

EXPANDING HORIZONS

Wednesday November 12, 2025

Public Library Research Symposium

Expanding Horizons: Shaping Public Library Knowledge and Practice Through Partnered Research

📍 *Hamilton Public Library, Central Library, 4th Floor*

📅 *November 12, 2025*

🎤 *Emcee: Sarah Gauthier*

8:30 – 9:00 AM

Welcome Breakfast and Networking

9:00 – 9:30 AM

Formal Welcome and Introductions

9:30 – 10:30 AM

Keynote Address

Dr. Paulette Rothbauer

Topic: *Public Libraries and Social Cohesion: What the Research Tells Us*

Bio: Paulette Rothbauer holds a PhD in Library and Information Science from The University of Western Ontario where she is a Full Professor in the Faculty of Information & Media Studies. She is an expert on the role that libraries play in supporting an active reading culture in their communities. She is a passionate advocate for public libraries, and she has been studying and teaching about reading and libraries for over 25 years. She is co-

author of key texts for Library and Information Science curriculum including *Reading Matters* (2006), *Reading Still Matters: What the Research Reveals about Reading, Libraries and Community* (2018), and the forthcoming *Reading Disrupted*. Her research shows that systemic exclusion from reading literacies, technologies, practices, and institutions puts reading at risk and denies access to the many benefits that derive from reading for people who do it.

10:45 AM – 12:30 PM

Horizons in Focus: Community Research Platform Lightning Round

Strengthening Public Libraries Through Research: The Community Research Platform Model

- **Paul Takala** – CEO and Chief Librarian, Hamilton Public Library
Bio: Paul Takala is the CEO and Chief Librarian of Hamilton Public Library (HPL), where he has led efforts to position the library as a dynamic hub for learning, research, and community engagement. Under his leadership, HPL has prioritized partnerships that strengthen public libraries' role in knowledge creation and evidence-based decision-making.
- **Dr. James Gillett** – Associate Professor, McMaster University
Bio: James Gillett is an Associate Professor in the Department of Health, Aging and Society and serves as the Academic Director of McMaster University's CRP where he nurtures and fosters relationships with many community organizations across Hamilton. His research interests include human to animal relationships, leisure and recreation, mental health and well-being, media and communications, and perspectives on living with health and illness across the life course.
- **Leora Sas van der Linden** – Manager, McMaster's CRP
Bio: Leora Sas van der Linden holds an MA in Social Anthropology and is the Manager of McMaster's Community Research Platform (CRP). She has more than 15 years of program management and community engagement experience. As CRP Manager, Leora supports faculty researchers, students, and community partners to build research capacity and undertake collaborative research projects that address societal challenges and create meaningful community impact.

Sustainable Research Partnerships: Lessons Learned from My Time as Researcher-in-Residence at HPL

- **Dr. Kaitlyn Wynia Baluk**
Bio: Holds a PhD in Health & Society from McMaster University (2021). Her

postdoctoral research explored sustainable public library–university partnerships, digital literacy initiatives for older adults in affordable housing, and the role of libraries as social infrastructure. She brings experience in research administration, including funding development and strategic support for academic projects.

I was trying to find my way, I was trying to find my place: Evaluating the Benefits and Impacts of the HPL Social Work Program

- **Kianosh Keyvani**

Bio: Kianosh Keyvani (MSW) is a Registered Social Worker and Clinical Resource Coordinator the City of Hamilton’s Alcohol, Drug & Gambling Services / Mental Health Street Outreach Program. She has 20 years of clinical experience working with individuals who have both mental health and addiction concerns in various settings, including emergency shelters, drop-in, residential treatment facilities and outpatient settings. She is also a passionate educator and community planner. Her research interests include the viability of social work practice in a library setting as well as inclusive research design.

- **Bridget Marsdin**

Bio: Bridget Marsdin is a Vanier Scholar, a sessional instructor, and a doctoral student in the School of Social Work at McMaster University. She has 25 years of experience working in community organizations dedicated to social justice in areas such as sexual health, sexual violence, gender-based violence, trauma, mental health, harm reduction, and communitybased research. Bridget is actively involved in several community initiatives, including the evaluation study of the Hamilton Public Library Social Work Program. Her doctoral research is in collaboration with Six Nations of the Grand River to explore Haudenosaunee cultural practices that promote sexual health, well-being, and healing.

Writing Through Time

- **Nadia Lana**

Bio: Nadia Lana is a PhD student in Cognitive Science of Language at McMaster University and a graduate research assistant for the Writing Through Time program. Nadia coordinated logistical aspects of the program, such as promoting registration through university and community channels, maintaining an interactive web application that hosted stories submitted by participants, training undergraduate research assistants, and leading group meetings between older adult participants and undergraduate students. In February 2024, Nadia collaborated with Hamilton Public Library staff to carry out a community event celebrating the program finale and publication of three photobooks at Hamilton Public Library Central.

- **Dr. Victor Kuperman**

Bio: Dr. Victor Kuperman is a Professor in the Department of Linguistics and Languages at McMaster University and the Canada Research Chair in Psycholinguistics, specializing in several areas of psychology of language, including interaction of language and emotion, and literacy and reading acquisition. Dr. Kuperman is the Principal Investigator of the Future of Canada Project “Bringing hope and well-being to community- dwelling older Ontarians in the pandemic world through creative writing and digital literacy learning.” Through this project, Dr. Kuperman led a collaboration between McMaster University and Hamilton Public Library to deliver digital skills and storytelling programming to older adults in the Hamilton community.

