessola.com. Nominations open September 16.

OPLA Council Vacancies

OPLA Vice President / President Elect
OPLA Northwestern Region (3 year term)
OPLA Northeastern Region (1 year term)
OPLA East Central Region (1 year term)
OPLA Mid Central region (3 year term)
OPLA Metro Toronto Region (3 year term)

OLBA Council Vacancies

OLBA Vice President/President Elect
OLBA Northwestern Region (3 year term)
OLBA East Central Region (3 year term)
OLBA Central West Region (3 year term)

Melissa Macks

Manager, Membership

Ontario Library Association
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OPLA Awards: Call for Nominations Opens September 16



Do you have a co-worker, colleague, supervisor or anyone in your library staff that goes above and beyond? It's time to give them the recognition they deserve! OPLA Award Nominations will open on September 16.

OPLA Lifetime Achievement Award

Presented to a library staff member who has given life long service to the profession and has contributed significantly to the growth and innovation of public libraries in Ontario. [Submit a nomination.](#)

OPLA James Bain Medallion

The James Bain Medallion is awarded to a library board member who has demonstrated outstanding leadership in governing a public library in Ontario. [Submit a nomination.](#)

You may also be interested in:

The OLBA W.J. Robertson Medallion (Public Librarian Of the Year)

The W.J. Robertson Medallion is presented by the Ontario Library Boards' Association to a public librarian who has demonstrated outstanding leadership in the advancement of public library service in Ontario. [Submit a nomination.](#)

Melissa Macks

Manager, Membership

Ontario Library Association

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Ontario Public Library Week

Save the date! October 20-26, 2024, is Ontario Public Library Week.

As the coordinator, the Ontario Public Library Association (OLA), will be providing public libraries and public library supporters with various promotional resources. Keep an eye out for graphics in the next couple of days!

For questions and comments, please contact communications@accessola.com.

Celebrate and Support I Read Canadian Day!



**MARK YOUR CALENDAR
I READ CANADIAN DAY**



NOV 6, 2024



Mark your calendar! I Read Canadian Day is November 6, 2024. This day is a national celebration of Canadian books for young people, with the goal of elevating the genre and celebrating the breadth and diversity of these books. There will be virtual presentations taking place, so stay tuned for more details.

Keen to celebrate in style and get kids excited about reading for fun? Shop I Read Canadian merch from The Library Marketplace in advance of this fun-filled day! Every young person should have access to Canadian books and a portion of the sales go to the I Read Canadian Fund.

Child & Youth Expo

On November 4, the OPLA Child and Youth Services Committee will present the annual forum for children's and youth library services staff and other stakeholders to exchange ideas and learn about innovative programs and services in order to provide the best programming for children and youth.

Stay tuned for more information about this upcoming event in Toronto, Ontario!

Melissa Macks

Manager, Membership

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Save the Date for OLA Super Conference 2025!



You are invited to the OLA Super Conference 2025: [Building Bridges / Jeter des ponts!](#)

This year's conference will take place January 29 - February 1, 2025 at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre in downtown Toronto. There will also be an option to attend virtually.

Libraries are more than just buildings; like bridges, they are essential structures and dynamic spaces that facilitate community building through connection. We invite you to create those connections — build bridges with us — at this year's Super Conference.

[Sign up for conference alerts.](#)

Around the province

Barrie Public Library Thrilled to Win ALA Public Relations Award

The Barrie Public Library (BPL) is proud to announce that it was awarded a \$10,000 John Cotton Dana Library Public Relations Award from the American Library Association in June.

This prestigious grant is awarded to up to eight libraries each year, honouring outstanding strategic communications, marketing and public relations. BPL received the award for its 2023 membership drive, an organization-wide campaign with the goal of welcoming 10,000 new members by the end of 2023.

