



ANNUAL REPORT

2005 – 2006

For the year ending May 31, 2006

From the President

A top 10 list for a special year

by Maureen O'Keefe

**“We can do anything we want to do
if we stick to it long enough.”**

- Helen Keller

For the past 20 years the Oakville Literacy Council (OLC) has been sticking to it! Over the years we have set goals to improve our delivery of service and we have consistently reached those goals. To provide better and better service to our learners will always be our primary goal. It is my privilege to work with so many people dedicated to making our organization stronger every day.

The 2005-2006 year has made me so proud of the Oakville Literacy Council. Knowing that I would be approaching the end of my tenure with OLC in 2006, I feel so good about the strength of this organization. There were many large and small but significant events during the past year that contributed to this strength and pride – learners reaching all manner of goals, tutors attending workshops to enhance their skills, donations from our community, partnerships with other organizations, board development, and public and media events. Here are my top 10 highlights for the year:

Super staff Two very valuable assets came to OLC last year. Joanne Smith-Scozzafava, our Tutor-Student Coordinator, and Karen Majerly, our Office Administrator, brought to us their multi-talents, their energy and enthusiasm, their fresh ideas, their dedication, and their wonderful personalities. So many times they made my job easier and made OLC stronger through their efficiency. We are very blessed with two very dynamic women in our Council.

We are very lucky to have found these two to fill the shoes of Carol Risidore and Chantell Tunney, who left us during the year to move on to other opportunities. Those were big shoes to fill.

Volunteers The heart of our organization is volunteers who deliver our service to those who reach out to us and/or who give their time to one of our committees or events. Volunteers gave over 4,000 hours of their time this year. That is an amazing amount of time from less than 100 people. Volunteers are THE STRENGTH of OLC. Without them (all of you) we would not have an organization at all.

Used Book Sale Our book sale organization and results get stronger and stronger every year. This year was the biggest sale ever. We have a smooth and very efficient committee for this event, whose members, I hope, feel very proud of themselves for their fantastic results, both in terms of funds and awareness raised. There are now many people who wait for our book sale each year.

Road to Reading Another “Road to Reading” public event in September 2005 brought back some of our greatest supporters: Mayor Ann Mulvale; MPP Kevin Flynn; Oakville Beaver cartoonist Steve Nease; Arnie Stewart, adult learner and former OLC Board member; two Sheridan students; and several



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From the President ...continued

representatives of the Oakville Public Library. We continue to pursue the challenge of educating our community about the impact of low literacy skills on all of us. Supporters like those listed here help to strengthen our resolve and pride.

Training This year we trained 15 new tutors. Our Laubach training program assures us that all of our volunteer tutors have reached a standard that is recognized, not only nationwide, but worldwide. Laubach Literacy of Canada (LLC) is the largest Canadian network of adult literacy programs that provide instruction through trained volunteers. LLC certifies our tutors when they have satisfactorily completed their training.

This year Joanne Smith-Scozzafava has volunteered to be an Assistant Laubach Trainer. I will continue to be a trainer for OLC with Joanne by my side. As in the past, we train cooperatively with The Literacy Council of Burlington. Victoria Crouchman, from the Burlington council, is an Assistant Laubach Trainer and a member of our training team. Both Joanne and Victoria will be fully certified Laubach literacy trainers in the not-too-distant future. This is a strong (and getting stronger) training team.

Trillium Foundation Our Trillium grant project was completed during the past year. Our promotional materials are beautiful and certainly have raised awareness of who we are and what we do in Oakville. This project was spearheaded by Elizabeth Avery, and, along with Elizabeth, developed and refined by Karen Majerly and Val Sanna of Ignition Design + Communications. Our brochure was written by Gloria Hildebrandt of Orchard House Communications.

Joyce Savoline In November 2005, the Council was thrilled to have Halton Region Chair Joyce Savoline speak at our Annual General Meeting. She gave a wonderful speech, proving to us again that she truly understands and supports our work. We also want to thank Joyce once again for the \$3,500 donation she presented to us that evening. The funds were raised through her Chairman's Charity Golf Classic.

Here's what Joyce said that night about our volunteer tutors: "I recognize that the Oakville Literacy Council is dependent on the time and talents of volunteers...ours is a caring community and we need look no farther than this room to see evidence of that, by those who volunteer to give the gift of language to those not versed in these skills."

