

Action Read

[learning + support + goals = possibilities!]

Annual Report 2017-2018



Board of Directors

Barbara Stefaniak
Bev Nuttall - Secretary
Cheryl Turner - Trainee
Don Young -Treasurer
John Dack
Joyce Allen
Judy Noonan
Michael Brodzikowski - Chair
Renee O'Drowsky
Shawn Knight

Staff

Brenda MacDonald - Family Literacy Coordinator
Don Peters - Computer Technician
Gabriel Smith - Group Learning Coordinator
(until 01 / 2018)
Jan Sherman - Literacy Facilitator
Joanne Morant - One-to-one Coordinator
Laine Hayles - Group Learning Coordinator
(starting 01 /2018)
Lynn Veronneau - Administrative Assistant
Lynda Lehman - Finance Manager
Mira Clarke - Executive Director



In Their Own Words...



"The Action Read Cashier Training Course gave me the skills and confidence to get my job."
> Cathy, former learner

"I've come a long way through all areas of my life by being part of Action Read. It's really built my confidence being here"
Tania, learner and volunteer <



"I'm blown away at how much my daughter retains from the program."
> Family literacy parent

“Let us remember: one book, one pen, one child and one teacher can change the world.” Malala Yousafzai

Dear Friend,

For anyone who struggles to read, write, or use a computer – surviving in society is not easy. We are called to use these skills every day – whether we’re navigating the ever-changing Guelph Transit schedule, struggling to help our teenagers with their math homework, or trying to complete an incident report at work.

New research shows that the struggle is real: in 2016, 19% of students were unsuccessful on their Grade 10 literacy test, and 13.5% of young people did not complete their high school education. Canadians with the lowest levels of literacy are more than twice as likely to be in poor health compared to Canadians with higher literacy skills. 46% of adults at the lowest literacy levels live in poverty.*

In the face of these challenges, Action Read’s inspiring community of learners, volunteers, staff and supporters are making real headway in reversing these statistics. Learners are making huge strides in improving their skills and transforming their lives. Not only that, learners are making new friends and building networks of support, are feeling more connected to their community, are more informed about opportunities, and perhaps most valuable of all, are finding a renewed confidence and sense of hope that many haven’t felt in a long time.



Marc and Celina
Photo Hamid Dywer



Lois and Kevin

In addition to our Early Start, our One-to-one Tutoring and our Small Group Learning Programs, this past year saw several exciting developments at Action Read.

Some examples include;

- Through Rotary Guelph Trillium support, we became an approved Northstar Digital Literacy Certificate site, which allows our learners to obtain valuable skills and credentials for employment
- Launch of the popular volunteer-led Book Club, which included visits by five local authors
- Expanded family literacy programs to HOPE House and Immigrant Services
- Offered computer classes at the Shelldale Centre
- Held a well-attended Meet-the-Candidates Meeting for the provincial election
- Organized a six-part workshop series on various diversity issues from 'Music as Medicine', to slam poetry, to mental health advocacy
- Upgraded our computers at the centre, which opens up a world of online programming possibilities...



Christine and Joanne

We are incredibly grateful to our loyal and generous funders including the Ontario Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development; The United Way of Guelph, Wellington, Dufferin; The City of Guelph; The Guelph Community Foundation; Rotary Trillium and to over 100 individual and corporate donors. We are also indebted to 116 dedicated volunteers who diligently steer Action Read, by way of the Board, and who compassionately touch lives through their support every day. Without our volunteers, Action Read would truly be lost!

Finally, huge thanks to the amazing Action Read staff who are so creative, talented and committed. They are the glue that hold together the many moving parts of Action Read.

I hope you'll enjoy catching up on our work. Please drop me a note at action1@on.aibn.com, if you'd like to get more involved ...or if you just have a good book to recommend!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mira Clarke".

Mira Clarke, Executive Director



Mary-Ellen and Laine



Gabe and learners

Adult Program

Each year, Action Read sets targets in the areas of customer service, suitability, progress and learners served. In 2017-2018 we largely met our performance targets.

We met or exceeded targets in the areas of customer service, whereby 100% of learners we interviewed after they left the program were satisfied with the service they received and would recommend the program to others.

We exceeded our suitability targets, which means that we are delivering the program to the right individuals, such as those who have been out of school for at least 6 years, or those who self-identify as having a disability.