As stated in the John Cotton Dana Awards (JCD) announcement: "From planning through implementation, Barrie Public Library's library card sign-up campaign was fun and built upon community spirit and personal connections. Their campaign forged connections within the community through referral cards that were well-designed and truly had the community 'sharing the love' of their public library. They were savvy with staff utilization in this multi-channel campaign. Their ongoing evaluation and monitoring led to updating goals and invigorating staff for a highly successful campaign."

The effort was a huge success! Barrie Public Library reached its goal in early October and welcomed 12,476 new members by the end of the year.

"Our membership campaign was a true team effort across the entire organization," said BPL's CEO Lauren Jessop. "Everyone brought their energy and passion, and together we surpassed our goal by 20%."

The Barrie Public Library thanks the American Library Association, EBSCO, and the H.W. Wilson Foundation for the honour.



PHOTO: Pictured (L to R): Kelly Sitzman, Vice-chair of JCD Committee; Gregg Dodd, Chair of JCD Committee; Melissa Foster, Manager of Marketing & Communications, Barrie Public Library; Martha Alvarado Anderson, JCD Committee Member.

Melissa Foster

Manager, Marketing and Communications

Barrie Public Library

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Brampton Library Celebrates its Seventh Annual Local Authors Showcase



PHOTO: Local authors who participated in this year's Local Authors Showcase book fair at Brampton Farmers' Market.

Brampton Library (BL) announced its seventh annual Local Authors Showcase via social media on June 10th and on Saturday, June 22nd hosted a book fair at the downtown Brampton Farmers' Market for the authors to engage with residents and sell their books.

This year's showcase was the largest ever, featuring more than 70 authors who have collectively written nearly 100 books. What began in 2017 as an initiative to spotlight local literary talent and respond to ongoing requests from local authors to have their books in BL's collection, has become an annual community celebration which has attracted authors at all levels of experience, including science fiction author Robert J. Sawyer, who joined this year.

Authors living in Peel Region who have published, or self-published, a book in the previous five years, who are also Brampton Library members, are eligible to submit their book(s) for consideration. The resulting collection is featured in-branch and online for a full year. Currently, the 2024-25 collection is on display at Gore Meadows Branch Library and accessible online [here](#). The submission package for the 2025-2026 Showcase can be accessed [here](#).

June Dickenson

Manager, Marketing and Communications

Brampton Library

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Grand Opening of Bruce County Public Library's Newly Relocated Paisley Branch

Bruce County Public Library (BCPL) held the grand opening of its newly relocated branch within the Paisley Community Center in Paisley, Ontario. The new branch's space is bright and fully accessible, with enough space for a designated children's area and a fresh collection of titles.

The support from the municipality of Arran-Elderslie, and the funding that BCPL was able to secure, was key in completing the second-story renovations and installation of an elevator in the Paisley Community Centre, ensuring that all members of the public can access the library with ease. Total municipal funding for renovations for the library, a multi-use space on the second floor, and the elevator was \$585,000, including provincial funding support of \$218,000.

The grand opening was held on Friday, July 12, with speeches from Bruce County Warden Chris Peabody, Board Chair Mark Goetz and Arran-Elderslie Mayor Steve Hammell. About 120 children from Arran-Elderslie were entertained by the magical Mr. Oh! at an interactive magic show.

Prior to the opening of the new Branch, BCPL ran a community survey that drew incredible participation. Using that feedback, BCPL has also updated its weekly hours and moved regular weekly programming, such as Story Time, to time slots better suited to its patrons' busy lives.

BCPL is excited to provide this new, updated space for the community of Paisley – a reflection of its commitment to being a community-sharing place.



PHOTO: Local kids at Paisley Branch grand opening, watching the Magical Mr. Oh! perform.

Lindsay Moffatt

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Star Date Log 2024/07/12 re: Mission Report F.U.N. @

CPLTDSRC



F.U.N. is the acronym for the Futuristic & Universal Neutron Star -- a library event that kicked off Clearview Public Library's TD Summer Reading Club (CPLTDSRC) program in July.

