

**Date of Meeting:** March 23, 2023

**Report Number:** A48-23

**Report Subject:** March 2023 Chief Executive Officer Report

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**Recommendation:**

1. THAT the Clarington Public Library Board receive Administrative Report No. A48-23: March 2023 Chief Executive Officer Report as information.

**Report Overview:**

To provide the Board with information about operational highlights and key activities in March 2023.

**Staffing Highlights**

On March 20<sup>th</sup>, Aiden Brydon will begin her new role as Collections Coordinator. Aiden holds a Bachelor of Arts in English from St. Mary's University, a Master of Arts in English Literature from the University of Western Ontario, and a Master of Library Information Science from the University of Toronto. Aiden joined the Library in 2021 and is passionate about public libraries and committed to building positive relationships and generating new ideas.

*Truth and Reconciliation Panel Discussion on Climate Change*

On March 10<sup>th</sup>, Samantha Aitken, Coordinator, joined the Municipality of Clarington's Truth and Reconciliation Committee to attend a panel discussion on addressing climate change at Trent University. As part of the 47<sup>th</sup> Annual Elders and Traditional Peoples Gathering, the Weaving (K)new Connections to Address Climate Change discussion focused on bringing Indigenous Knowledges and Western science together to further understand how climate change is impacting a variety of ecosystems, and how to adapt to changing conditions. The discussion featured a keynote address by Rebecca Sinclair, Executive Director at Treaty and Aboriginal Rights Research Centre, Dr. Dan Longboat, founding Director of Trent University's Indigenous Environmental Studies and Sciences Program, Dr. Deborah McGregor, Law Professor at York University's Osgoode Hall, and Joe Pitawanakwat, Founder and Director of Creators Garden.

### *Multi-Faith Prayer Room*

In partnership with the Municipality, all Library and Museum staff have been provided access to the Multi-Faith Prayer Room and Spiritual Space located on the second floor of the MAC building. The location offers a safe space for prayer, silent reflection, or a sensory break. No room booking is required.

### **Facilities**

On March 4<sup>th</sup>, the Courtice and Orono Branches were closed for the day due to inclement weather. The branches reopened the following scheduled day of business with no further incident.

On March 8<sup>th</sup>, the Sarah Jane Williams Heritage Centre re-opened for staff and the public. As reported last month, the facility was temporarily closed due to the formation of a sink hole. Municipal staff arranged for a structural engineering firm to investigate the cause of the sinkhole as well as the safety of the building's structure. Due to the proximity of the sinkhole to the location of the elevator shaft, the elevator was taken offline by the TSSA. The results of the investigation were inconclusive; however, the building was determined to be safe for re-entry and, on March 9<sup>th</sup>, TSSA authorized the return to service of the elevator.

### **Programs and Outreach**

#### *Snow Castles of Newcastle*

On March 4<sup>th</sup>, the Newcastle Branch provided its outdoor space to A Gift of Art to host their snow castle building competition, Snow castles of Newcastle. Registered participants spent the day building snow castles to compete for a \$500 prize. Families were welcomed to watch the competition and take part in an array of activities and interactive booths from community organizations such as, Soper Creek Wildlife, Haute Goat, J&K Sugar Shack, bouncy castles from Larry Potter Events and Top Notch Horse Drawn Carriage Rides, Inside the Branch, Library staff provided hot chocolate to event-goers and hosted a craft station, with over 60 people creating penguin-themed artwork.

#### *Orono Food Pantry: Clarington East Food Bank*

The food pantries that were installed in February 2023 have received an outpouring of community support and community use. On March 11<sup>th</sup>, in partnership with the Clarington East Food Bank, a food pantry shelf was installed at the Orono branch of the Library. Offering non-perishable food and personal hygiene items, members of the public can pick items up as needed from the shelves, which will be freely available during open hours, to address ongoing food insecurity in Clarington.

### *Black History Month Book Club*

On February 28<sup>th</sup>, the Bowmanville Branch hosted a book club and group discussion, for Black History Month. Staff from the Municipality, the Library and the Museum were given the opportunity to read "Washington Black" by Black-Canadian author Esi Edugyan follows the early life of George Washington "Wash" Black, chronicling his escape from slavery and his subsequent adventures in search of his true self.

### *Clarington Celebrates Black History Month*



During the evening of February 25<sup>th</sup>, in partnership with the Municipality of Clarington, the Library hosted Clarington Celebrates Black History Month at the Bowmanville Branch. This immersive experience featured entertainers, vendors, and artists from across Clarington and Durham Region. During the event, attendees were able to explore vendor tables, featuring authors Michelle Richards-Graham and Sharon Ennis, the Congress of Black Women

of Canada, and Cultural Expressions Art Gallery, who also provided art pieces and decorations during the event. The audience was invited to participate in engaging entertainment and local high school students provided musical performances. The event was catered by Starapples, a local Jamaican restaurant. More than 100 people attended the event, coordinated by Clarington's Anti-Black Racism Subcommittee and Diversity Advisory Committee and positive feedback was received from the public and organizations who participated in the event.

