



REPORT TO THE LIBRARY BOARD

MEETING DATE: Wednesday, September 19, 2007

Session:	Public Session
Subject:	Service Excellence Update
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Presented By:	Susanna Hubbard Krimmer
Purpose of Report:	For Receipt and Information Only <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Recommendation

It is recommended that this report be received by the Library Board.

Issue / Opportunity

This report to the Library Board provides an update on strategic actions designed to make a difference in our community. The report provides an update on service excellence initiatives to:

- Children and Youth; and
- Diverse populations, including as newcomers and refugees.

The report on diversity also provides information about LPL:

- Human Resources diversity strategies;
- Staff training and
- Volunteers.

The diversity report was also provided to the City of London, at the request of the Mayor, for inclusion in the submission for an EMCY National Award. These awards are given to individuals, corporations and organizations who have created excellence through the celebration of diversity. The awards recognize outstanding accomplishments in 2006 in promoting equity and diversity that have contributed to the enrichment of the fabric of our country.

CHILDREN'S AND YOUTH SERVICES INITIATIVES AT LONDON PUBLIC LIBRARY

Issue / Opportunity

The past year at London Public Library has been an exciting one as we gave priority to providing focused services and programs specific to the teen population of London, a group that had been underserved in recent years. Research and community needs assessment identified that youth ages 12 to 18 need opportunities to develop the leadership and literacy skills required to improve the quality of their lives. Meeting these needs directly aligns with the Library's *Vision, Mission* and Service Excellence Model. In addition, we continued to develop and improve services to children from birth to 12 years to provide a continuum of service excellence for all children and youth.

Background & Review

Youth Services

- The Library received a grant of \$35,000 from the Ministry of Culture's Library Strategic Development Fund, which provided a catalyst to this service priority. The process involved energizing local youth, staff, community partners and volunteers and empowering youth to take a lead role in the development of programs and services. We actively engaged youth; they told us what they wanted and we listened.
- It quickly became clear that traditional library approaches would not be successful in making the Library a viable and desired destination for teens. We had to be immediately responsive to their suggestions and to be creative in our approaches to developing programs and services to attract them.
- The first step was to create a drop-in centre at the Central Branch Library. Based on youth input, a vibrant, dynamic and welcoming space was created which includes a 24-foot mural of urban expressionism by local artist Bryan Jesney, colourful and youth-friendly furniture, computers with dedicated hours for teens, improved collections of materials in a variety of formats, and exhibit space for teen art. Young people are now using this space regularly and extensively. Our youth advisors gave it a name: Teen Annex. This name and subsequent brand are being used in all promotional materials, and based on our Central Library experience, a Teen Annex is being created at each branch library.
- Many innovative programs and services have been introduced this year. Designed to promote health and wellness, creative expression, media literacy, public speaking, leadership development, community awareness and fun, they included: art mural projects, Battle of the Bands, LOUD concerts (local Indie bands which play in the library during library hours), online book blogs, video contests, teen reading challenge, Book Club in a Backpack, volunteer opportunities, Random Acts of Poetry, a non-competitive talent showcase, author readings, programs around anti-smoking, sexual health, and mental health, as well as Dance, Dance Revolution parties, open mic nights, and board and video gaming competitions.
- Many of these programs were developed through active community partnerships, and as a result the Library is now being seen as a key player in the community with regard to youth services. Of particular note was the Library's involvement during the 1st annual National Youth Week in May. Events were held at all locations during the week, and library staff were active participants on the city-wide National Youth Week planning committee spearheaded by the City of London's Neighbourhood and Children's Services Department.

- Improvements have also been made to our virtual space; this was particularly important as teens use this media to search for information and communicate. As well as improving the teen section of the Library's website, a myspace.com site has been added, photos are shared on flickr.com and videos shared on youtube.com, all of which highlight programs and services. The response to these additions has been overwhelming positive and far-reaching. Teens are finding us through this social network, are offering suggestions and looking for information via this non-traditional format. Furthermore, other libraries are looking to LPL as a leader in this area. A highlight this summer was a concert by *Harry and the Potters*, a 'wizard rock' band out of Boston who approached us after seeing our myspace page. With only one date for a Canadian performance available on their summer tour, they chose to come to London; this concert attracted over 500 people many of whom were older teens from as far away as Kitchener/Waterloo. (see email)
- The Library now has a strong foundation on which to build sustainable youth services as part of its operational structure. A Teen Service Action Plan has been developed and our system-wide Children's Services Committee has been revamped to include youth services as well (now known as the Children's and Youth Services Committee).