Highlights of this free family-friendly activity circuit were tours of the galaxy's constellations, offered by The Ontario Planetarium. Side attractions included close contact with aliens, communicating with Imperial Storm Troopers and navigating through a "solar system" of literary activities.

By maximizing effective usage of the joint space offered by the library, the art gallery and the ice rink, CPL was able to offer a stargate to a universe of learning opportunities for its friendly earthling patrons.

The event certainly created maximum "thrust & lift off" for CPL's TD Summer Reading Club program!



PHOTOS 1-3: F.U.N. library event hosted by Clearview Public Library (CPL) and The Ontario Planetarium and enjoyed by junior astronauts, friendly aliens and other earthlings who wished to learn more about travelling throughout the solar system and to the stars!

Michele McKenzie

Deputy CEO

Clearview Public Library

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Idea Exchange Shifts to Cambridge Public Library

From 2012 to 2014, the Cambridge Public Library Board and staff embarked on a journey to reinvent how people interacted with their public libraries and to show the Cambridge community how libraries were a dynamic part of the community.

The phrase “Idea Exchange” prompted a discussion about how libraries support the public and how they, in turn, evolve as the community evolves. At that time, the Library Board determined that changing the name of the library from Cambridge Libraries and Galleries to Idea Exchange would make the library more contemporary. Idea Exchange (IE) was then rolled out to the public in 2014.

Since 2014, Idea Exchange has experienced expansion of its locations, information and technology, collections and departments, as well as the launch of a new location (Old Post Office). Adult programming was introduced for the first time, and now book clubs, workshops, tech learning, making and signature events have multiplied in its spaces. Idea Exchange’s engagement with community organizations, both grassroots and other agencies, has increased exponentially and entire new collections have been created and continue to meet community needs (e.g., Unusual Things to Borrow, Seed Library, and the Active Living Collection).

During Idea Exchange’s strategic planning process in 2023, staff and the public repeatedly identified that the “Idea Exchange” name created barriers to access for residents, newcomers, and those new to Cambridge. Today’s libraries are recognized as vibrant community hubs providing access to information, things one needs, cutting-edge technologies, amazing programs, and most importantly, a safe space for all. Changing the name, however, never changed IE’s legacy of bringing exceptional library service to its community. Modern public libraries are as innovative, forward-thinking, and

community-focused as they have always been. Acting on this feedback, the Cambridge Public Library Board voted unanimously to shift from “Idea Exchange” to “Cambridge Public Library”.

Idea Exchange’s goal is to complete the identity process for the summer of 2025, ahead of opening Cambridge’s future sixth location in south-east Galt. The public library community will notice gradual changes as the library works through the process. “Idea Exchange” will remain the brand on several items until the project is completed, while “Cambridge Public Library” will start to appear in select communication materials. Cambridge Art Galleries will continue to be part of Cambridge Public Library just as it has been a part of Idea Exchange.

Cambridge Public Library is a 21st-century library that will continue to bring the future to Cambridge. It is an exciting time to move forward together with a new identity!

Jaime Griffis

Director, Programming and Promotion

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Lambton County Library’s New Clearwater Library: A New Chapter in Community Engagement

On April 8, 2024, the City of Sarnia and the County of Lambton celebrated the grand opening of Clearwater Library (CL), a brand-new location of Lambton County Library, designed to serve the residents living in the eastern portion of Sarnia.

Nestled within the Clearwater Arena on Wellington Street, this library has replaced the former Mallroad Library, which was in a commercial plaza about 1.5 kilometres away. Strategically positioned to support the projected growth in the east end of the city, Clearwater Library is much more than a place to borrow books. It stands as a cornerstone of community development. By transforming an underutilized area on the arena's second floor, the library is helping to convert the Clearwater Arena site into a dynamic, multi-purpose community hub.