Our learners also made great progress, which is demonstrated by the successful achievement of milestone or culminating tasks. We served 174 learners, which is 96% of our 181 target.

The breakdown of learner goals for the program were varied, and have implications for the programs we offer and the resources we bring into the centre. Goal breakdown is as follows:

- 51% employment or apprenticeship (e.g. getting a job, retaining a job, advancing in a job etc.)
- 7% secondary school (e.g. high school)
- 10% further education or training (e.g. college or other training program)
- 32% independence (e.g. personal growth, managing a household, budgeting, communicating with others etc.)



Gary Diggins Music as Medicine Workshop



Noah Irving Getting your Voice Heard Workshop

Spotlight On The Diversity Action Project

The goal of this Guelph Community Foundation funded project was to celebrate diversity, and to create a comfortable and inspiring context in which to share ideas and experiences around issues of identity, culture, and abilities. Through a series of workshops new learning partnerships, new community connections and a sense of belonging were built. Project Coordinator Dawn Matheson identified the need to approach each workshop through a “kind and compassionate” lens, setting a positive and non-judgmental tone to the project. The project brought energy, enthusiasm and excitement into the centre around topics of diversity, inclusion, mental health and more. One workshop participant stated in her evaluation that she liked “...all the poetry, the interaction, laughter, relaxed atmosphere, the fun. It’s something new I have never done before.”

Family Program

“This program fills an important gap. I had a difficult time finding a literacy based program for my 4 year old child to socialize with children her age.

I love this program!” Parent

Action Read's Early Start Family Literacy Program is essential to our literacy and numeracy mission. Research clearly shows that a parent or primary caregiver is a child's first and most important teacher. Between birth and age 6, children learn essential skills that lay the foundation for later success in school and lifelong learning generally. We know that there are many simple free or low-cost things that parents can do to build literacy and numeracy skills in day-to-day life. And we are confident that we are successful, as shown in the following 2017-2018 participant results:

- 92% report that their child is more interested in letters, stories, word play and rhymes as a result of the program
- 92% would recommend the program to others
- 100% have seen an improvement in their child's emergent literacy and numeracy skills as a result of the program

Furthermore, parents are learners too. Through the program they not only improve their ability to support early literacy, they also learn about opportunities in the community to enhance and to further develop their own skills.

We believe that our program is essential to the development of healthy and resilient children in a literate society, and to creating a healthy community where everyone belongs.



Children and parents of the Family Literacy Program

Awards

Doris Middleton Award

Doris was a long-time member of Action Read who was greatly loved and respected for her keen sense of humour, her clarity of thought and insight, and her devotion to her family and friends. Doris was an Action Read “hero” for her outstanding desire to learn and grow, and for conquering personal dragons - all the while maintaining a positive attitude towards herself and others.

This award is presented each year in recognition of an individual who embodies the values of personal growth, inner strength, support of others, a sense of humour and an overall desire to learn. This year two learners are equally deserving of this award.

Lisa Dee

Lisa’s goal has always been to get her GED (General Education Diploma). She began her learning in 2013 at Action Read. Lisa faced many barriers at that time and was unable to continue. She never stopped wanting to achieve her goal. Lisa rejoined our GED group 2 years ago.

As well as the many successes Lisa has had in working towards her goal, she has become a great advocate for Action Read. She openly talks about her life and learning experiences with our community partners, and admits that one of her long-term goals is to become a one to one tutor! Lisa is the GED group’s ‘Welcome Committee’ as she explains to new members that, “This is a safe place to learn and it’s okay to make mistakes”. She is always willing to help out others with a kind and encouraging word.



Lisa Dee



Lana Dietrich

Lana Dietrich

Inspired by her friend Lisa, Lana joined the GED group last year. Lana’s goal is to get her GED and to find a job that she would enjoy. As a parent of four, Lana also wants to set an example of how important education is to achieving goals.

Lana continues to make great progress with her learning and has encouraged other friends to “just come in and see what it’s all about. They are really friendly here and I love how much I am learning to do things I couldn’t before”. Lana’s enthusiasm for learning is contagious which is demonstrated when she participates in speaking about her experience at Action Read. With her new skills, Lana extends help to others in the GED group.

Lisa and Lana are always humble, kind, focused and hardworking. They are valuable members of our community, and excellent role models to others. We are proud of the progress you have made at Action Read Lisa and Lana, and grateful for your generous contributions.

