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Saskatoon Public Library Wins International Award, Putting Funds Into Technology

Saskatoon Public Library (SPL) was recently named as a recipient of the John Cotton Dana Library Public Relations Award. This is the most prestigious award given out annually by the American Library Association (ALA) and comes with a \$10,000 US prize from the H.W. Wilson Foundation.

The award was given to SPL for its 2016 Better Than Ever marketing campaign, which helped establish a fun and bold brand for the library. More than 50 different messages were developed for the campaign and integrated strategically in branches throughout the city. Examples included “You are now in non-fiction. It’s true”; “LARGE PRINT BOOKS. As easy on the eyes as you are”; and “Welcome to your library. Come in and check us out.”

The prize money for this award will be allocated to purchasing various forms of technology for patrons to use at all of SPL’s branches. In total, SPL will be purchasing 40 Code-A-Pillars, 40 Snap Circuit kits, 40 Makey Makey kits, and 30 Ozobots.

“This will add significantly to our already robust collection of digital tools and interactive technology,” said Carol Cooley, SPL’s Director of Libraries and CEO. “SPL’s Better Than Ever campaign really helped establish a new and progressive personality for the library, and adding these new forms of technology is yet another step in that direction.”

The campaign also aligned with a significant increases in SPL’s metrics over 2016. For example, when compared to 2015 the system witnessed a 31% increase in program attendance, 35% increase in active members, and 15% increase in the circulation of digital materials.

SPL is one of only five Canadian library systems to win this award in the past decade, joining Hamilton Public Library (2008), Richmond Public Library (2008), Edmonton Public Library (2011) and Vancouver Public Library (2016). It is anticipated that the new technology will be purchased and ready for patrons to use city-wide this coming fall.

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