Clearwater Library represents the power of collaboration, community engagement, and the timeless value of libraries in our society. In just four months since its opening, CL has made a positive impact. With 17,942 checkouts to 1,831 unique borrowers, 423 new library card sign-ups, and 16,593 visitors, the numbers speak volumes about the community's enthusiasm for its new library.

To celebrate the new space, Lambton County Library hosted a Community Open House on June 15, 2024. This event invited residents to explore the library and its offerings, showcasing the library as part of a community hub. The Open House featured Family Story Time, face painting, a free skate, a visit from the Museum of Archaeology of Ontario, and the launch of the Summer Reading Challenge. The event attracted 512 visitors and highlighted the library’s integral role within the community.

During the Open House, membership sign-ups surged by an impressive 167% above the average, indicating a renewed interest in library services among residents. Circulation rates also saw a dramatic 246% increase as community members eagerly explored the collection. Particularly noteworthy was the success of the Summer Reading Challenge, with 143 children signing up--67% of whom were first-time participants, underscoring the effectiveness of the library's outreach efforts.

With the opening of Clearwater Library, Lambton County Library has created an inviting, multifunctional space within Clearwater Arena that seamlessly integrates literacy and community activities. This approach has not only redefined the library experience but also demonstrated the potential for libraries to become vibrant centres of community life.

For more information, please contact Darlene Coke, Manager, Library Services, Lambton County Library, at darlene.coke@county-lambton.on.ca or by phone at 519-845-3324 ext. 5238.



PHOTO: While taking advantage of everything Lambton County Library's Clearwater Library offers, visitors can also play chess while overlooking the rink and keeping an eye on any hockey or lacrosse action.

Emily Bisson

Community Engagement / Communications Supervisor

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Change is Good (At North Perth Public Library) -- Very Good!

The North Perth Public Library (NPPL) launched a brand-new summer reading challenge for its youth, scrapping all old parameters and structure. This year, youth were given the option to decide between a NPPL branded bucket hat or tote bag. This is where they will

collect and display the badges that they earned throughout the summer. Badges are earned for every weekly challenge completed, with eight possible challenges in total.

Challenges consist of activities such as “read outside”, “read to a friend” or “draw a picture of your favourite book character” and are meant to be completed anywhere and at any time. Once youth have completed their challenge, they are to come into the library and share (or show a picture) of how they completed their challenge to collect their badge.

Once five or more challenges have been completed and badges collected, youth can enter a contest for a chance to win one of three grand prizes. Thanks to a generous donor, the grand prizes are a three-person camping tent with two sleeping bags, an adventure activity basket valued at \$100, and another at \$50.

Previous versions of summer reading challenges consisted of completing a certain number of pages, chapters, or time spent reading, but NPPL found that many readers were intimidated or became discouraged. Last summer, 75% of the readers did not complete the entire challenge and only half of the readers made it halfway through! Staff at NPPL recognized that even though summer reading is a “challenge”, it should be a challenge for all, not an initiative to reward “good readers”. This year’s goal was to bring excitement and fun back into reading and to allow all readers to participate equally. With so many different speeds, abilities, and interests of young readers, NPPL recognized the need for change.

The new summer reading challenge has sparked an astounding reaction from the community. The engagement has nearly doubled since last summer and instead of declining in participation, there has been a steady increase as the summer progresses. Youth are seen all around the community sporting their NPPL merch with their badges proudly displayed and there has yet to be a day where new participants have not joined. The library has recognized that this challenge model also fosters a sense of community, being outdoors, and creates buzz about literature. NPPL anticipates doubling, edging close to tripling, their numbers by the end of the summer.

Revamping the entire youth challenge was a big and scary feat, however NPPL staff has watched how the change has brought many new faces into the library and witnessed the excitement on youth’s faces, making it all well worthwhile. Change can be good, and in this case, it is *very* good!