Children's Services

- In addition to our focus on youth services, the Library continued to offer and improve upon high quality and relevant programs for children. Some highlights include:
- This year's summer reading program built around the theme of "Lost Worlds" attracted 5,500 children who read over 22,000 books throughout the summer. Our popular game board designed to encourage reading from various parts of the library was supplemented by high quality supporting materials from the TD Bank, a video contest, promotion at Home County Folk Festival's children's stage, and LPL Day at the London Regional Children's Museum, as well as an increased number of outreach opportunities through city and community agencies to bring it to children in high needs neighbourhoods who, for a number reasons, are less likely to come to the library. Branch Librarians visited each of their area schools to promote the program and spoke to over 11,000 children!
- With a grant from Canada Summer Jobs and support from the Friends of the Library to hire students as Literacy Facilitator, one-on-one reading help for children ages 7 to 12 with reading difficulties was provided to 224 children in Summer R.E.A.D. (Reading Enjoyment And Development) at 14 locations. Approximately 55% of the children came from families where a language other than English is spoken at home. The summer CSJ students were an outstanding group who provided excellent reading help and support to these children. Many of the children were subsequently referred to our R.E.A.D. program which runs during the school year at 4 locations.
- A summer "Book Buddies" program to meet literacy needs of children who do not have reading difficulties, but who would benefit from a chance to practice reading, was piloted this year. Using volunteers and facilitated by our summer CSJ students, children ages 5 to 11 were given the opportunity to practice their reading skills with these volunteers in an informal and friendly environment.
- The Library has also developed a new partnership with the London Regional Children's Museum. The Library has a presence in the "Much More Munsch" exhibit which runs until the end of January, and throughout the summer, staff visited every Friday afternoon to present a storytime to campers and regular museum visitors. This is being extended into the fall with a weekly storytime on Friday evenings from 6:30-7:30 pm.
- A new initiative to increase the number of children who have library cards, called "Every Kid a Card" was introduced in the fall of 2006. This fall campaign is tied into back to school activities, the catch being that a library card is the most important back to school supply. Last year 4682 children participated. Our 2007 campaign is currently underway and our target is 5000 children this year. Branch Librarians from all locations will visit

each of their area schools to promote the benefits of a library card and encourage participation. With generous support from many sponsors, all participants will be entered into a grand prize draw including laptops, an MP3 player, a digital camera and London Knights tickets.

- With support from IBM, Homework Centres have been established at 5 locations (Sherwood, East London, Crouch, Jalna and Pond Mills). Priority of use on computers is given to students doing homework during specific hours (after school and on Saturdays). Limited free printing is also provided to these students.
- In the spring, the Library was invited to participate on the newly formed Child and Youth Network for Best Start, a mechanism the City of London will use to plan, implement and monitor Best Start (an integrated system of services that supports children and parents from birth through the transition into school) and to facilitate the development of a Child and Youth Agenda in the local community. With over 75 organizations involved, the Library is pleased to be a member and to offer input and support to help develop this agenda and to work toward London's Vision for Children and Youth (as identified by this Network): *Happy, healthy children and youth today; caring, creative, responsible adults tomorrow.*

DIVERSITY INITIATIVES AT LONDON PUBLIC LIBRARY

Programs, Services & Initiatives that *make a difference* in the lives of Diverse Populations in London!

Collections & Lending:

Language Learning Collections

- books, videos, DVDs, language learning kits and electronic resources, for newcomers to learn English and for English speakers to learn non-English languages (adult and children's materials, at Central and Branches)

Let's Read! Family Literacy Kits

- Children's materials in **17 world languages**, including puzzles toys, books and games packaged in a large clear plastic containers donated by Families First in White Oaks

French Language Collections

- Books, videos, DVDs, print and electronic periodicals for adults and children at Central and most Branches.

World Languages Collections

- Books, videos, DVDs and periodicals in 30 languages at the Central Library, and in about 20 languages in the Children's library. Selected world language collections in Branches to meet local demand.

ESL collections & Tutor/Teacher support

- Special collections developed for use by ESL and other language teachers. A corresponding booklist has been created. An area in our new Lifelong Learning and Literacy Centre has been identified for ESL materials.

Literacy Collections

- The Adult Literacy print collection is often used by newcomers who need easy-to-read adult materials. Central and Branches have book/cassette literacy kits; audiocassettes are recorded at 10-15% slower than normal speed.

