



May 2025 Strategic Operations Report

Empowering Our Community (and Staff)

- In celebration of Asian Heritage Month, we showcased artwork by local Korean-Canadian youth artist Jessica So on the library's second floor. Jessica, a frequent library user, expressed her interest in sharing her pencil drawings and paintings with the community. She was thrilled to have the opportunity to exhibit her work, and the response from visitors was overwhelmingly positive.
- Our Manager of Programs & Community Engagement took part as a community partner in reviewing applications for the Community Action Table's Quick Action Grants. These grants support residents and organizations working to promote mental wellness in the community. By partnering with the Community Action Table, we gain a broader understanding of local community-led initiatives and continue to build strong connections with the social service agencies involved.

Ensuring Welcoming and Accessible Places and Spaces

- Students from the Community Art class at Sacred Heart Catholic High School reached out to the library for their final project, which challenges them to "solve a community problem" through art. We shared that we're looking to make the teen area of the library more inviting for youth. The students have taken on the project of painting a mural in the teen space to revitalize it and make it more engaging for teens. Their mural was unveiled on Wednesday, June 11, 2025.
- At the end of May, Newmarket Library launched four StoryWalks in local parks. Each StoryWalk features a children's book displayed along a walking path, combining reading with nature and active living. The books are in the following parks:
 - *Biindigen! Says Welcome* at Rogers Park
 - *Afro No!* at Woodland Hills Labyrinth Park
 - *Ettý Darwin and the Four Pebble Problem* at Jim Bond Park
 - *All at Once Upon a Time* at Fairy Lake Park, as part of the Fairy Trail Walk for Esther and the All Our Kids Play Park
- This summer, the Outreach team will be at Upper Canada Mall on multiple Fridays, offering children's activities for families. This initiative is part of a Library card campaign promoted on the mall's electronic signs. Shoppers who show a library card—or proof that they've signed up for one—can visit Customer Service to receive a free gift bag, which includes library resources, a free book, and arts and crafts supplies.

Providing Engaging and Relevant Services

- Newmarket Library is proud to partner with York Pride this year to sponsor and present *Drag Queen Storytime* during the York Pride Festival on Saturday, June 21, 2025. The event will take place on the “Rainbow Rally” stage and is designed for children and families. By collaborating with York Pride, we’re increasing the visibility of our programs and aligning our Pride celebrations with broader community events.
- May saw a noticeable increase in programs for adults at the library. We introduced new pilot initiatives, such as *Craft N Chat* afternoons, to help bring people together, and hosted two public events in recognition of Jewish Heritage Month: *Create Your Own Spices* with Chef Joel Solish and a screening of the documentary *Periphery*. Our *Plant Swap and Sale* was also a major success, with over 300 plants donated and 96 attendees.
- We welcomed storyteller Sarah Abusarar for two sessions focused on themes of friendship and kindness. While her personal advocacy work—including support for Palestinians—sparked community-level discussions with antisemitic concerns, the library remained committed to offering this early literacy program in alignment with our values of inclusion and learning. A safety plan was in place to ensure a welcoming and secure experience for all. Over 60 attendees enjoyed the sessions and connected with the storytelling.
- In May, we launched a new automated *Welcome Email* for all new library members. This is the first step in a broader email campaign aimed at helping new users discover the full range of library resources. So far, over 1,600 new members have received the email, with an impressive 70% open rate.
- Following a successful pilot at the Home Show in April, we officially launched *SmartPass* to the wider community. This feature allows library members to save their card directly to their iPhone or Android wallet. Since the public launch, over 100 members have signed up.
- Staff have planned an Indigenous Family Storytime – Dibaajimowin Maadaajim on Tuesday, June 24 at 9:30 a.m. in the Picture Book Area for Ojibwe storytelling presented by Dnaagdawenmag Binnoojiiyag Child & Family Services. This free event is open to families with children from birth to age 10.

Customer Feedback

"It is amazing that we could use this device to convert all the slides. I am saving so much money" Maker Hub participant, Digitization program.



**Children participating in the Friendship and Kindness program on May 2, 2025.
Over 60 people attended the program with storyteller Sarah Abusarar**