Hayley Dietz

Coordinator of Digital Initiatives

North Perth Public Library

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Oakville Public Library Announces Architecture Firm for New Central Branch

The Oakville Public Library (OPL) is thrilled to announce a major step forward in its development of the New Central Branch. Renowned architecture firm, Perkins&Will

Canada, has been awarded the design of the new facility. Slated for opening in 2028, this exciting project involves relocating the current Central Branch to a new site in the heart of downtown Oakville, at 193 Church Street, just a five-minute walk from the current Central Branch, at the site of Oakville's former post office.

In partnership with the Town of Oakville, this location has been strategically chosen to enhance accessibility and better serve the community. As part of Downtown Oakville's Heritage Conservation District, the New Central Branch will respect the area's historical significance while incorporating modern amenities and features.

Perkins&Will is the ideal partner for this transformative project, bringing over 75 years of experience creating spaces and public libraries that prioritize people and society.

Oakville Public Library is also pleased to share that Smoke Architecture will be leading the integration of Indigenous perspectives into the building's construction and design. Smoke Architecture, an Anishinaabeg-owned and operated firm based in Hamilton, Ontario, works alongside Elders and community leaders to gather knowledge on how to honour distinct Indigenous identities in every step of the process.

"Announcing Perkins&Will and Smoke Architecture as the architects marks a significant milestone in the development of the New Central Branch. This collaboration brings together a wealth of expertise in innovative, sustainable design and a deep respect for Indigenous traditions and identities," said Councillor Jeff Knoll, Chair of the Oakville Public Library Board. "As we face significant challenges due to the aging infrastructure at the current Central Branch, the New Central Branch brings promise of delivering a modern space that honors our past while building for the future. We are excited to continue to engage the community throughout the development process and ensure that the New Central Branch reflects the vibrant spirit of Oakville, and that it meets the diverse needs of our Downtown Cultural Hub."

For more information, please visit OPL's [New Central](#) page and the Town of Oakville's [Downtown Cultural Hub](#) page.

Naveen Atwal

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Oakville Public Library

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Oxford County Library's 7th Annual Oxford Reads

Oxford County Library (OCL) is excited for its 7th annual Oxford Reads program, a community reading program in partnership with Woodstock Public Library (WPL). This year's selected title is *Everyone in this Room Will Someday Be Dead* by Emily Austin, a Canadian author and MLIS grad from St. Thomas, currently residing in Ottawa.

This year, for the first time, OCL and WPL accepted community nominations in addition to their committee selections of shortlisted titles, and Emily Austin's book was the unanimous winner. It was truly a community pick!

To celebrate this year's title, there will be paint nights, murder mysteries, craft nights, book clubs and a presentation from a local death doula at both library systems. These programs will culminate with the Oxford Reads Gala, featuring the author, Emily Austin.

To encourage staff to read this year's title and promote it to patrons, OCL developed an Oxford Reads Staff Reading Box, containing a copy of the book, a bookmark, a bag of tea, a gluten free/vegan cookie and a journal to record any thoughts or questions about the book. The Reading Box has been a huge success and almost half of all staff across its 14 branches have signed up to receive the box from which they are able to keep the bookmark, tea and cookie.

For more information about Oxford Reads, please visit oxfordreads.ca.

Sarah Adam

Systems Support Librarian

Oxford County Library

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Sault Ste. Marie Library Loans Life Jackets

In recognition of National Drowning Prevention Week (July 21-27, 2024), the Sault Ste. Marie Public Library (SSMPL) joined forces with the City of Sault Ste. Marie's John Rhodes Community Centre to introduce a vital initiative: the lending of life jackets through the library. Leveraging donated life jackets from the city, SSMPL aims to broaden access to them by incorporating them into its object library collection. This initiative seeks to remove financial barriers for families who may not have the means to purchase life jackets or are hesitant to invest in them and promote safety during water-related activities.

Available for a one-week loan all summer long, these life jackets represent a proactive step towards reducing water-related incidents. Statistics highlight the urgency of such measures, with Ontario averaging 164 drowning deaths, 100 hospitalizations, and 568 emergency department visits annually due to non-fatal drowning (Lifesaving Society, 2024). The Library and City partnership underscores a commitment to community safety, aiming to minimize preventable accidents and tragedies across all demographics.