### *Journey to Africville*

On February 21<sup>st</sup>, Library and Museum staff participated in a virtual tour of Africville, a community of Black settlers in Halifax, Nova Scotia, to learn about the severe hardships of Black migrants to Canada throughout the centuries.

"Black people have lived in Nova Scotia since before the founding of Halifax in 1749. However, it was only after the American Revolution, in the late 1700s and early 1800s, that large groups of Black settlers began to arrive in the province. Many of them were former enslaved people who had been promised freedom and land in Nova Scotia, but when they arrived, they encountered white settlers who viewed them as inferior. Because of racism, Black settlers were pushed to the margins of society and forced to live on the most inhospitable land. Despite this, they persevered, developing strong, vibrant communities. Africville was one such place." - The Canadian Museum for Human Rights.

## *Winter WonderLearn Festival*



On the Family Day Weekend, from Friday, February 17<sup>th</sup> to Monday, February 20<sup>th</sup>, the 20<sup>th</sup> annual Winter WonderLearn (WWL) Festival was held. This popular festival is designed to encourage members of the community to get active, learn something new, and spend time together as a family. The event's key sponsor was Ontario Power Generation (OPG). A hybrid Festival was planned for this year, with a range of in-person activities and workshops spread across multiple locations and days. Throughout the weekend, the Library hosted sixteen (16) in-person programs and four (4) pieces of virtual content, featuring several community partners including A Gift of Art, Visual Arts Centre of Clarington, Ontario Tech University, Ontario Turtle Conservation

Centre, the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada, Scientists in School, EarlyON Child and Family Centre, and the Municipality Emergency and Fire Services. WWL 2023 welcomed 669 participants in total, which includes 313 in-person program attendees, 102 passive activities completed, and 254 virtual downloads/views.

## *Group Visits*

Throughout February and March, several school and community groups visited Library branches or were visited by Library staff at their location. Group Visits allow participants to discover everything the Library has to offer through a customized experience. The following visits took place:

- Mar. 7 – Vincent Massey Public School visited the Bowmanville Branch
- Feb. 21 – Edna Thomson Child Care Centre visited the Bowmanville Branch
- Feb. 16 – Dr. Emily Stowe Public School visited the Courtice Branch (2 classroom visits)

## *Social Media Highlight*

The Library and Museum's most liked post on Instagram was published February 23<sup>rd</sup> and featured a video of the Library Food Pantry. As of March 9th, this post received 65 likes and 3 comments. Comments include, "This is such a kind thing to do <3" and "Can anyone donate?" <https://www.instagram.com/p/CpBQ6hNpWop/>

## **Website Refresh, Re-Branding and Information Technology**

The website development is well underway, with "tree jack" studies released to determine the human navigation tendencies. The results will inform the team of patterned information seeking behaviour to ensure the most effective site navigation is developed.

The re-branding exercise continues to be in development. The initial designs have not satisfied team members and we are targeting to present options to the Library Board in April.

## **Library Collections**

On March 10<sup>th</sup>, bike locks were introduced into the loanable collection. As a means to encourage members of the public to be environmentally conscious and travel to the library by means other than car, as well as encourage physical activity, the locks will be available for same-day use at all branches.

On February 24<sup>th</sup>, in partnership with Ontario Tech University, Botleys were introduced to the library collection. Botleys are STEM coding toys, meant to help children as young as 5 learn to code through interactive and 100% screen-free play.

## **Museum Collections**

On March 7<sup>th</sup>, Milosh Environmental provided a follow-up mould assessment of the remediation cleaning that occurred in December 2022 at the Waverley Place. Visual assessments and tape lift samples were taken for lab testing. The assessment report is expected later in March and will advise as to the effectiveness of the remediation process for removing the mould from the heritage belongings and furnishings.

## **Customers and Staff Comments**

- A young member came to the desk with 32 items to check out. Her mom reminded her the “deal” was 15. The young girl responded “I just couldn’t decide... I want to read them all!”
- Several Good Neighbours users penned notes thanking staff for the service. Comments received included: “thank you for caring”; “with my appreciation”; and “good reads again”.
- Customers posted a 5-star and 4 star review of the Courtice Branch on Google, writing: “It is great and quite place to read.” and “Clean facilities, friendly ,helpful staff.”
- Customer posted a 5-star review of the Bowmanville Branch on Google, writing: “A good, quiet, nice Library to study and visit. I enjoy my studying work life there. And I recommend the neighborhood to visit and experience and explore what the Library have to offer. Great place! I highly recommend it.”
- While in the community, a staff member was approached by a Library user and her son who enjoyed the Valentine’s Day scavenger hunt in the Library. She said upon getting home, her son wrote out and hid letters all over the house for her to find in their own version of the game!

## Chief Executive Officer Notable Events

Date	Event
March 3	Re-Branding Meeting with GHD
March 7	SLT (Municipality)
March 8	Federation of Ontario Public Libraries, Large Urban Caucus Meeting
March 14	Meeting with MOC Treasurer RE: Reserves and Financial Migration SLT (Municipality)
March 15	Orono Design Presentation to Accessibility Committee
March 21	SLT (Municipality)
March 22	Conference: City Building in Challenging Times (Municipalities of the Future)
March 23 - 24	Council and SLT Retreat