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Urban Libraries Council Recognizes Vaughan Public Libraries with 2021 Innovation Award ***Surprise Me! Bundles Exhibits Transformative Impact on Community***

VAUGHAN, ONTARIO – The Urban Libraries Council announced Vaughan Public Libraries (VPL) as one of 10 Top Innovators during the 2021 Innovations Celebration held virtually on January 21 – the only library in Canada to receive this achievement this year. The annual Innovations awards recognizes transformative programs that address structural racism, bridge digital divides, provide lifelong education opportunities, meet the needs of under-resourced populations and improve essential library service delivery from ULC’s member library systems across the U.S. and Canada.

VPL’s Surprise Me! Bundles was selected by a panel of expert judges from over 250 submissions in 10 categories that showcase creative thinking and imaginative applications of library resources. VPL won in the category of Top Innovator, Customer Experience with award winners being recognized for their level of inventiveness, the outcomes achieved and the ability for other libraries to adapt and implement their work.

“Creativity and inventive approaches continue to thrive at ULC member libraries, and this year’s winners are no exception,” said Urban Libraries Council President and CEO Susan Benton. “This year’s submissions highlight our libraries’ remarkable capacity for leadership, commitment and determination during a time of continued change and stress. We celebrate VPL for developing a leading-edge program that will transform their library and community, serving as a model for all public libraries in North America.

“We are honoured to receive this prestigious award from the Urban Libraries Council. Throughout the pandemic we have remained committed to innovation, and the introduction of the Surprise Me! Bundles is an example of how we’re always looking for new ways to provide our customers with excellence in service and access to a world-class collection.”

- **Rose Savage, Chair, Vaughan Public Libraries Board**

“Vaughan Public Libraries is fortunate to have a creative and resourceful team of staff. The Surprise Me! Bundles were one of many changes and innovations that staff developed to help maintain and improve service throughout the pandemic and this award is a reminder that the foundations of an exceptional library are exceptional library employees.”

- **Margie Singleton, CEO, Vaughan Public Libraries**

Due to COVID-19 closures and restrictions, VPL recognized how difficult it was for customers to browse their collections. Therefore, in January of 2021, VPL introduced the book bundling service, Surprise Me! Bundles for children, teens, and adults. Each bundle included various items hand-picked by Information staff and were easy for customers to borrow as they were always pre-packaged and ready to go out the door during curbside hours. Surprise Me! Bundles allowed customers to borrow a selection of materials without the hassle of requesting each item, encourage reading, and discover something new.

All 2021 ULC Innovations entries can be viewed at urbanlibraries.org.



About Urban Libraries Council

The Urban Libraries Council is an innovation and impact tank of North America's leading public library systems. ULC drives cutting-edge research and strategic partnerships to elevate the power of libraries as essential, transformative institutions for the 21st century. More than 160 urban member libraries in the U.S. and Canada rely on ULC to identify significant challenges facing today's communities and provide new tools and techniques to help libraries achieve stronger outcomes in education, digital equity, workforce and economic development, and race and social equity.

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Instagram: [vaughanpubliclibraries](https://www.instagram.com/vaughanpubliclibraries)

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