Together, SSMPL and the City of Sault Ste. Marie, strive to ensure that enjoying water activities remains safe and accessible for all community members.

Elise Schofield

Manager of Community Engagement

Sault Ste. Marie Public Library

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Picture Yourself! A Stratford Public Library and Chartwell

Retirement Residence Collaboration



In January and February of this year, the Stratford Public Library (SPL) collaborated with Chartwell Anne Hathaway Retirement Residence to capture the dreams of some 40 residents. Staff at SPL invited seniors in the residence to “picture themselves” doing something they always wanted to do. Then, using green screens, an iPad, free creative commons backdrops, and Canva editing, the Library created “photographs” of the participants. Some featured dear furry friends, while others featured dream careers, favourite celebrities or exotic locales.

Robyn Godfrey, SPL’s Adult Outreach and Collections Librarian stated, “My favourite photo is of “Cowgirl Dorcas”. Dorcas was adamant that she only wanted to be a cowgirl, and nothing else, so that is what we created for her! It turned out very well.”

The Library gifted two glossy copies of each photo to the participants and hosted a gala reception for residents and their families. All the photos (over 50!) were on display there before being moved to the Library’s auditorium gallery space, where they remained on display during February, and then again in June, to celebrate Ontario Seniors Month. The Library has plans to collaborate with another retirement residence in the winter of 2025.



PHOTO 1: Cowgirl Dorcas.

PHOTO 2: Lunar Lander Paul.

PHOTO 3: Astronaut Rita.

PHOTO 4: Lois and Dusty.

Robyn Godfrey

Adult Collections and Outreach Librarian

Partnerships with Service Providers at Thunder Bay Public Library's Brodie Library

As community hubs, it is important for libraries to meet people where they are to help them access the services they need. With that being said, the Thunder Bay Public Library has forged partnerships with local service providers, enabling them to offer their services in the Brodie Library's Study Room.

On Mondays and Tuesdays, the Thunder Bay Indigenous Friendship Centre offers housing assistance and community outreach and support services, including mental health and addiction support. On Thursdays, Alpha Court provides brief supportive counseling, connection to resources, assistance with completing applications and system navigation, as well as housing assistance.

Canadian Mental Health Association is present on Fridays to assist with referrals to New Foundations, First Place Clinic, and the Integrated Mobile Police Assessment Crisis Team (IMPACT). It also helps with the completion of housing forms and makes referrals to CMHC's Housing First program, provides connections to community partners, and facilitates access to basic food in order to address food insecurity.

Raili Roy

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Timmins Public Library's 100-Year Story

The Timmins Public Library (TPL) commemorated its 100th anniversary with a grand celebration this summer. Over a thousand people, including community partners and members of the public, gathered at the nearby Hollinger Park on Wednesday, July 10, to celebrate this exciting milestone. Special guests included Timmins Mayor Michelle Boileau, and former Timmins Mayor Jamie Lim, along with other dignitaries.

The festivities featured kiosks and activities for all to enjoy, including local performers, a themed photo booth, a free BBQ, a children's fun area, and a community mural painting. Attendees could also stroll along the "History Highlights" display, where a series of panels around the park displayed trivia, photos, and developments in TPL's history since its inception in the 1920s.

The event was a wonderful opportunity to reflect on the important history and role of the library, to connect with the community which it has served for the past 100 years, and to inspire citizens to share their library love with future generations, as TPL continues its mission of building community and inspiring change.



PHOTO 1: Timmins Public Library staff celebrate the library's 100th anniversary.



PHOTO 2: Community mural painting.

