

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

January 4, 2019

**Vaughan Public Library Board wins prestigious Joyce Cunningham Award  
for Public Library Board of the Year**

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**VAUGHAN, ON** – The Vaughan Public Library Board is this year’s recipient of the Ontario Library Association’s Joyce Cunningham Award. Also known as the **Public Library Board of the Year Award**, it is presented to a Public Library Board that has demonstrated a high level of collaboration and innovation to produce outstanding results.

“The Vaughan Public Library Board is composed of local, passionate, committed and highly creative individuals who share a belief that public libraries play a fundamental role in shaping, building and enhancing communities,” commented Margie Singleton, CEO of Vaughan Public Libraries. “The VPL Board of 2015-2018 quickly morphed into a cohesive unit where decisions are reached after engagement in healthy, respectful debate among trustees. Differing ideas are heard, acknowledged and considered before decisions are confirmed.”

“Under the strong leadership of Board Chair Dr. Devender Sandhu, a visionary strategic plan was created which ensured VPL remained responsive to the community, evolving as required. SMART goals and outcome measurements were established to measure success,” Singleton said.

Board Chair, Devender Sandhu declared he’s extremely proud of receiving the award on behalf of the passionate group of extraordinary Vaughan Public Library Board members which include Rose Savage (Vice Chair), Mubarak Ahmed, Lynne Axmith, Ralph Cinelli, Ward 3 Councillor Rosanna DeFrancesca, Ugo Di Federico, Deputy Mayor and Regional Councillor Mario Ferri, Maya Goldenberg, Ward 1 Councillor Marilyn Iafrate, Manjit Kaur, Jane Kelly, Steve Kerwin, Palma Pallante, Loreta Pavese, Cristina Rizzuto, Suri Rosen, Gary Thompson and Ward 4 Councillor Sandra Yeung Racco. Dr. Sandhu would also like to dedicate this award to the late Isabella Ferrara (1945-2017), a long-time Board Member and a passionate supporter of the Vaughan community.

“The Board embraced and inspired innovation through the establishment of three creation spaces. Individually, trustees monitored library innovations and during their international travels, returned to enthusiastically share observations with fellow trustees. As a Board, we were tenacious in pursuing an aggressive building plan which has resulted in the opening of three new facilities, planning and designing three additional new libraries currently under construction, and designing another to begin construction in 2020,” said Sandhu.

“I would also like to acknowledge the outstanding leadership provided by CEO Margie Singleton, her admirable executive team and employees,” added Sandhu.

Letters of support accompanied the Vaughan Public Library Board nomination, proof, Dr. Sandhu acknowledges, of the ability of the Board to collaborate with various businesses and community organizations to the benefit of City of Vaughan residents.

The Hon. Maurizio Bevilacqua, Mayor of the City of Vaughan, was one of those who supported the Library Board's nomination for this award.

"The Vaughan Public Library Board has worked collaboratively to ensure that Vaughan libraries continue to provide the highest level of services in keeping with the pace of our fast-growing municipality," said Mayor Bevilacqua. "Through forward-thinking and cooperation, the Board oversaw the opening of three new branches in four years and have set the direction to develop three more. The new facilities have improved access to services in various parts of the city, and enabled and empowered individuals to take advantage of countless opportunities to ignite their imagination, increase their knowledge, and develop their personal and professional growth."

"The libraries in Vaughan are admired across the province—award-winning, innovative and accessible—and welcome more than 2.8 million visitors every year. In our recent Citizen Satisfaction Survey, Vaughan Public Libraries received a 96 per cent satisfaction rate," added Mayor Bevilacqua. "The City of Vaughan is fortunate to have many compassionate citizens, like the members of the Vaughan Public Library Board, who give their time to help make the community an even better place."

Paul Stevens, Senior Principal at ZAS Architects + Interiors, was another supporting the nomination. He has worked with the Vaughan Public Library Board on the design and construction of two major library projects in the City of Vaughan over a period of six years.

"I've found the Board members were keenly interested in adding new facilities to the library system that were bold, progressive and respectful of each respective neighbourhood in the City. In my view, their contribution has produced impactful results that could not have been achieved without their interest, collaboration and ongoing support," said Stevens.

He was also struck by how well the Library Board works together.

"The Vaughan Public Library Board is one of the most collaborative and supportive organizations we have ever worked with. The leadership of the Board has adeptly assembled a group of interested citizens and experts that have wisely guided the expansion of the Board's system of libraries," he added.

"The goal of this Board is uncompromised in its mission to *Enrich, Inspire and Transform* and our libraries truly support the City of Vaughan's philosophy that no person is left behind," summarized Board Chair Dr. Devender Sandhu.

The award will be presented by the President of the Ontario Library Boards' Association at the Public Library Award Gala on Thursday, January 31, 2019 held in conjunction with the Ontario Library Association's annual Super Conference in Toronto.

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## **ATTACHMENTS: Joyce Cunningham Award**

### **Joyce Cunningham Award**

Given out annually since 2016, this award is presented to a Public Library Board [or two Public Library Boards that participated in a collaborative effort] that has demonstrated a high level of collaboration and innovation to produce outstanding results. For more information, including a definition of a high-performance Public Library Board and characteristics, please [visit the Ontario Library Association website](#).

**VAUGHAN PUBLIC LIBRARIES**

*Home to one of the 15 coolest libraries in Canada according to Chatelaine magazine, [Vaughan Public Libraries \(VPL\)](#) offers ten welcoming destinations that educate, excite and empower the community. With over 2.5 million visitors annually, VPL is one of the City of Vaughan's top leisure and information destinations with a collection of over 500,000 resources, an assortment of technology and thousands of programs and events. You can enjoy our incredible array of content everywhere – in the library, at home and on a variety of devices. Visit [www.vaughanpl.info](http://www.vaughanpl.info) for more information and to subscribe to our [eNewsletter](#).*

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