

## REPORT TO THE LIBRARY BOARD

October 19, 2023

**SUBJECT:** Staff Activity & Community Impact Report

**PURPOSE:** For information

**PREPARED BY:** Senior Team

**PRESENTED BY:** Michael Ciccone – CEO and Chief Librarian

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### RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended the Board receive the October *Staff Activity & Community Impact Report* for information purposes.

### BACKGROUND

This document provides a mechanism for Senior Team to share information updates with the Board and is produced for each full meeting of the Board.

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## Events, Programs, and Services of Note

### After School Club

Thanks to generous donations to the Library, we are able to continue offering our After-School Club program at five Branches serving equity-seeking communities: Sherwood, Beacock, Jalna, Pond Mills and Crouch. This program focuses on supporting children and youth through literacy activities, games and creating a sense of belonging in the community and offers children, youth and families a safe and encouraging space to receive support for learning. Homework assistance and snacks are provided to participants. The program will commence Tuesday, October 10.

### Digital Literacy for Seniors

The Library has launched a partner program with *Literacy Link South Central* and *London & Middlesex Community Housing* at two high-needs, low-income seniors housing complexes - one on Commissioners Rd. W. and another on Walnut St. This partnership is designed to bring digital literacy opportunities to older adults that may be experiencing barriers to accessing a Library location to attend a free computer course. There are currently 23 older adults enrolled in the program across the two housing units.

### Punk Rock Flea Market

On September 23, the Library participated in a pop-up market hosted by *London Punk Rock Flea Market* on Dundas Place. We showcased some of the innovative collections and tools available to the public, such as Musical Instrument Lending Library. We interacted with 380 attendees and were excited to see that some of the vendors had used the Labs at the Central Library to create their products.

### Science Literacy Week

125 people attended the Science Literacy Week Celebration at the Bostwick Branch on September 23. In partnership with *Western Engineering*, the open space at the StarTech.com Community Centre was used to build a [Rube Goldberg Machine](#). This was intergenerational programming at its finest, with all ages. Numerous participants asked if we could run this event again, with one patron commenting that her son asked if he could do something like this for a living.

### Zineography

On September 21, the Central Library hosted *Zineography: A Celebration and Showcase of Self-Published Zines*. Three hundred eighty-three people attended this

event, which featured vendors from the GTA and Southwest London. Participants from the *Zine Fiends*, a monthly zine club dedicated to incubating zine culture in London and our partner in this event, stated that the turnout at the event demonstrated that London has a really supportive arts community. LPL's labs were used to create some of the products featured at the event.

## **From the Community**

### **Byron Branch: Special Acknowledgement**

A Ph.D. student, who spent many hours at the Byron Branch working on his dissertation, had a special message to the Branch Staff in his acknowledgements page: *I am particularly grateful to the management and staff of London Public Library (Byron Memorial Branch), London, Ontario, for creating such a lovely study space within my local community, where I spent many pleasant study hours.*

### **Beacock Branch: Knit Hit with Newcomers**

The Beacock Branch's Knitting group welcomed a newcomer to their group - an English language learner - who kept coming back over time to work on her crochet work with the group. Before long, the knitters were teaching her how to knit and she was teaching them how to crochet. A lovely connection from a longstanding program!

### **Central Library: Job Interview Help**

A patron who is a graphic designer accessed the Adobe Creative Cloud suite at the Labs to prepare for a job interview. Individual access to the software is cost-prohibitive and the patron was grateful he could access the software at the library.

### **Central Library: Memory Lab Preserves Memories**

A couple came to use the Memory Lab on September 14 after they learned about it on the Library IT List segment on CBC Radio. They had previously paid someone to digitize their home movie – which didn't work – and they were pleased to be able to digitize it themselves with some staff assistance.

### **Cherryhill Branch: Making Connections Fossil-ble**

A budding archeologist attended *The Wonderful World of Fossils* program at the Cherryhill Branch. The young patron brought his own collection of fossils to share with the facilitator, Dan the Fossil Guy, and was thrilled to get an expert's evaluation. The young patron's mother exchanged contact details with the facilitator and expressed enthusiastic interest in joining the local London and Area Fossil Collection group.