Janna Lizotte

Marketing & Communications Specialist

Timmins Public Library

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Empower YOUth Series at Vaughan Public Libraries



This summer, Vaughan Public Libraries (VPL) pivoted their teen programming to empower youth, recognizing summer as a unique time to inspire and engage teens. VPL aimed to foster self-confidence, resilience, leadership skills, and a sense of purpose, helping teens view the library as a hub for personal and professional growth.

The summer programs at VPL are structured around six pillars of achievement under the Empower YOUth theme: French Literacy, Financial Literacy, Culinary Literacy, Career Exploration, Public Speaking, and Mental Health.

Programs include Financial Literacy Bootcamp for Teens, Intro to Debate, Parlez-vous Français?, Makers With a Cause: Yellow Brick House, Project Thrive: Health & Nutrition Workshop for Teens, Ace Your Presentation!, Resume Ready for Teens, Unlocking AI: Teen Workshop, and YAY Cooking! With such variety of offerings, there is something for everyone.

Additionally, VPL is hosting a Design a Bookmark Contest for the first time. Youths aged 12-18 are invited to submit digital or handmade designs on the theme "How do libraries and reading empower and inspire you?" A panel of VPL staff and experts from the



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PHOTO 1: Design a Bookmark Contest graphic/banner.

PHOTO 2: Empower YOUth page in VPL's What's On magazine.

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Whitby FanCon 2024: A New Chapter Begins!



PHOTO: Cosplay artist Christine Scott will be headlining FanCon as Sailor Moon.

For almost a decade, fans flocked to the Whitby Comic Arts Festival (WhitCAF) to celebrate all things superheroes. Capes were not mandatory but certainly encouraged! WhitCAF shattered attendance records last year with over 500 people visiting the Central Library in downtown Whitby. The astounding response from the community inspired the library's planning team to take things up a notch for 2024. With big plans to broaden the scope of the festival, Whitby Public Library (WPL) decided the timing was right for a name change. WhitCAF is now Whitby FanCon.

The goal for Whitby FanCon is to build on the community's love of comic books and tap into the massive fan base for manga, anime, graphic novels, and of course, cosplay! Local celebrity Sailor Moon (aka Christine Scott) will headline a talented cast of cosplay artists. With the addition of WPL's popular green-screen technology, everyone can join in on the fun. There will be loads of opportunities to interact with comic creators, artists, and writers. Games, workshops, author signings, 3D printing, and craft sessions are also on the bill. Whitby Public Library is thrilled with the amount of community buzz leading up to the event!

Whitby FanCon will take place at the Central Library on Saturday, October 5, 2024, from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The Fandom is ready, and so is WPL! Hope to see you there!

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Whitchurch-Stouffville Public Library Hosts Successful Spy-Themed Fundraising Event

It was a dark and stormy night in June when Whitchurch-Stouffville Public Library hosted its annual Stouffville Reads fundraising event. The 2024 theme was spies, and, in the spirit of the renowned CBC Canada Reads program, three community book champions each made an entertaining speech as to why their spy-themed book selection should win.

The winner of Stouffville Reads 2024 was Elaine Bernard, a Senior Development Officer at Markham-Stouffville Hospital Foundation, who passionately advocated for her book selection, *American Spy*, by Lauren Wilkinson. Guests at the event were able to bid on

specialty curated cocktails during the drink auction and could also bid on silent auction items generously donated by individuals and businesses in the community.



PHOTO: Stouffville Reads 2024 Winner Elaine Bernard, with bouquet, CEO Margaret Wallace (on Elaine's left) and members of the Whitchurch-Stouffville Public Library Board and Town of Stouffville Council.

The highlight of the evening was an interactive murder mystery performed by the cast of Mysteriously Yours Dinner Theatre. The actors had the guests laughing and mingling with each other as they tried to solve the crime.

The Stouffville Reads fundraiser will celebrate 10 years in 2025.

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Next Issue:

The deadline for submissions for the Fall edition of HoOPLA is November 1, 2024.

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.

To receive back issues of HoOPLA, please contact communications@accessola.com.



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