**Media Release**

**Toronto Public Library Welcomes International Collection of Books for and About Children and Teens with Disabilities**

Parents, children, teens, educators, authors and illustrators are invited to share the joy
of reading in its many forms.

**TORONTO** (February 20, 2014) – Toronto Public Library is proud to announce the arrival of a distinguished international reference collection of books for and about children and teens with disabilities. The **IBBY Collection of Books for Young People with Disabilities** at North York Central Library features more than 3,000 multilingual books in a variety of accessible formats, including sign language, Braille, Blissymbolics, Picture Communication Symbols, tactile and textile. The collection includes books for children and teens with developmental delays, language disabilities and reading difficulties, stories in traditional format, as well as games and Kamishibai. The IBBY Collection complements Toronto Public Library’s materials in large print, talking books, audiobooks, descriptive and closed captioned videos, as well as inclusive programs and outreach visits, accessible spaces and adaptive technology. The entire IBBY Collection at Toronto Public Library can be browsed at [www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/ibby](http://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/ibby).

“We’re honoured to have been entrusted with the stewardship of this renowned collection, and I hope that people will make a point to come explore it,” said Jane Pyper, City Librarian. “Young readers will see themselves reflected in the books’ characters – which is something they may have never experienced before. Since the books come in so many accessible formats, everyone has the opportunity to enjoy them in their own special way. I think that exposing your child – regardless of his or her abilities – to the Collection’s books, and connecting with different characters, experiences and emotions are essential to helping develop empathy.”

The collection comes to Toronto Public Library from IBBY, the International Board on Books for Young People, a non-profit organization that represents an international network of people from all over the world who are committed to bringing books and children together. This Collection was founded in 1985 at the Norwegian Institute for Special Education at the University of Oslo. From 2002 up to its arrival in Toronto, the Collection was based at the Haug Municipal School and Resource Centre (HSRC), just outside of Oslo.

“This is the first time the collection has travelled outside of Norway, and we’re so pleased its new home is at Toronto Public Library,” shares Elizabeth Page, Executive Director of IBBY. “I know that TPL will take good care of the Collection, help expand it with new, incredible books and ensure that as many Torontonians as possible are exposed to everything these special books have to offer.”

Aside from children and teens with disabilities and their parents, teachers, caregivers, librarians, authors, illustrators and researchers are also encouraged to come and explore the IBBY Collection anytime during North York Central Library’s opening hours. To schedule a librarian-led tour of the collection, a group visit or research assistance with a librarian, customers can contact the IBBY Collection at Toronto Public Library at 416-395-5630 or ibby@torontopubliclibrary.ca

Every two years, the IBBY selects approximately 50 outstanding books for and about children and young people with disabilities from around the world. For the 2015 edition of the list, Toronto Public Library will oversee the submission and selection process.

The IBBY Collection of Books for Young People with Disabilities will officially open on

Thursday, February 27 with a reception and ribbon cutting at 5:30 pm. Special guests will

include Linda M. Pavonetti, IBBY Vice President; Patricia Aldana, President of IBBY Foundation; Elizabeth Page, IBBY Executive Director, and Heidi Cortner Boiesen, former Director of the IBBY Documentation Centre in Norway.

**Media interested in attending the event or getting an advanced preview of the collection can contact 416-397-5936 to schedule a tour.**

*Toronto Public Library is one of the world's busiest urban public library systems. Every year, 19 million people visit our branches in neighbourhoods across the city and borrow 32 million items. To learn more about Toronto Public Library, visit our website at torontopubliclibrary.ca or call Answerline at 416-393-7131. To get the most current updates on what's happening at the library, follow us on Twitter @torontolibrary.*

*For more information about the International Board on Books for Young People – IBBY– visit* [*www.ibby.org*](http://www.ibby.org) *or Facebook: ibby international.*

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