## **Sherwood Branch: Welcoming Ukrainian Families**

Sherwood Branch Staff welcomed a new Ukrainian family to the branch. Staff signed them up with library cards and demonstrated how to use our digital resources. The family was so appreciative of how the library made them feel welcome.

## **News from Departments**

### **Volunteer Services**

In September, Volunteer Services ran three information sessions and had over a hundred (100) members of the public attend. They received 47 new applications to become a volunteer at the library. In September, many of our fall programs that are supported by volunteers resumed such as: Knitting at the Central Library and Bostwick Branch; Chess in the Library (5 locations); and Tech Tutors. We are still recruiting for our READ program, and especially looking for volunteers who can mentor students in the French READ program.

## **CEO Report**

### **FOPL Advocacy Update**

Members of The Federation of Ontario Public Libraries (FOPL) will be attending two in-person lobbying days at Queen's Park on November 14 and 15. They will be joined by our partners at the Ontario Library Association (OLA) as they aim to have 24-26 meetings over two days with a variety of sector stakeholders including Ministers, MPPs and Ministry officials.

The Library is a member of FOPL and the CEO is a member of the FOPL Government Relations Working Group.

### **OVERDUE: The Case for Canada's Public Libraries**

The Canadian Urban Institute has published the report completed in partnership with the Canadian Urban Libraries Council (CULC), of which the Library is a member. The CEO was a member of the CULC steering committee that contributed to the report.

Released on October 4, [OVERDUE: The Case for Canada's Public Libraries](#) details the significance of public libraries for Canada's post-pandemic recovery, competitiveness, and resilience and calls for renewed and diversified investment.

The case provides recommendations for public policymakers to instill positive change:

- Relieve current operational pressures to ensure libraries remain safe, accessible, and welcoming libraries to everyone.

- Treat libraries as critical infrastructure where community resilience is strengthened through funding of libraries to deliver government priorities
- Formalize sustainable investment streams that recognize their expanding role.

As libraries provide essential community support, the report calls upon each order of government to up their investment in the country's largest network of knowledge and service providers with the tools and resources they need to meet the challenges of this post-pandemic century.

A summary of this report has been included in our advocacy packages for our 2024-27 Budget submission.

## From the Media

[The LFP Weekender](#). September 28, 2023.

[Opinion: London's public libraries are totally rad and you should use them](#). Western Gazette. October 3, 2023.

[London Muslim Mosque recognized as historical site](#). CTV News. October 11, 2023.

[Ontario's first mosque commemorated by history buffs and original worshippers](#). CBC London. October 12, 2023.

## Upcoming Events and Programs

### Forest City Film Festival Returns to Wolf Performance Hall

From October 14 - 22, London Public Library's Wolf Performance Hall becomes the home of the Forest City Film Festival (FCFF), bringing the best films connected to Southwestern Ontario to our big screen. FCFF also features industry workshops, filmmaker Q&As, receptions, a Youth Film Festival and it all culminates in the awards ceremony on the final night.

### Annual Book Sale

The Friends of the London Public Library's [Annual Book Sale](#) will take place from October 20 to 22 at Centennial Hall (lower level).

### Dinovember

Following the success of last year's Dinovember, our Children's Librarians have planned an expanded month of [dinosaur-themed activities](#), offered at locations across the City. Special dinosaur storytimes will be offered at most locations, while select locations will offer Dino Lab "make and build" family programs, dinosaur art-making

programs and dinosaur-themed beading programs for teens. On the November 17 PA Day, dinosaur-themed activities will be offered at most locations.

### **How to Protect Yourself from Scams, Fraud and Identity Theft with Libro Credit Union**

In this partnership with Libro Credit Union, a banking specialist will be available at the Carson Branch to answer questions about scams, identity theft and keeping financial and personal information safe. Offered on October 24, November 7, November 21 and December 5 from 2 to 4pm.

### **Creative Age: Strings Unleashed: Sultans of String's Founding Duo in Concert**

Chris McKhool and Kevin Laliberté of the Sultans of String will perform a free concert on November 8 at 2 pm in the Library's Wolf Performance Hall. This special event, billed as a musical journey around the world, is offered as part of our Creative Age series and will feature Folk, Jazz, Flamenco, Middle Eastern and Cuban rhythms, followed by questions from the audience and a reception to meet the musicians. Funding is provided by the New Horizons for Seniors federal grants and contributions program.