Emotional Labour and Resilience in Library Work

- **Dr. Diana Singh**

Bio: Dr. Diana Singh is the Executive Director for the McMaster Centre for Advanced Research on Mental Health and Society (ARMS) and an Adjunct Assistant Professor in the Department of Sociology. Her research examines the intersection of emotional labor, health, and workplace well-being, with a particular focus on workers in human service and public-facing roles.

- **Lita Barrie**

Bio: Lita Barrie is an accomplished and forward-thinking leader in the public library sector. Currently CEO of Burlington Public Library, she has spent her career driving organizational success, fostering community engagement, and spearheading innovative initiatives to contribute to the growth and relevance of public libraries in the digital age. Lita is a lifelong learner--since graduating with her Master of Library and Information Studies from McGill University, she has continued to pursue formal and informal education, most recently completing a Graduate Certificate in Leadership and Inclusion from Centennial College. Lita is an active volunteer and is involved in governance with library, literacy, and social support organizations locally and nationally.

Building Research Capacity at HPL: Developing Guidelines to Support and Sustain Public Library–University Relationships

- **Amanda Bull**

Bio: Amanda Bull is a Ph.D. candidate in Social Gerontology at McMaster University and a Community-Engaged Research Intern with the Hamilton Public Library. Her SSHRC-funded research explores the intersection of ageism, work, and public institutions – with a focus on older adults’ lived experiences. Amanda has

collaborated on several projects examining how libraries engage with aging populations and has presented her work nationally and internationally. With a background in qualitative and arts-based research, she is committed to advancing age-inclusive practices in public services and policy

- **Erica Conly**

Bio: As Manager of Adult Programming at Hamilton Public Library, Erica Conly has extensive experience in library service development, community outreach, and researchinformed program design. She has played a key role in bridging public libraries and academic research, ensuring that research initiatives align with community needs and enhance library services. With a background in information access and public programming, Erica brings a practitioner's perspective on the challenges and opportunities of integrating research into public library operations.

12:30 – 2:00 PM

Lunch and Student Poster Showcase

2:00 – 3:15 PM

Topics on the Horizon: Transformative Challenges in Librarianship Panel

Come Together! Exploring How Social Connection and Inclusion Shape Older Adults' Engagement with Public Libraries

- **Dr. Nicole Dalmer**

Bio: Nicole K. Dalmer, PhD, is an assistant professor in the Department of Health, Aging and Society as well as the acting director of the Gilbrea Centre for Studies in Aging, both at McMaster University. In her work, she takes up an interdisciplinary, critical gerontological approach as she explores the meanings, expectations, and values of connections (with people, nature, and technologies) in later life.

Censorship in Canadian Libraries

- **Michael Nyby**

Bio: Michael Nyby is a technical services librarian for Alternative Education Resources for Ontario and former chair of the CFLAFCAB Intellectual Freedom Committee. His research interests include intellectual freedom, politics, and library accessibility. His research on censorship in Canadian libraries has appeared in Partnership: the Canadian Journal of Library and Information Practice and Research, Public Library Quarterly, and The Political Librarian. Michael's reviews of

accessible format books frequently appear in Canadian Children's Book News. His non-research interests include long-distance bike touring and adapting Dungeons and Dragons materials for visually-impaired players.

Patron-Perpetrated Sexual Harassment (PPSH) in Public Libraries

- **Dr. Tami Oliphant**

Bio: Tami Oliphant is an associate professor at the School of Library and Information Studies at the University of Alberta. Her research draws upon intersectional feminist anti-violence theory and practice and theories of justice (particularly epistemic injustice and more recently climate justice). Working alongside Dr. Danielle Allard and Angela Lieu, our SSHRC funded research (2024-2027) Patron-Perpetrated Sexual Harassment (PPSH) in Libraries project explores library workers' experiences of gender-based violence in a "pink collar" profession and feminized workplace and focuses on policy and PPSH interventions.

- **Dr. Danielle Allard**

Bio: Danielle Allard is an Associate Professor at the School of Library and Information Studies, University of Alberta. Her research areas include: sexual violence and sexual harassment in libraries; Indigenous, community, and activist archives; and critical information studies including the application of intersectional feminist and critical race theories and methods to LIS. In collaboration with Dr. Tami Oliphant and Angela Lieu her research examines patron-perpetrated sexual harassment in libraries.

Android Tablet Training for City Housing Hamilton Older Adults: An Action Research Approach

- **Dr. Brian Detlor**

Bio: Brian Detlor is Professor of Information Systems in the DeGroote School of Business at McMaster University. He also is Professor (Status Only) in the Faculty of Information at the University of Toronto and serves as a Visiting Professor at the Centre for Social Informatics at Edinburgh Napier University, Scotland. He is a Past-President of the Association for Information Science & Technology (ASIS&T). His recent research projects involve the investigation of digital literacy training programs led by public libraries, social service agencies, other local community organizations. Research partner organizations include Hamilton Public Library, Dixon Hall, and CityHousing Hamilton.

3:15 – 4:00 PM

Future Horizons: Community of Practice Development

4:00 – 4:30 PM

Closing Conversations

