World Play Day 2015

What a great World Play Day 2015! Well done to everyone who celebrated all around the world. It was wonderful watching the reports and photos fly in on social media. My Facebook page was just full of people playing.

A special mention to Rosebud Toy Library, Australia and our Mexican friends who got ‘Happy’ for World Play Day. You can see their videos here:

- Mexico: tinyurl.com/ITLAHappy1
- Rosebud: tinyurl.com/ITLAHappy2
- Tijuana, Mexico: tinyurl.com/ITLAHappy3
- Mexico City: //tinyurl.com/ITLAHappy4

These videos, lots of World Play Day photos and discussion of all things Toy Library are on our Facebook discussion group and on the Itla World-Play Day Facebook page. If you are not already member, please join us on Facebook at Toy Library Discussion Group (ITLA).

If you are a national association or the link person for your country you should have recently received a survey from your ITLA continent link. Please fill in this short survey and return it to debbiej.williams@gmail.com by the 14th August along with any photos, articles or videos you have of you World Play Day activities. If you have not received the survey you can find it on at: tinyurl.com/WPDReport2015

There were so many events to celebrate World Play Day around the world it is not possible to mention everyone, but here is an example of events in a few countries.

New Zealand

Toy Library Federation of New Zealand has establish Toy Library Awareness Week to coincide with World Play Day. This provides New Zealand Toy Libraries an opportunity to promote both the benefits of play and their local toy library.

There were a lot of local open days held at individual toy libraries and a national photo competition. Some creative toy library lovers also wrote their own toy library song, which is in English and Maori: tinyurl.com/TLFNZsong.
South Africa

World Play Day (WPD) is a day that Cotlands, a member of the International Toy Library Association (ITLA) and coordinator of the Toy Library Association of South Africa (TLASA), proudly advocates the importance of play in every child’s development and their right to play.

The theme for 2015 WPD was FUN and FUN was certainly “contagious” in and around South Africa on Thursday 28th May 2015. TLASA sent out invitations, posters, a brief on how to conduct a WPD event and a variety of FUN activities to all its members and interested parties.

The build up to WPD was fantastic; invitations to various events hosted by TLASA members, ECD Centres and NGO’s were posted on Facebook, Twitter and other social media forums. Radio, television and newspaper interviews were conducted with Monica Stach, COO of Cotlands and ITLA board member. The various platforms were used to advocate for every child’s right to play, generating a lot of enthusiasm and excitement for the day. The highlight for TLASA was the inclusion of World Play Day into the UNICEF South Africa advocacy calendar 2015.

WPD was a whole lot of FUN that was thoroughly enjoyed by young and old alike! It was heart-warming to see the variety of fun-filled activities that was organised not only by the TLASA members but as well as numerous other organisations for the day.

William Pharrell’s “Happy” song was selected for flash mobs to promote WPD around the world, and although this proved to be rather challenging for TLASA members the “Happy” song was still a big hit during various WPD events. Children and adults happily sang and danced to the “Happy” song, even in remote rural villages in Kwa-Zulu Natal.

Play is often seen as the opposite of work, being lazy and the lack of achievement or at best seen as recreation. This is a common misperception and research has shown that PLAY in early childhood is one of the most important opportunities you can give a child and the best foundation for their success in school. Play takes many forms and shapes and the heart of play is FUN and pleasure. If it isn’t FUN, it isn’t play!

It was encouraging to see South Africa come together collectively on World Play Day and provide children within the Rainbow Nation a day of playful FUN! A number of non-profit organisations promoted and participated in WPD and was truly inspiring to see were businesses participating in WPD! While it is difficult to give exact numbers of children enjoying WPD in South Africa, it is safe to say that in an excess of five thousand children enjoyed a fun-filled day.

Many of our current generation of children have lost the opportunity to play due to poverty, violence, poor education and socio-economic conditions that have had a negative impact on their opportunities for safe play. The overwhelming response to World Play Day as a nation is certainly creating a positive change in how society understands how play enhances every domain of a child’s development. WPD creates FUN playful learning opportunities for our children giving them cherished memories and experiences to help them learn, figure out who they are, how the world works, where they fit in and develop skills they need to learn to read and write.

TLASA maximised on every opportunity to advocate for every child’s right to safe play as World Play Day falls within the week of Child Protection and just a 2 weeks after we celebrate Youth Day on the 16th June.
so there were many occasions and on various platforms to do so.

We are looking forward to next year, as World Play Day will be included in the Toy Library Play Conference that the Toy Library Association of South Africa will host from 31st May to 2nd June 2016.

Venessa T’Hart, Cotlands/TLASA

Mexico

World Play was celebrated across toy libraries in Mexico with much excitement. Specialy Tijuana that made two WPD with the 25th flash dance anniversary. In addition to the ‘Happy dances’ a large event was held in one of the most popular streets downtown Mexico City. ITLA President, Monica Juarez spoke on The Importance of Play in the Life of a Human Being in the Archbishopric Museum of Mexico and a large crowd gathered outside to for free play.
We look forward to making World Play Day 2016 even bigger and better. If you have any ideas for a theme, please let us know. We look forward to reading your WPD reports very soon.

Debbie Williams, WPD Coordinator