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Update on COVID-19

Thursday, March 19, 2020

Dear Members,

These are extraordinary and challenging times, and I want to offer my support and empathy during this current COVID-19 pandemic. The closures of our libraries and cancellation of our events is obviously disappointing, and given the many unknowns surrounding our current circumstances, many of us no doubt feel frustrated and nervous.

Now is a time to practice self-care, and be compassionate and gentle with ourselves and others. Whether we are working remotely, working in other roles, or working at caregiving to our families, we need to ensure that we are taking the steps necessary to keep ourselves and our loved ones safe.

Even as we practice social distancing, let's remember that as OLA members, we are an amazing, vibrant community who continue to reach out and support each other. I am inspired and encouraged by the resilience, commitment and determination of our profession, and have no doubt we'll emerge from this challenge with a renewed commitment to serve our communities and connect with each other.

On behalf of the OLA Board, I wish you all health in the weeks to come. Please read below for updates from the OLA Staff Team.

Andrea Cecchetto, president, OLA

Library Sector Updates:

You can find ongoing updates on news related to COVID-19 in Canada compiled regularly by [the Canadian Medical Association Journal](#). Here are some highlights as they pertain to libraries:

Public Libraries

As of March 17, Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health required [closure of all public libraries](#).

OLA and the Federation of Ontario Public Libraries is continuing to track public library closures and strategies in serving their publics during this time. This includes connecting with Southern Ontario Library Service and Ontario Library Service-North. You can share or update information about your library through [this form](#).

On [March 19](#), the Municipal Emergency Act, 2020 passed the Ontario legislation, giving municipalities the ability to “fully conduct Council, local board and committee meetings electronically when faced with local and province-wide emergencies, empowering the government’s municipal partners to respond quickly when in-person meetings cannot be held.” As library boards make decisions about how to hold their upcoming board meetings, **OLBA has shared a resource to help boards understand [some of the options available to them](#)**.

OLA has already been in touch with the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries to provide feedback on how public libraries are responding and how they are being impacted by the current pandemic. [Read OLA and FOPL’s March 17th update to the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries](#).

In addition, Minister MacLeod hosted a town hall for sector organizations on March 19. This was an opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback. The ministry has assured stakeholders that provincial funding and grants will remain in place and they are investigating early release of grants to provide relief to the sector.

Public and Private Schools

On [March 12](#), all publicly funded Ontario schools were ordered to remain closed from March 14 through to April 5, 2020. As of [March 17](#), private schools were directed to close until March 31, when the order will be reassessed.

Colleges and Universities

It is our understanding that most libraries at colleges and universities have physically closed. CAPAL-ACBES has issued [a Statement on Academic Libraries and COVID-19](#).

Academic libraries are ensuring students are aware of online resources to support their courses.

Member Services Updates

In response to this rapidly changing situation, there are a number of updates related to OLA’s services:

Operations

As of March 17, our Toronto-based office is closed to the public. OLA staff will continue to work and respond to members’ inquiries remotely. We will be available via our main phone number (416-363-3388) and email at info@accessola.com. Please note that there may be a delay in response to email and phone inquiries. We appreciate your patience.

Membership

For those members whose membership were set to expire during the month of March, we have extended these memberships until April 30 at no extra cost. We will continue to evaluate expired memberships as this situation progresses.

Events

OLA has postponed two upcoming events: RA in a Day and OCULA Spring Conference. OLA values the health and safety of our members and the

communities that they serve, and is monitoring information coming from Toronto Public Health, the Ontario Health Ministry, and the Canadian Public Health Agency on an ongoing basis to determine next steps for other upcoming events scheduled for 2020.

Education Institute

The Education Institute's [upcoming webinars](#) will continue to run on a case-by-case basis. Due to COVID-19, webinar presenters are taking on more work to support their communities and may not be able to run their session during previously scheduled times. The following webinars will take place next week:

[Developing Library Leaders - March 24 @ 1-2 p.m. EST](#)

FREE: [Together in Isolation: Engaging Your Users During COVID-19 - March 26 @ 12-12:30 p.m. EST](#)

We are currently curating content to help you through the changing landscape of your regular work, whether you are running programs virtually or figuring it out. Please email dialdeo@accessola.com if you have an idea that can support the library community.

If you or your organization are seeking solutions for providing professional development for staff in bulk, please get [in contact with us](#).

Our archived webinars are available for 50% off on the Library Marketplace when you use the code **WFH**. Please email us at education@accessola.com to request a session.

The Library Marketplace

The Library Marketplace is monitoring all packages shipped to and from OLA. As of March 18, the border for Canada and the United States is open for trade purposes and we are able to receive packages from our American suppliers.

Employees from OLA are working from home to practice social distancing and minimize the spread of COVID-19. Deliveries from orders purchased from March 17 and onwards will be delayed until further notice. You can still place orders online with us.

Due to the inconvenience of delays, we are offering all socks at 40% off. Once you have added a pair of socks to your cart, enter the code **WECARE** at checkout.

If you have ordered from The Library Marketplace and need a tracking number, or if you have any questions or concerns, please email us at orders@accessola.com.

Visit [the Education Institute website](#) for the full list of offerings or check out these past webinars if you are interested in professional development:

[Free: Inclusion For Sexual And Gender Diversity in Libraries](#)

[PDFs, Accessibility and Adobe Acrobat](#)

[Fake it 'Til You Make it: Leadership for Beginners](#)

[How \(Not\) to Plan Your First Research Project](#)

[Unfettered: Rethinking Bureaucracy in Libraries](#)

[Effective Budgeting for Libraries](#)

[The Anxious Weeder: Keeping Your Collection Fresh](#)

Our archived webinars are available for 50% off on [the Library Marketplace](#) when you use the code **WFH**. Please email us at education@accessola.com to request a session.

GoodLife Membership Benefit

All Goodlife memberships have been put on hold and all associated payments were stopped Tuesday, March 17. Members who have purchased a Paid-in-Full annual membership will receive an extension to their current expiry date reflective of the total time GoodLife clubs remain closed.

Forest of Reading

If you are a Forest of Reading program registrant or a member of OSLA or OPLA, you will receive an update from us on the program tomorrow.

Stay Informed

OLA and its divisions have prepared [the Info Brief: COVID-19 and Pandemic Planning: Resources for Public Places](#) to keep you informed.

Here are resources and news we've shared recently. Please follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) for ongoing updates.

- [Indigenous educators volunteer to teach short K-8 lessons online amid school closures](#)
- [Canadian writers are sharing readings of their books online](#)
- [Toronto's digital public library delivers the world to your self-isolation door](#)
- [Coronavirus-Impacted Libraries Get Unlimited Access to Ebook Central Holdings](#)
- [Macmillan Abandons Library E-book Embargo](#)

Despite these difficult and challenging times, our members continue to serve their communities with resilience and innovation. OLA will continue to support you as much as we can.

Keep in contact with us. If you have any resources or news to share, please send it via social media ([Twitter](#) or [Facebook](#)) or at info@accessola.com.

Please take care of yourselves, your families and friends. Thank you for your continued support as we work together through this rapidly changing situation. Stay safe, stay healthy.



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