

Science Literacy Week

My name is Jesse Hildebrand and I'm the founder of science literacy week – an event that recently took place in the general Toronto area to promote the public understanding of science. Through book displays, links to great online content, lecture series and hands on activities the goal was to showcase the wonder of great scientists and the work they do to students and the public. A link to the event can be found here <http://guides.library.utoronto.ca/scienceliteracy>

The whole event was inspired by my childhood, where if I displayed even the slightest interest in a topic my parents would dutifully march me to the library to let me explore for myself. Their effort resulted in my lifelong desire to both communicate science to the public and help others have a similar experience in libraries. I think Carl Sagan the astronomer said it best:

“Books permit us to voyage through time, to tap the wisdom of our ancestors. The library connects us with the insight and knowledge, painfully extracted from Nature, of the greatest minds that ever were, with the best teachers, drawn from the entire planet and from all our history, to instruct us without tiring, and to inspire us to make our own contribution to the collective knowledge of the human species. I think the health of our civilization, the depth of our awareness about the underpinnings of our culture and our concern for the future can all be tested by how well we support our libraries.”

For next year's event I'd like to turn the event into the largest in Canada – something I'm going to need a great deal of help to accomplish. To do so, I'm enlisting the assistance of science faculties, libraries and like minded institutions to work together and publicize the great work being done both locally and globally in all the sciences. I think the nature of the event permits people to run wild with their imagination in what to do, what to show and who to have speak – and to utilize their own passion projects to make it come to fruition. I believe it also serves the role of drawing attention to the library more generally, so that people are eager to continually come in and see what there is to discover.

At this early stage I am simply testing the waters to see who might be intrigued, and I sincerely hope you are. The more the merrier has always been my catchphrase for this endeavour and I think the more people involved the more successful and grand the event can become. As of this moment I have received early support from over 25 institutions representing every province which needless to say I'm very happy about! If you are in fact interested or have more questions, please let me know and I'd be happy to help. Till then, thank you very much for your time and I hope you have a lovely rest of the week!