

PRESIDENT'S AGM REPORT

JUNE 2, 2022

The activity of the Friends of the East Gwillimbury Library

January 1 to December 31, 2021

In 2021 the COVID pandemic continued and to a great extent intensified. Library operations adjusted almost monthly from implementing Stay at Home orders and curbside service to allowing limited contact and finally more normal operations by the end of the year. The Friends' activities also were affected. All board meetings were held virtually including the AGM in June.

Effective January 1, we extended 2021 memberships to the end of 2022 as a thank you to our loyal membership base and recognizing that we could not offer our usual benefits. Therefore, 77 members from 2020 remained in good standing for 2021. Members who chose to contribute generated over \$1,100 in donations.

As 2020 closed, we realized that virtual author events were our only option and began planning accordingly. By the end of 2021 we had hosted four virtual author events and raised \$3,267. The model we chose was to invite a moderator to engage the author in conversation rather than have a talking head or reading. In March Mary Lawson joined us from London, England. Councillor Tara Roy DiClemente was our first moderator and steered the discussion masterfully. It was our best attended event with 107 links sold and 77 new names added to our mailing list. We know that often more than one person in a household views from a link.

We continued in May with Paula McLain who connected from the US, and we were honoured to have Judy Penz Sheluk, president of the Crime Writers of Canada moderate. 87 links were sold. These two Zoom webinars were hosted by Penguin Random House which had to withdraw their platform due to the demands on their technical staff. We investigated acquiring our own Zoom license but there were many variables, and the cost was not in the budget. We were grateful that a board member agreed to host our events on her corporate Zoom account at no charge. Library staff offered technical support and we were off and running. We hosted two more virtual events; Michelle Sagara in September, moderated by Michelle Cowan of our board and Kathleen Winter in November with poet James Dewar as moderator.

In total last year we donated \$3,343 to the following Library Projects:

- Summer Reading Club
- Advent Calendar Book Gifts
- DVD and CD Shelving Units
- Media rack for HL branch.

We shared the cost on installing a new Literacy Garden Sign in the spring and contributed to a video which library staff produced describing the rationale of the garden and the groups which collaborated on the project in 2010.

We cancelled our Shabby Chic fundraiser for the second year in a row but received about \$400 in donations as part of a winter fundraising request.

In July a Memorandum of Understanding between the Friends and the East Gwillimbury Public Library Board was signed by both parties.

The past two years have been challenging for library staff, the library board, and the Friends as volunteers. Virtual events were more work for fewer people than in-person events have been. Buying and selling the authors' books was difficult with supply chain problems and arranging pick up at the branch. Without the resilience of the library staff, it could not have been done. Many people behind the scenes made the year a success. We thank Angela Ramsay and Monika Mahachek for their leadership and unending support as well as Ben Van Gorp, Catherine Arthurs and Lyndsey Irvine.

New systems of receiving revenue were put into place and our reach grew beyond the community to the rest of Canada and into the United States via Zoom events. Our treasurer, Helen Bzonkova kept track of various revenue streams and kept immaculate records of sales which occurred almost to the last minute! Without the social media presence created by Christine Glenn we would not have received the exposure we did. We converted our mailing lists to MailChimp and Suzanne Sherman-Rose kept everyone informed of our events and announcements to our members and beyond. Without the dedication of the people on the Friends board we could not be as productive as we are.

Thank you to our members and the board for making a difficult year a success.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Brydon

President