

# ANNUAL REPORT 2006 – 2007

For the year ending May 31, 2007

*From the President*

## Plenty to celebrate and many to thank

By Bernie Martenson

It's been another great year for the Oakville Literacy Council, with some "best-ever" achievements.

Over the entire year we served 52 students, and that's what it's all about. Think of the changes in the lives of each one of these brave individuals. As of May 31, 2007, we have 43 students enrolled in our program. Thank you tutors for helping them succeed!

I also want to say thank you to our wonderful book sale committee members. This event keeps breaking new ground every year. It's become a not-to-be-missed event for many people in Oakville. Toward the end of the fiscal year, we nominated our book sale committee members for an Oakville Community Spirit Award in the group category to show them appreciation for all their hard work.

Publicity also continues to grow. We've been featured many times in local publications this year.

In September 2006, then Oakville Mayor Ann Mulvale proclaimed September 8 Literacy Day in Oakville. The day brought local officials and supporters of literacy out to Hopedale Mall for a news conference and celebration.

2006 was our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary year, and we picked our annual meeting night in November to recognize this milestone. About 60 people joined us at our best-ever event. Local officials and three local newspapers came out, and we welcomed Dan McLean of CHCH News in Hamilton as our keynote speaker.

In January 2007, to celebrate Family Literacy Day, we asked sponsors to support a two-page ad in the Oakville Beaver so we could place an article about literacy issues in our community. Local individuals and businesses could purchase a letter of the alphabet and place an ad in that space. Thank you again to everyone who "bought a letter" to support literacy.

Partnerships are so important to us, and this year we've formed some new ones. The Oakville-Trafalgar Rotary Club introduced us and our learners to a pilot project for adult literacy students and donated some used laptops. Ten of our students were able to do a series of lessons on the computer, gaining online and traditional literacy skills.

The Kerr Village Business Improvement Area has become a new friend as well. We did our first event with them in May, celebrating the Town's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary. In our minds, the Kerr St. neighbourhood is a good place for us to promote our services. We want people to know we're here to help, and will be continuing with outreach in this area.

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Oakville Literacy Council  
905 469-8528  
[www.oakvilleliteracy.ca](http://www.oakvilleliteracy.ca)

## Special thanks to our generous supporters

**Volunteer tutors:** 1,500 hours spent in lessons with your students!

**Special event volunteers:** Whatever the weather, you're there.

**Board members:** Thank you for your contribution to the Council.

**OLC annual members:** We appreciate your support year after year.

**Liaison with Oakville Public Libraries:** Margaret Gatt (now retired) and Brenda Reindl

**Book Sale Committee members:** Elizabeth Avery, Marg Clements, Gabrielle Garcia, Joan Heffernan, Joanne MacNair, Ann McCulloch, Phyllis Robson

**Used book donors:** More of you every year!

**Special thanks and recognition to:** United Way of Oakville and the Oakville Public Library

**Other generous donors in 2006-2007:** Halton Region Chairman's Golf Classic; Community Foundation of Oakville; Calloway REIT (Hopedale Mall); United Way workplace donors from Toronto and Peel who asked that OLC receive their payroll donations; Bell Canada Employee Giving Program; Barkley Design Print & Copy; Bradley Harvey, C.A.; Oakville Rotary Clubs; Communications at Work; Mind in Balance Training and Development; Alternate Choice Office Furniture; Solvr Systems; Starbucks Coffee Canada; Panago Pizza; Dominion Hopedale Mall; The Oakville Club; Print Management Solutions; Home Depot Oakville; UPS Store Appleby Line.

## Board of Directors 2006-2007

Bernie Martenson  
President

Wendy Nunn  
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Members-at-Large:

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Michael Klinck  
Teresa MacDonald  
Ann McCulloch  
Erin McInnes  
Chris Nind

OLC staff:

Joanne Smith-Scozzafava,  
Program Manager

Karen Majerly,  
Office Manager

*From the Used Book Sale Committee*

## We're talking 10 grand here!

By Co-Chairs Ann McCulloch and Gabrielle Garcia

*Used book sale  
royalty, from left:  
Marg Clements,  
Joanne MacNair,  
Gabrielle Garcia,  
Phyllis Robson,  
Elizabeth Avery*



The 2007 Used Book Sale was held May 24 through 26. It was a resounding success due to the hard work of committee members Elizabeth Avery, Marg Clements, Joan Heffernan, Joanne MacNair, Phyllis Robson, and our energetic, always positive Office Manager, Karen Majerly.