Betty Bean-Kennedy Volunteer Award

Bev Nuttall

This award was inspired by Betty Bean-Kennedy - a passionate and tireless volunteer and supporter of literacy.

Anyone who knows anything about Action Read knows how incredible our volunteers are. Bev Nuttall is one such volunteer! Bev began tutoring at Action Read in 2013 - in addition to a ton of other volunteer work that she does in the community. Bev not only has the knowledge and experience working with adults, she also understands the day to day barriers and challenges that our learners have and how it can affect their learning.

Bev has worked with a number of learners over the past five years. Her current learner describes her experience with her as follows; "Bev is very caring, supportive and easy to get along with. She is quiet spoken, which I like. She is helping me improve my reading, spelling and grammar. My comprehension has really improved and so has my spelling. Bev is very encouraging and is always willing to help."

Three years ago Bev joined our Board of Directors and has held different positions on it from secretary, to signor, to special project committee member. She has also helped as a fundraising event organizer and volunteer. We can't say enough about how much we appreciate all the time Bev devotes to our organization and particularly to our learners.

The Action Read Community Award

The Guelph and District Labour Council

The Council's mission is to defend workers around our regions, and to support the values of fair wages, safety in the workplace, social justice, environmental protection and the rights of workers. They stand with all those in our community facing injustice and struggling for a better world.

For years, the council has been incredibly supportive of the work of Action Read. They have sponsored our For the Love of Words (FLOW) event since the beginning. They have come out to our community celebrations and fundraisers, quietly supporting the work we do with financial and moral support. It is not just that they support us: it is how they support us. When asked to support the event this year, they respond with encouraging words like "we will be honoured to support this event once again". They offer valuable feedback and words of appreciation to the work we do.

We are so grateful to Terry O'Connor, Janice Folk-Dawson and the entire Council for their tremendous generosity of spirit, and for the important work they do in the community.



Bev helping out at FLOW



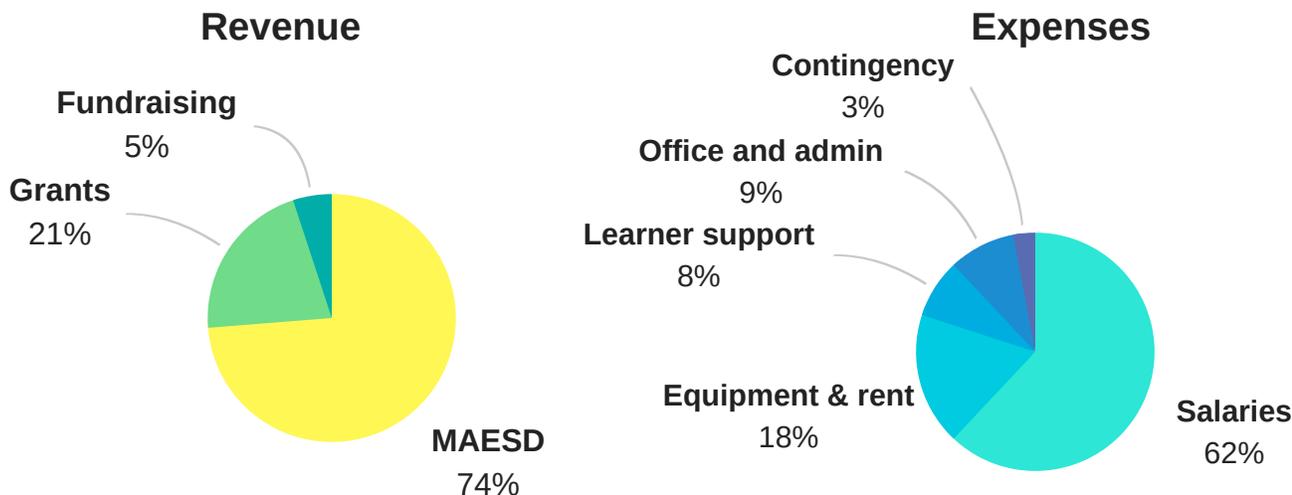
Lynn and Terry at our 'Coming From the Heart' Workshop