We thank Joyce and wish her all the best.

Literacy Action Day This was another event that highlighted our community support. On Literacy Action Day, literacy organizations call upon all MPs to support literacy. Having created the largest postcard in the province addressed to MP Bonnie Brown, we were once again supported by the Oakville Public Library. The Central Library provided space so that we could invite members of the community to join us



Having a latte for literacy

Left to right: Joyce Pacaba, volunteer tutor; Eleanor James, Oakville Public Library CEO; Florica, OLC learner; Joanne Smith-Scozzafava, Tutor-Student Coordinator; Irena Qureshi, volunteer tutor; Karen Majerly, Office Administrator; Kathryn Palmer, Oakville Public Library Development; Joyce Savoline, Halton Region Chair.

for a postcard signing. Two of our local authors, Alison Baird and Vicki Delany, attended, as well as library Board President Maria Robinson and others.

Lattes for Literacy In January 2006 a group represented OLC on Lattes for Literacy Day at Starbucks Coffee. Halton Region Chair Joyce Savoline donned an apron and served up lattes for the cause. On that day, Starbucks donates the entire proceeds of latte sales to national literacy organizations in Canada. Oakville Public Library staff joined in for a latte to show their support as well.

Partnerships Our partnership with United Way of Oakville (UWO) continues to be our most significant source of funds. We also receive a great deal of support and encouragement from UWO through consultations, workshops and agency meetings. They have always given us confidence that we have an important service to provide and that we can grow in our community.

Our partnership with the Oakville Public Library continues to be the most significant supporter of our mission. They are our biggest in-kind donor, with space, resources, encouragement, promotion, joint events and projects, and general support in all ways, in every library, and in the community at large.

The Literacy Council of Burlington is a prized partner in our efforts to educate the public and to deliver service to those who need us. They too have always offered encouragement and counselling. We share many resources and interests and a mutual admiration for the good work done in our councils.

Learners And finally, our adult literacy students are the reason we get up in the morning! They inspire us with their courage and commitment and we continue to wish them much success!

From the Treasurer

Another challenging year, but a surplus in the end

by Bernie Martenson

We expected this past year to be a challenge financially but we made it through with a very small surplus. Revenues were very close to the planned level with expenses below budget, leaving the Council in a net positive position.

There were some key highlights over the year: another strong year for the Used Book Sale with a 20% increase in net revenue; expenses coming in below budget; additional funds from United Way to invest in office furniture; and another increase in membership. On a disappointing note, United Way froze all grants for the 2005-2006 year at the prior year's level and other fundraising was below budget.

Last year, in 2004-2005, we received a grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation for \$18,500 to fund promotional materials. We have now completed this project and can proudly display our redesigned stationery with new logo, as well as new marketing materials, including a brochure and wonderful signage that ensures we are visible at outreach events.

Our single biggest expense remains our two contract staff positions – Office Administrator and Tutor-Student Coordinator. Our dedicated staff allow us to accomplish so much each year by ensuring we have a smooth operation.

In the fall of 2006, we will submit our United Way grant application with a request for increased funding, as they will again be accepting requests for additional resources. The United Way, along with the Oakville Public Library, are our largest sponsors.

We are optimistic about the United Way grant – it will support us in our goal to continue reaching the many learners who can use our services. But even with an increase in United Way funding, we are anticipating a challenging year, unless we are able to secure other significant sponsors or donors.

Again, we offer heartfelt thanks to our many supporters. Without you, we could not be as effective as we are today.

05-06 FACT The number of OLC members is on the rise. At the end of fiscal year 2004-2005, OLC had 49 members. At the end of 2005-2006, the number was 56.

From the Used Book Sale Committee

Lots of loonies add up to \$8,400!

by Gabrielle Garcia and Ann McCulloch, Co-chairs



The 2006 Oakville Literacy Council Used Book Sale was a resounding success.

Our small committee held three preliminary meetings, beginning in February, followed by collecting, sorting, setting up, and selling books. The work was rewarded by a successful 20% increase in revenue over 2005's sale – a total of \$8,400! This means we are able to buy the learning materials and support the staff necessary to run a top-notch program for our learners.

The Used Book Sale is OLC's biggest fundraiser. It is held for three days following the long weekend in May. Hopedale Mall has been a great supporter of our event, and this year was no exception. As well as donating their centre court space, and providing a storage room for our books, they gave us publicity through professionally designed signage and public address announcements.