Visiting Library Services Collections

- We support seniors whose mother-tongue is not English by providing collections in their first language via Visiting Library Service.

Catalog of Chinese Materials in Chinese characters.

- Vicki Seymour, a dedicated volunteer, worked with a small group of volunteers to compile this collection. As part of this work she is actively promoting the collection to her community.
- The result is that the average circulation of Chinese language materials is now about 3 times that of the average circulation of other world languages.

Dual language books in Children's collections across the system

- e.g. Arabic/English, Chinese/English, Spanish/English, etc.

International materials

- International video (& dvd) collection, music

Community Partnerships & Outreach

- **"Libraries for All"** is a joint project between London Public Library and Thames Valley Children's Centre. Communication boards are available in all libraries for patrons who cannot talk or who have speech that is difficult to understand. The communication boards include:
 - **Alphabet Board** (for people who can spell by pointing to letters).
 - **Word Board** (commonly used words and phrases about library services).
 - **Picture Board** (concepts represented in picture form).
 - **QWERTY Board** (for people who can spell by pointing to letters, laid out in keyboard format).
- Citizenship preparation resources are available in the library and assist newcomers with this process.
- We facilitate an ongoing "Abraham's Cafe" discussion series (three gatherings, so far, of the three big monotheistic faiths (Judaism, Christianity and Islam) in a respectful dialogue)
- "Your Guide to London Public Library" currently available in 10 languages.
- We place a feature article in the Library's ACCESS magazine in non-English language: to date we have featured French, Korean, Arabic, Chinese, Spanish and next Russian
- Distribute free community newspapers in French, Arabic, Polish, Chinese, Korean and Spanish
- Conversational Circles, cosponsored with LCCLC, offered at multiple locations
 - Spanish/French/Mandarin/Korean Conversation Groups with volunteers (recruited as facilitators/teachers-12 week sessions twice per year)
- Provided the following programs:
 - A music program called Autorickshaw. The music program featured multicultural music with an emphasis on East Indian music.
 - Sankofa: a film cosponsored by WAFRICA (West African Association)
 - Menaka Thakar Dance Company: an evening of East Indian dance.
 - Chinese painting, a 6 week program offered annually.
- General and customized Visits / Tours were provided for groups of new Canadians/international visitors, such as:
 - Hensim Centre YWCA (ESL class)
 - London International Academy, a private school located in downtown London for international students
 - Wheable Centre Adult Education, Bridge to English class (ESL)
 - Banting Annex (ESL class)
 - London International Academy, a private school located in downtown London, for international students
- ESL Storytimes (for children); Top Hat (ESL) - (have tried for Grade 1 only)
- Spanish Mutual Aid Parenting Program cosponsored program with Children's Aid Society to offer parenting tips to parents while children involved in library programming. Expansion to other locations being explored.
- One on One English conversation program (currently in trial-public release Fall 2007)

- The 'possibilitheatre program' (in partnership with the Thames Valley Children's Centre) allows children of varying abilities to create a drama project and see it from beginning to end (creating the script to performing in the play).
- R.E.A.D. program (2006-2007) for children who are reluctant readers age 7 to 12 at four locations (Crouch, Sherwood, Jalna and East London). Approximately half of children participants are from newcomer groups.
- Black History Month- LPL representation on Resource Committee
- Multicultural Celebration Displays (based on major multicultural events via www.multiculturalcalendar.com (ie. St. Jean Baptiste Day/ National Aboriginal Day etc)
- Newcomer Information Sessions featuring partnership with WIL Employment Connections, Thames Valley District School Board, London Cross Cultural Learner Centre and London Public Library to provide answers/referral to newcomers
- Select and growing list of partnerships regarding Newcomers including London Cross Cultural Learner Centre, WIL Employment Connections, LUSO Community Services, TVDSB, LDCSB, South London Neighbourhood Resource Centre, City of London, Northwest London Resource Centre, Crouch Neighbourhood Resource Centre, ACFO, Aids Committee of London, LEDC, Intercommunity Health, LUHC, MLHU and many more
- International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (March 21st) – Member of The Community Committee to Commemorate March 21st is established to commemorate the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, by promoting racial harmony and celebrating cultural diversity in collaboration with community organizations in London, Ontario. This Committee has organized a special event annually - at the Central Library - to commemorate the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.
- A new library bag is being launched with "my library" in various languages.
- Ads in Spanish are running in Culturas magazine, the Spanish phone directory (current) and agenda to promote the library to the Spanish population.
- Our Fall "my library" ad campaign will appear in non-English language publications.