Financial Statement 2017-2018

Year ended March 31, 2018

	2018	2017
opening balance, beginning of year	1,595	1,529
Revenue		
Government Grants (MAESD*)	266,866	173,480
Grants (United Way, Rotary, City of Guelph, etc)	77,803	81,933
Fundraising	18,437	19,646
Total	363,106	275,059
Expenses		
Salaries and Benefits	226,486	178,281
Equipment	38,105	1,984
Rent	28,800	33,870
Learner and Tutor Support	28,141	22,611
Office	12,063	10,158
Materials and resources	5,049	4,194
Advertising and promo	3,896	8,109
Professional fees	3,106	2,702
Telephone	2,742	3,839
Insurance	2,736	2,798
Memberships	2,289	1,238
Garlic Press	1,299	249
unspent TSA (returned to MAESD)	0	471
Contingency fund	10,000	4,489
Total	364,712	274,993
closing balance, year end	-11	1,595

This statement is a summary of the income and net assets statements as they appear in the audit provided by Curtis-Villar Chartered Accountants. Copies of the full audit are available on request.



* Ontario Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development

Donor Honour Roll

Action Read would like to thank the many wonderful individuals, families, foundations and companies who provided financial and in-kind support in 2017-2018.



39 Carden St. Bistro	Guelph Little Theatre	Peter Mansbridge
4imprint	Guelph Music	Play with Clay
Air U trampoline Park Guelph	Guelph Storm Hockey Club	Renee O'Drowsky
Acqua Hair Salon	James Clarke	RBC Royal Bank Citizens
The Albion Hotel	Jane Tuer	Engagement Program
Amy Baskin	Janet Woods	Rotary Club of Guelph Trillium
Ann Middleton	Janus Books	Royal City Nursery
Atmosphere café & etc.	Jean Higgins	Sip Club
Barbara Chance	Jeff Guitard	Stephen Aspinall
Ben Barclay	Jeremy Luke Hill	Stone Store Natural Foods
Blooms + Flora	Joanne and Warren Hamilton	Sweet Violets
Borealis Grille and Bar	Joanne Morant	Tambro Construction
Buns Master	Joyce Allen	The Albion Hotel
Canadian Scholars	Karen Richards	The Bloom Room Floral
Chaplin Renovation & Construction	Knar Jewellery	Company
Costco	La Luma Salon & Academy	The Bookshelf
David Atkinson	Liz Morant Graphic Design	The Estate of Henry Wiseman
David Middleton and family	Loretta Wilke	The Flour Barrel
David Wilke	Lynda Lehman	The Guelph Grotto Indoor
Delta Hotel Guelph	Marilyn Clarke	Climbing Gym
Dorothy Fisher	Mastermind Toys	The Keg
Element Print & Copy	McNeil Consumer Healthcare-	The Retired Teachers of
Emily Quinton	Women's Leadership Initiative and	Wellington District 31
Enid Fanning	2017 McNeil Guelph Credo Award	The Woolwich Arrow Pub
Exitus Escape Rooms Inc.	Mijijidaa Café + Bistro	The Works Gourmet Burger
Ghost Walk of Guelph	Mira Clarke	Bistro
Grey Rock Clothing	Moores	Thu Phan
Guelph and District Labour Council	Nancy Stevens	Thyme to Cook
Guelph Air Park Café	Nancy Swinehart	Valeriot Market
Guelph Curling Club	Nancy and John Bligh	United Way Greater Toronto
Guelph Grotto Indoor Climbing	Orangetheory Fitness	Vocamus Press
Gym	Paul Baker	Wellington Brewery
	Persephone's Wardrobe	WriteDesign

Announcing the 'Action Read Community Literacy Centre of Guelph Fund'

In 2017-2018, an anonymous donor generously created the "Action Read Community Literacy Centre of Guelph Fund" held at The Guelph Community Foundation. Every year the original gift will generate interest and income that will be given back to Action Read, FOREVER!

Last year was Action Read's 30th Anniversary, and our fund currently has a balance of more than \$30,000 dollars! Anybody can give to the "Action Read Community Literacy Centre of Guelph Fund" and no gift is too small. To donate to the fund, please visit the Guelph Community Foundation's website at www.guelphcf.ca, and click on the secure 'Donate' link.

Action Read

COMMUNITY LITERACY CENTRE



The Book Club welcomes author Deborah Ellis (third from left), 2018



Ontario

Canada

This Employment Ontario program is funded in part by the government of Canada and the government of Ontario and through the Canada-Ontario Job Fund Agreement.



United Way
Guelph Wellington
Dufferin

