



# Using the Bookmobile to Engage Vulnerable Populations

OLA Super Conference  
January 27, 2016



- Bookmobiles are part of the Mobile Library Services Department
- Comprehensive service review traditionally:
  - Looks at traditional library statistics
  - Looks at barriers to library service that are geographical, physical
- The 2014 review expanded to identify the city's vulnerable population and how outreach could bring the library to them in a new way.

# Bookmobile Outreach to Family Shelters



- To promote library services, programs and library card registration to an underserved group
- To reach residents of the city who are experiencing barriers to library service
- To give the parents and children living in shelters an opportunity to learn about library services and enjoy literacy-based programming
- To model group story times and recommend appropriate children's books and songs to Shelter staff

# Toronto Public Library

is coming to

## Birkdale Residence

Visit us on the Bookmobile



**Thursday, September 11**

**Thursday, October 9**

**Thursday, November 13**

**6:30 – 7:45 p.m.**

- ✓ Sign up for a Library card  
(Please bring 1 piece of identification with your name on it)
- ✓ Borrow books and other materials
- ✓ Join the Librarian for a program

[torontopubliclibrary.ca](http://torontopubliclibrary.ca)

- Bookmobile
- Branch
- Shelter

- Library card registrations
- Staffing
- Scheduling visits
- Parking
- Collection

## Benefits & Success

- Serving the underserved
- First time library users
- Assisting and supporting local branches
- Memorable experience
- Requests for more





## Quantitative Measures

- Program Statistics
- Events & Activities Statistics
- Circulation Statistics

## Qualitative Evaluation

1. From your perspective, what were the benefits of having the bookmobile visit the Shelter?
2. From your perspective, what were the challenges you encountered?
3. If we were to do this project again, do you have any suggestions for what we could do differently
4. Any other comments? Please include stories you may have based on this experience

*“Most people were first time library users who now have a library card because of our visit”*

*“The children have been exposed to instability, trauma and stress...they can be a ‘tough audience’”*

*“It really was a joy to be part of this project!”*

*“Thank you greatly for all your efforts and commitment to bringing literacy to the families of this shelter”*

- Flexibility
- Shelters
  - Families
  - Adult Men/Women
  - Youth
  - Refugees
- High density, low income housing

*In the midst of new library technologies and environments, delivering library services outside of the physical library and providing services to segments of the population who may not otherwise utilize our services is of primary importance to any community-minded librarian.*

- *Jessica Rovito*

*(“Crossing the Threshold into the Private Space: The TD Summer Reading Club Outreach to Shelters Project”, Feliciter 58.2 (2012): 12-14).*

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