

October 20, 2011

VIA EMAIL

Josh Morgan, Chair of the Board of Directors
London Public Library
251 Dundas Street
LONDON, ON N6A 6H9

Dear Mr. Morgan:

Re: Library Review of Internet Access Filtering

I am writing this letter on behalf of the Children's Aid Society of London & Middlesex.

I understand that this issue is being reviewed once again by the Library Board. Since the last review in 2007 (that we participated in) it appears that many progressive changes have been made to limit public exposure to pornography. Having reviewed your *Internet Service Policy*, I note that internet filtering is occurring in specific areas used by teens and children. It is also my understanding that attention has been paid to sight lines and new screens have been installed to better limit inadvertent exposure to pornography. I believe it is important to acknowledge the Library for undertaking these important and progressive steps. Having said that, I understand that the library is still attempting to "strike a balance" between public access to information, while also respecting the need for the library to be a community space that is welcoming and safe for all.

The Children's Aid Society of London & Middlesex, whose mission in this community is the "protection and care for children at risk, and the promotion of the healthy development of children, families and our community", is of the opinion that the "duty to protect children" must always tip the balance in this debate. By putting measures in place that would fully restrict the possibility of our community's children and youth from inadvertently viewing pornography at a public institution, in our opinion you would be doing your part to ensure a safe and child friendly public space.

Our concerns stem from what we know about the impact of pornography in our society and its' potential impact on children. We know that people misuse the internet to distribute what is euphemistically called child pornography (but is really images of child sexual abuse), racism and hate literature and that having open computer terminals in a public space, no matter how carefully they are placed, increases the chances that a child might inadvertently view inappropriate images. We know of the significant role that images of child sexual abuse can play to create opportunities for child sexual abuse. Finally, we know that unintentional exposure to child pornography, hate literature and violence can be disturbing and potentially traumatizing to the viewer, especially if that viewer has a history of trauma.

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As stated previously, while applauding the progress that the Library has made, we respectfully ask that you **put the safety and healthy development of our most vulnerable members above all other considerations**. We believe that the library is, and should continue to be, a warm, welcoming and an even safer place for all.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jane E. Fitzgerald". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jane E. Fitzgerald,
Executive Director

JEF/dc