The sale would not be a success without the support of volunteers, Board members, and staff. Of course, as our success grows, so does the need for more support. We would welcome some new faces to the organizing committee for the next book sale. We will meet four times, starting in January 2007, before the sale in May. If you would rather pitch in at the sale itself, mark your calendars and join the camaraderie next May!

Special thanks to our generous supporters

Volunteer tutors: Nearly 2,700 hours of lesson preparation, travel, and tutoring time!

Board members: Thank you for your time and dedication.

Liaison with Oakville Public Libraries: Margaret Gatt

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

Outreach/Fundraising Committee members: Scott D’Cunha, Elana King, Michael Klinck, Karen Majerly, Wendy Nunn, Maureen O’Keefe, Patricia Rogerson, Joanne Smith-Scozzafava

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

Other generous donors: Donald Jackson; Halton Region Chairman’s Golf Classic; Anell Francis Real Estate; Shiphope Ltd. (Hopedale Mall); Bank of Montreal Financial Group; United Way workplace donors from Toronto and Peel who asked that OLC receive their payroll donations; Barkley Design Print & Copy; Bradley Harvey, C.A.; Michael Klinck, Barrister & Solicitor; Communications at Work; Orchard House Communications; Signs Alive; Solvr Systems; Starbucks Coffee Canada; Panago Pizza; Ada’s Flowers; Dominion Hopedale Mall; Anita & David Katz; Mr. & Mrs. Roger Love; Bernie Martenson; Joyce Savoline; Kim McArthur; Constance Wrigley-Thomas, All in Order

From the Fundraising Committee

Searching for new sources of funds

by Michael Klinck, Chair

Although the OLC receives generous funding from the United Way of Oakville, it is still necessary for us to do other fundraising in order to support our operations. Aside from our United Way funding, the OLC’s biggest fundraiser is our annual Used Book Sale. OLC has also focused fundraising efforts this year on searching and applying for available grant monies and on OLC event sponsorships.

Regarding grant funds, we are very fortunate to be able to utilize the research and grant-writing skills of our Office Administrator, Karen Majerly. Karen has been able to identify a number of potential sources of grant funds that were previously unknown to OLC. This fiscal year, the OLC has applied for grant funds from Starbucks Coffee Company and from the

Community Foundation of Oakville (for a workplace and agency outreach project).

We have also made attempts to leverage our existing events and activities by including a sponsorship element whenever possible and appropriate. This year, for example, at the OLC Used Book Sale, businesses and individuals were invited to “buy a letter” in support of OLC. Donors had their names prominently displayed on the “letters” they had purchased.

We will continue to look for further sponsorship opportunities and as always, we will gratefully accept tax-deductible donations from businesses or individuals.

05-06 FACT Not including the Used Book Sale, donations to OLC totalled \$20,000 this year, including both cash donations and in-kind gifts of materials or services.

How can you help us?

Fundraising Bring the message of literacy to your school or workplace! Hold fundraising events to support OLC.

Donating The Oakville Literacy Council is a registered charity and will issue tax receipts for your generous gifts.

We are also a United Way agency, which makes donating easy! You can be a supporter of United Way through their payroll deduction program.

We appreciate any support you can give. Thank you!

From the Tutor-Student Coordinator

Dedicated tutors touched the lives of 52 learners

by Joanne Smith-Scozzafava

This has been an exciting and challenging time for me as I continue in my role as your Tutor-Student Coordinator and friend.

We have a fantastic group of tutors, and I would personally like to express my thanks to each and every one of you for your dedication and the happiness you bring to your students. Without you our learners would not accomplish their goals. You touched the lives of 52 adult learners this year, and have contributed a whopping 2,696 hours of your time – now that's "Getting With The Program!"

Maureen O'Keefe and I invited 14 potential tutors to an information session this spring. These meetings are an important element of creating awareness in the Oakville community, as they allow us the opportunity to share with potential tutors the mission and vision of OLC, and to give them an outline of what we do, how their skills can help, and empower them to decide if tutoring with OLC is a good fit for them.

We held two tutor training workshops this year and certified 15 new tutors – we welcome them to our Council. A Writing Workshop for tutors is scheduled for June 2006. This workshop will enhance the skills tutors require to assist learners with their writing concerns.