Once again Hopedale Mall generously donated the space and all the tables, and their graphic design department even made posters to advertise the event. What wonderful management and staff they have.

We kicked off our sale with a media photo opportunity with Mayor Rob Burton, Councillor Cathy Duddeck, United Way representatives, and Starbucks volunteers. Thank you to all of them for being with us. Our media coverage really helps rein in those customers!

This year we rented a storage space at the mall for the month preceding the sale. This made delivery and book sorting and set up much more efficient and easier on our backs!

Thanks to the organizing committee, our supportive Board members, and the many volunteers, tutors, and students who donated books and time, we sold more than \$10,000 worth of books! This will go a long way to supporting our students. It keeps us true to our commitment to providing individual attention to each student, and helps us purchase learning materials and do outreach projects.

Because this is OLC's biggest fundraiser, we look forward to your involvement in next year's sale, May 22 through 24. Whether you're interested in joining the organizing group, donating books, or working at the sale, we welcome your support.



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*The Oakville Literacy Council is a non-profit  
volunteer group dedicated to helping adults  
improve their literacy skills.*

*We are a United Way Member Agency.*

*From the Program Manager*

## Tutors dedicated to student success

By Joanne Smith-Scozzafava

From June 2006 to May 2007 it has been a busy time here at the Oakville Literacy Council. Here are some highlights of the year.

### **Tutor recruitment, training, and development**

Tutor training workshops were held in September and April. We trained 24 new tutors and matched most of them with a student. I have embarked on a new role as an apprentice literacy trainer and have participated in the tutor training workshops by presenting specific segments under the watchful eye of Maureen O’Keefe, our past president and my supervising trainer.

I facilitated two tutor information sessions this year, allowing us to increase awareness of literacy in the community and introduce potential tutors to our program.

Also this year, we launched tutor networking meetings, where tutors can meet their peers, share successes, or learn from other tutors.

OLC is very lucky to have such a fabulous group of tutors, and I would like to express my thanks to each one of you for your dedication to your role, and the happiness you bring to your students. As a group, you spend 1,500 hours a year working directly with your students, and that doesn’t include your preparation or travel time. Without you, our students may not gain the skills and confidence they need to become more successful individuals.

### **United Way features literacy in campaign video**

This year United Way of Oakville canvassed agencies that may be interested in taking part in campaign videos featuring member agencies. OLC was chosen, and two of our tutor-student pairs were featured.

Also through United Way, two other students were gracious and brave enough to tell their stories of how they came to the Literacy Council and the positive impact it has made in their lives. One of them was featured in a United Way column in the Oakville Beaver.

### **Literacy materials at the library**

The Oakville Public Library and OLC partnered to bring some new adult literacy materials into the library system. We encourage the tutors to use these resources which are housed at Woodside Library (or can be reserved and shipped to other branches via the OPL website) during their weekly lessons. You can borrow the materials on your library card, or have your student borrow them on his or her card.

### **Here are some of the other highlights of the year:**

- Five tutors successfully completed a Writing Workshop.
- We joined in the Kerr Street Ministries 1<sup>st</sup> annual 5K Run for Hope. We also used this event to create awareness for our Council.
- We became part of United Way of Oakville’s “Speakers Bureau” and presented at Omron, a local manufacturer.
- I joined the Board of the Halton Association of Coordinators of Volunteer Services on behalf of our Council.
- Ten tutors and ten students took part in a project to learn new literacy skills with an on-line literacy program called “Autoskill.” The Rotary Club of Oakville Trafalgar and Autoskill trained our tutors and tracked the progress of each student. Thank you to the Rotary club for donating four used laptop computers so we could take part in this project.
- We recognized our dedicated volunteers during National Volunteer Week at a special thank-you event. Tim Rivers of the Town of Oakville Greenhouses spoke about container gardening. Congratulations to all the tutors who reached tutoring hours milestones at that event and others—they are truly achievements of dedication!
- OLC attended the Laubach Literacy Ontario annual conference. Perhaps in the coming years some of our tutors or students might take part in the conference as well.

At Oakville Literacy, we sometimes feel like the best kept secret in Oakville. Let’s change that by spreading the word. Tell two people what we do and encourage them to give our telephone number to someone who may need our assistance.