Technology

- Adaptive technology (AT) volunteer program - help provide equitable access to those learning to use AT software and hardware; provides people with the skills and knowledge to determine if this software is right for them and to explore the world of networked information and activities
- Public computer classes offered in non-English languages (Spanish) will be reintroduced (coming soon)
- Computer classes for general public offered in Spanish (2004-2005). Plans to reintroduce classes in various languages (coming soon)
- All public computer workstations display foreign website information in many non-Roman alphabets. The capability of creating Word documents and email messages in non-Roman alphabets is being explored
- Software/CD-roms with Rosetta Stone software , TOEFL preparation and other language learning or improvement programs are available at Central and select branches
- Kurzweil 3000 software scans any book in French, Spanish, Italian or German and will read it aloud to listeners. The Dictionary component of Kurzweil provides definitions of words in 15 languages.

- Early Literacy Station rollout to all branches (coming soon) and may eventually feature ESL Assistant program by Canadian Language and Literacy Research Network, a Network of Centres of Excellence Canada
- Multilingual welcome signage for all locations (coming soon)

Community Meeting Space

Our space is used by many cultural groups – rentals, free community use, cosponsored programs, community displays – neutral, welcoming & accessible space

Branch Library -- Diversity / Newcomer Initiatives

Programming:

- ESL Book Club for adults (started in July 2007) – provides a space for adults to practice English conversation and share stories in a welcoming environment
- French Storytimes - in partnership with organizations like 'La Ribambelle' – provides literacy learning opportunities for young children as well as offering a gathering place for parents, caregivers and children to connect and socialize within the community
- Hosting events like "Hosting International Students 101" & "Host Family Meet and Greet" programs – held on May 5, 2007 and June 9, 2007 at Masonville Branch– opportunity for families interested in hosting international students to learn more about this hospitality program, and meet other families, international students and program facilitators
- Summer R.E.A.D (7-12 years) – opportunity for children with reading difficulties to practice in a one-on-one environment using engaging books and activities --help is available once a week at scheduled time from July – August. Many newcomers are using this program to its fullest extent.
- Book Buddies (5-11 years) – opportunity for children to practice reading with a buddy (volunteer) for fun for 20 minutes. Many newcomers are using this program to its fullest extent.
- Lost Worlds: London Public Library's TD Summer Reading Club – opportunity for children to explore literacy and learning in a fun environment. This year's theme focuses on the exploration of ancient civilizations which contributes to cultural awareness.
- Children's Programming – on-going programming for children often includes events that emphasize a particular culture or heritage to raise awareness, and provide opportunities for learning and discovery. Examples include: "Chilean Rain Sticks" (craft program), Great Masonville Pyramid (craft program where children contribute to the creation of a large pyramid), "Jewellery of the Lost Worlds" (children used natural materials to create jewellery pieces representative of various ethnic groups (e.g. Celtic, Egyptian and Mexican)), and "Mehndi" (henna tattoos program exploring cultural artistic expressions and history).

Art Exhibits and Displays:

- Art Exhibits held on a monthly basis in most branches – showcase an individual or group's artistic style which is often informed by their cultural heritage – provides the opportunity to share artistic expressions and culture within the community
- Topical displays (emphasizing library resources, programs and services) on a regular basis - to recognize and raise awareness about special multicultural events (e.g. Black History month) and holidays (e.g. Hanukkah)

Outreach:

- Outreach to ESL Parent Coffee Group at Jack Chambers Public School in June 2007. Librarian provided information packets about the library resources, services and programs, including the Summer Reading Program, R.E.A.D. and Book Buddies.

Volunteer Opportunities

London Public Library offers a variety of volunteer positions. We welcome and encourage newcomers to contribute their skills by volunteering in the library. Volunteers help to connect newcomers to communities and volunteer engagement is a win-win for volunteers, newcomers and ultimately the whole community." Some examples of the volunteer opportunities that newcomers engage in are:

- Technology Tutors
- READ Volunteers
- Book Buddy
- Language Collection Volunteer
- Children's Program Volunteer
- Special Event Volunteer
- Language Specific Volunteer Tour Guide Interpreter
- Usher

The benefits to London Public Library and the community are as follows:

- Giving immediate and direct help to newcomers.
- Developing cross-cultural communication skills and learning about other cultures and their needs.
- Helping to prepare newcomers for life in Canada and London.
- Helping to integrate newcomers into the London community.
- Teaching newcomers the value and benefits of the public library.