Congratulations to these tutors – Cathy Adams; Hilton Dinner; Caroline Glasbey; Maggi Lawson; Sue Lawson; Bernard O'Keefe, Mary-Jo Powell; Joyce Pacaba; Eve Rawlick; and Joanne Smith-Scozzafava; for receiving Senior Certification from Laubach Literacy of Canada in achieving 40 hours of tutoring time. Gabrielle Garcia received Advanced Certification for over 175 hours of

Mayor Ann Mulvale presents Brian, one of our learners, with his prize for placing in the top five in a province-wide story-writing contest. His tutor, Caroline Glasbey, far right, helped him reach his goal of reading aloud at church.



Volunteer appreciation night in April 2006 gave everyone a chance to meet and mingle. Above left: Raquel, student representative on the OLC Board (left), and her tutor Helen (centre) chat with Maureen O'Keefe, OLC President. Above right: Joanne Smith-Scozzafava, Tutor-Student Coordinator (left), presents Mary-Jo Powell with her Senior Tutor certificate for 40 hours of tutoring time.

tutoring time. We will award more certificates at our Annual General Meeting in November 2006. Congratulations to everyone.

In April, to coincide with National Volunteer Week, we held a volunteer appreciation event, which was well attended. We had awards, prizes, music, goodies, and refreshments. We also had a vibrant speaker give us hints and tips on "de-cluttering." *How many of us have followed through with any of the suggestions!* All in all it was a great way for tutors to mingle and meet each other.

In terms of learner news, during October 2005 Laubach Literacy Ontario held a writing contest. We are thrilled that three of our students, Raquel, Brian, and Anna submitted stories. Raquel's and Brian's stories placed in the top five. Congratulations to all three of them.

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From the Tutor-Student Coordinator ...continued

In June 2006, OLC will attend the Laubach Literacy Ontario Conference being held in Kitchener, Ontario. The conference provides a forum for meeting and talking with others in the literacy field. We have also attended a workshop about student recruitment, and participated in the “brown-bagger” networking group with the Centre for Skills and Development. These activities help us create awareness in the community.

On a personal note, I am now registered to begin training as a Laubach trainer – under the watchful eye of our own Maureen O’Keefe. I could not ask for a more experienced supervising trainer as my mentor.

We, the Oakville Literacy Council, are perceived as “The Best Kept Secret in Oakville.” We are slowly changing that perception. Thank you for your efforts.

**Everyone has the RIGHT to know
how to READ and WRITE.**

05-06 FACT The total number of hours volunteers spent on OLC activities this year was over 4,000.

Board of Directors 2005-2006

Maureen O’Keefe	Bernie Martenson
Wendy Nunn	Elizabeth Avery
Michael Klinck	Scott D’Cunha
Ann McCulloch	

Student representatives: Lorraine Mitchell,
Raquel Orlanzzini

OLC staff: Joanne Smith-Scozzafava, Tutor-Student
Coordinator; Karen Majerly, Office Administrator



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

A United Way Member Agency

Adult students enrolled in the Council’s program gain the skills and confidence to succeed at work, at school, at home, and in the community.

“Before I was in this program I didn’t know the difference between capital and small letters. Now I can write and I’m starting to spell. Before I didn’t read. Now I can read some newspapers and books.”
KL

“I like the one on one because it is easier and quieter. They make people feel safe. I always hated school.”
BB

And volunteer tutors are the backbone of OLC. They often arrive at OLC because they love to read – they stay because they find their tutoring experience so rewarding.

“My greatest success has been to see the significant progress my student has made – his enthusiasm and hard work to be successful and improve his ability to read and spell. It is a real pleasure for me to spend time with him.”
ER

From the Outreach Committee

Renewed focus on learner recruitment

by Trish Rogerson, Chair

This year has been challenging and exciting! As of January 2006 we had a new committee in place with new faces and new perspectives. There was a lot of information to absorb, and we focused on preparing ourselves for special events we had done in years past. We also reviewed the existing and possible literacy-related events, created a standard list of events we will take part in, and then streamlined and documented our event procedures.

We have just begun to focus on new initiatives, such as creating new partnerships and directly marketing ourselves to businesses and other non-profits.

I would like to thank all our committee members and event volunteers for their hard work. Our focus for the upcoming year is to further increase awareness of OLC and improve student recruitment. Anyone interested in helping out on our committee should contact the OLC office.