Congratulations to all of our students who are successfully progressing to their next level of learning.

To all my volunteer tutors and your students—your dedication and passion make my job very rewarding. Thank you.

*The Oakville Literacy Council has helped me to meet people, and it has helped me to develop my reading, writing and spelling skills. I enjoy the stories I read, and I enjoy the stories I write.*

*The literacy skills which I have gained have helped me to succeed in life.*

—K.G., adult literacy student, in a handwritten note to the Council

**President's report continued**

United Way continues to be our major funder and cheerleader. They give support in so many ways. In addition to regular funding, we received a special one-time grant from United Way to design and print a postcard and poster geared to low-level readers. We hope the simple approach will help people understand how we can help.

United Way is also funding a project to refresh our website. We can't wait to improve it and use it as a more effective outreach and communication tool.

The Community Foundation of Oakville showed support for literacy this past year as well. If you're not familiar with the way the CFO works, I encourage you to visit their website at [www.thecfo.org](http://www.thecfo.org). Donors give capital to the CFO to invest, and the community benefits from the earnings that capital generates year after year.

The grant we received from the CFO is for a workplace and community outreach package—a presentation folder stocked with information about what we do and how we can work together with employers and other helping agencies.

In spite of these successes, the Oakville Literacy Council continues to face some ongoing challenges. How do we find the many more adults in Oakville who are facing low literacy? Statistics around education and literacy levels tell us that we could help hundreds, maybe thousands, more people in Oakville. But they don't read brochures, or newspapers, or delve into online information. This is why we continue to look for new ways to reach them.

Our other challenge is finding additional, sustainable funding to support growing needs in our community. As we grow, the need for more resources grows, whether it's more staff hours, more tutor and student books, more office equipment, or more space. We hope to encourage more individual and corporate support of adult literacy in Oakville in the coming year, so do let us know if you can help in any way.

In the fall, we plan to apply for additional funds from United Way, and seek out an Ontario Trillium Foundation grant. If these applications succeed, we will start building a solid foundation for sustained growth.

I must also make special mention of the Oakville Public Library. We are so lucky to have our office in Woodside Library, and to have such an amazing friendship with so many staff members.

Speaking of friendships, what do a crown attorney, a wine importer, a controller, and a geophysicist have in common? They are new friends to the Council in the form of talented new Board members. Welcome to Jennifer Crawford, Teresa MacDonald, Jennifer Murray, and Chris Nind.

And in closing out our successful year, I must again thank all of you – our volunteers, staff and many supporters—for helping to make a difference in the lives of so many Oakville residents. It's not just about helping those who struggle with reading and writing—you have also made a difference for their families, their employers, and our community at large.

We couldn't do it without you, and we look forward to your continued support in the coming year.

*From the Treasurer***Funding challenge ongoing**

By Jennifer Murray

Funding is an ongoing challenge for a charitable organization and Oakville Literacy Council is no exception.

Our core expenses in the 2006/07 year increased slightly over the prior year, primarily due to increased hours for our very dedicated staff who run the program and the office. Our primary sources of funding are United Way and our well-known used book sale; however, the total income from these two sources does not cover our full cost base.

We had planned for additional fundraising initiatives, and had some great ideas, but we did not meet these financial goals.

As a result, the Council experienced a deficit of nearly \$9,000 for the year, and that depleted our very modest cash reserves. We are starting the 2007-08 year in a more difficult situation but are hopeful that requests for additional funds from United Way and an Ontario Trillium Foundation grant will help us fulfill our plans for future growth through assistance with operating costs and resources to build a strong fundraising base.

Thank you to those who support us with your gifts big and small.

**Oakville Literacy Quick Facts**

- Individual \$20 memberships with the Oakville Literacy Council add up to about \$1,200 a year toward our program.
- Between June 1, 2006 and May 31, 2007, we served 52 adult literacy students.
- During that same period, tutors spent 2,585 hours doing lesson preparation, travelling, and tutoring their students.
- In 2006, the Mayor of Oakville proclaimed September 8 "Literacy Day in Oakville." This day is recognized as International Literacy Day around the world.
- 42% of Canadians, aged 16 to 65, are at literacy Levels 1 and 2, below the minimum of what is suitable for coping with everyday demands.