The benefits to newcomers who choose volunteer opportunities are:

- Learning about Canadian culture
- Discovering your community
- Building English language skills
- Learning about work habits and professional possibilities
- Developing the ability to live independently in Canada
- Finding and using local services and resources
- Sharing the story of your culture and where you are from
- Making new friends!

LPL Staff Training

In 2006, we pursued two diversity training offerings for staff:

- A Diversity awareness overview - an experiential learning around the concept of "being different". We then explore what those responses look and feel like, our own learned behaviours and thinking around people who look/act different than we do. Finally, we

discuss what our policies and values say around offering a safe environment for the public and what that means when championing diversity with the public.

- Abilities Awareness - another session in which the staff learn by handling a "disability" during the session. We talk about the responses of participants, what barriers they experienced and how we could reduce them.

Libraries for All is a service we continue to train new staff in - the use of augmentative and alternative communication (AAC). Developed in 2005 in partnership with the Thames Valley Children's Centre, this continues to be a service we support.

The library staff also participated in a conference of London organizations around promoting diversity in the workplace.

Human Resources Diversity Strategies

LPL Human Resources is currently working on more targeted recruitment strategies by exploring how representation can best be done by examining processes, methods and recruiting tools that might act as barriers as part of our overall Hiring and Retention Plan.

To this end as part of the Hiring and Retention Plan for LPL we will be focusing on the following areas:

- Obtain local demographic, neighbourhood and community profiles and conduct a needs analysis of new immigrant and other emerging markets.
- Examine a mentorship program for internationally trained professionals.
- Recognition of International Accreditation and/or experience.
- Identify new strategies for Selection.
- Survey current staff to determine current diversity level and update list of languages spoken.

LPL currently advertises for position vacancies with the following groups and are looking at other local community ethnic/cultural groups:

- Crouch Neighbourhood Resource Centre
- Glen Cairn Community Resource Centre
- LEDC - London Economic Development Centre
- London Cross Cultural Learner Centre
- WIL Employment Connections
- UWO, Knighthunter

Currently, LPL works with the following organizations to place individuals with disabilities or other on work placements, some of which have been hired as Page staff:

- WIL
- Leads
- Goodwill
- March of Dimes
- Hutton House
- Alpha Logic Career Logic

- Thames Valley Board of Education

Human Resources Staff attended the following courses over the last year on diversity.

- Ivey Executive Development (focus on the EE Act through case study methods)
- London's Cultural Diversity Conference
- Bias Free Recruitment and Hiring – Key note speaker Maxine Carter
- Moving to a more Supportive Workplace Culture (with a focus on Diversity) through the City of London.

Sept 2006- Aug 2007 Hiring Statistics

- New Hires: 27
- Visible Minority (6) /New Immigrants (4): 10

London Public Library – Employment Resource Centre diversity initiatives

ERC Facilitators conduct ongoing outreach visits with the following organizations:

- Nokee Kwe, a local agency, was founded on aboriginal principals and incorporates the native people's cultural components and aboriginal philosophy, including traditional teachings, into their programs. Although their primary focus is on Aboriginal adults and youth, they will however, accept non-native unemployed or underemployed adults.
- Canadian Hearing Society (CHS) - Provides specialized employment services for deaf, deafened and hard of hearing consumers 16 years of age and older for whom barriers often include: difficulty accessing information over the telephone; difficulty in securing sign language interpreting services; difficulty in booking interpreters on short notice for job interviews; serious attitudinal barriers in the expectations, perceptions, beliefs and behaviours of employers regarding the employability of deaf, deafened and hard of hearing people.
- WIL - A non-profit agency dedicated primarily to facilitating the economic and social integration of immigrant women and men into the broader community of London and area. WIL provides services in assessment, employment counseling, employment preparation, information, referral and advocacy.
- LUSO - A non-profit organization that provides community services for children, youth and families of diverse ethnic backgrounds. Much of their community outreach is focused on families within the Northeast section of London. Programs include literacy, community development, multi-cultural outreach, immigration settlement and employment. In addition, LUSO is a CAP site with access to computers for anyone in the community.
- Access Centre - Assists immigrant clients to develop a concrete and customized plan that will explain for the client what areas need to be reviewed and assess for licensure in Ontario. These areas can include such things as language assessment and training.

The LPL Employment Resource Centre 6th Annual Open House/Forum's topic this year was "The London Challenge: Integrating Newcomers into our Community". The forum was well attended by community partners, with an interest in employment, from across the city.