**Ontario public libraries providing exceptional support to children and teens**

*OPLA announces new Teen Services Survey and Award Recipients*

**NEWS RELEASE**

**TORONTO, ON** (November 6, 2018): Across the province, public libraries remain an essential community partner in the provision of services for teens, according to results of the Ontario Public Library Association (OPLA) Teen Services Survey, released today.

As the report reveals, teens are recognized as a significant demographic with unique needs and it has become evident that libraries are responding.

**Some key findings from the report include:**

- **Teen engagement** at public libraries is on the rise, with opportunities for teens in communities big and small to be involved in the library by participating in teen advisory groups, strategic planning, and advising on physical teen space.

- Public libraries remain a significant source for **teen volunteer opportunities**, with 93% of public libraries offering opportunities for teens to volunteer towards their OSSD volunteer hour requirements.

- 51.3% of Ontario libraries reported having a **makerspace at their library** – including 50% of libraries serving fewer than 5,000 people. With more libraries incorporating makerspace programming, OPLA has reason to believe this number has increased further since original data was collected.

- **Teen programming is evolving**, with more libraries offering teen programming that focuses on LGBTQ+ specific programming, homework help, and leadership programs. More than half of Ontario’s libraries are offering some kind of maker programing for teens, with just under half offering digital technology/media, STEM and robotics programming.

- Public libraries are an important **community partner**, with libraries reporting more partnerships with diverse community agencies in support of effective teen services. Now, 82% of libraries are partnering with local schools and 50% are partnering with social services agencies.

The OPLA’s Child and Youth Services Committee believes with this new data on teen services, library staff can further advocate for teens as worthy of — and entitled to — equitable services, collections and programs that meet their unique developmental needs.

The OPLA is also pleased to recognize library staff for passion and commitment to serving their communities. Award winners go above and beyond to promote library services, to develop innovative programming and events, to provide exemplary readers’ advisory services, and to improve the overall work experience of their fellow colleagues.
Congratulations to our award recipients:

- OPLA Children’s or Youth Services Librarian of the Year Award: Kelley England of King Township Public Library

- Excellence in Children's or Teen Services Award: Christy Giesler of Kitchener Public Library for their Story Sheroes Program

The report and the award recipients will be announced on Tuesday, November 6, 2018 at OPLA’s Child & Youth Services EXPO at Centennial College, Progress Campus. The annual event celebrates the best in children, tween and teen services in Ontario public libraries. Media are welcome.

To read the full report and to read more on our award recipients, please visit our Children and Youth Services Committee page.

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About the Ontario Public Library Association: The Ontario Public Library Association (OPLA) is a division of the Ontario Library Association (OLA) that represents librarians and library staff who work in public libraries in Ontario on issues of common concern.

About the Ontario Library Association: The Ontario Library Association (OLA) is a centre of excellence for the library and information sector, with more than 5,000 members who work in public, school, academic and special libraries. OLA members advocate for the right of individuals to have free and equitable access to information. Our members research, develop and participate in educational programs designed to provide exemplary library services. Signature OLA events include the annual Super Conference and the Forest of Reading® program.

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