

# Action Read

Stronger Together



Annual Report 2018-2019





# Stronger Together

## Thoughts on Learning

Community based learning organizations like Action Read recognize that life and learning can be complex and tough, at times overwhelming. Overcoming challenges requires not only new skills, but deep reserves of strength, courage and wisdom, and a community which supports their development. Action Read is built on a vision of learning that involves;

- Bridging goals and interests between people and organizations
- Staff, volunteers and learners working as equal partners
- Meeting with people who have similar challenges and goals
- Participating in social events and group learning activities
- Giving and receiving help and encouragement
- Opening yourself up to inspiration and creativity
- Creating a place where everyone is welcome, and everyone belongs

Learning in any true community takes kindness, empathy, self-awareness, generosity, forgiveness, gentleness, patience, compromise - in a word compassion. These qualities are observed each and every day at Action Read. It's what makes learning life-changing and powerful. It's what makes Action Read so special.

Compassion is the glue that connects us. There is no question; we are stronger together.



Mira Clarke, Executive Director



Staff, learners and volunteers at our 2019 'For the Love of Words' fundraiser

## Adult Programs at a Glance...

Open 2243 hours  
in 2018-2019

266 adults  
served in  
programs or  
assessments

715 books  
borrowed from  
the lending  
library

120 volunteers  
donated 9500  
hours of their time

48 community  
presentations  
given to 558  
people

19 workshops to  
over 200 people

Over 95%  
learners  
satisfied at exit

378 digital literacy  
assessments  
completed



Cashier Training Course, June 2018

92% literacy  
and numeracy  
improvement

124 children  
served



85% gained new  
ideas and  
strategies to try  
at home

## Family Program at a Glance...

71% report  
improvements in  
children's social  
skills

92% made  
valuable  
friendships



330 hours of  
programming  
provided



# Stronger Together Means...

## Trust

Last year over 70 tutor learner partners worked together - refining goals, checking out learning resources, exploring new vocabulary, reading together out loud and discussing passages from books and articles. Some of our tutors are learning how to teach for the first time. Many of our learners haven't picked up a book or pen for many years. Getting to know and trust each other, and figuring out what works and what doesn't is all part of the process.

## Volunteers

Action Read volunteers are an inspiration! They give their time freely to teach others, help out in groups, answer phones and greet people, steer committees and boards, tidy the centre and do any manner of odd job that staff don't have time to complete. Action Read is so grateful for the kindness that we witness every day from volunteers. Without them, Action Read would be a very different place. Respect and high praise to our incredible volunteers!



## Fun!

Small group learning - book club, indigenous writing group, art therapy group, reading and writing group, math club and more - are not only amazing opportunities to learn from each other, they are also one heck of a good time! And let's not forget the special workshops and events such as the picnic and holiday party that build a sense of inclusion and belonging. These social opportunities are always looked forward to and well attended.



Clockwise from top left - Onike and Hazel; Paul helping out with a cooking class; Colleen and Mel; playing bingo at Math Club; Felting Group

# Stronger Together Means...

## Collaboration

Success for Action Read is defined by learners meeting their goals, experiencing greater independence and accessing opportunities in the community. Thus working with the community is essential to our work. Knowing what employment services exist, where to find basic need supports, and the latest and most effective programs and resources used by other literacy organizations serves the full range of learner needs and goals.

In 2018-2019 Action Read developed learning materials with other organizations, coordinated with staff at employment and training organizations, and participated in community planning tables such as the Literacy Service Planning Committee and the Employment and Training Committee. Partners included Lutherwood, Public Health, HOPE House, People Information Network, Project Read, Second Chance, Conestoga College, the Guelph Neighbourhood Coalition, to name just a few. Action Read reviewed curriculum or responded to questions about our own programs from service providers in Kingston, Cambridge, Owen Sound and Calgary AB and more.

## Family Literacy

The expression 'it takes a village to raise a child' is certainly true if our Early Start Family Literacy Program is any indication. This past year attendance was full at all but one of our five sites, and over 150 families participated. Families got to know each other and built communities of friendship and support. Children improved their literacy and numeracy skills, and learned social skills such as how to share and participate in a group and how to get along with others. These are the skills that young children need to successfully transition to school. Our family literacy program is often children's first structured learning experience, and one that many remember fondly for the rest of their lives! From our evaluations, we are confident that this program is a hugely positive first learning experience for children, which is so important for lifelong learning.



Painting at the Children's Art Factory; Brenda leading songs and word play at circle; Amelia reading stories

# Awards

## The Doris Middleton Award

This award was inspired by a member of Action Read who was greatly loved and respected by everyone who knew her, and who inspired others to learn. 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.

### Grace A.

Facing many personal barriers as a single parent, Grace came to Action Read to prepare for Academic Upgrading at Conestoga College before starting the Personal Support Worker program. With her hard work, Grace completed her upgrading and enrolled in her course. English is not Grace's first language and while successfully completing all the required course material she still needed to pass the English exam. Grace did not give up! She came back to Action Read and worked with Trisha to reach her goals. Trisha recently stated that "Grace always has an unwavering positive attitude, and her presence never fails to brighten up the spirits of those around her. Grace's commitment to her education is inspiring, and her ability to balance family responsibilities and student life is incredibly admirable. I am very fortunate to have met and worked with Grace."



Grace A.

This year Grace graduated from Conestoga College as a Personal Support Worker! Below is a little about Grace's journey, in her own words.

*"My name is Grace. I am a learner at Action Read. Action Read is said to be a place where adults with basic reading and writing skill gaps get help. I say "Action Read has more than just that."*

*I was a high school student in my home country. I came to Canada with my very basic reading and writing skills. After 10 years of residency in Canada without touching a book or a pen to write, life had made me to become like someone who had never held a pen to write even my own name before.*

*Coming to Action Read has not just restored my ability to read and write, but also re-define me as the person who I am. Staff at Action Read have the ability to see the potential in their learners, listen to their learners patiently, make their learners feel heard, connected and accepted. They give us a sense of belonging and hope to let that little voice inside say, "Hey Grace, if somebody else can believe in you – you can do it!!"*

*I strongly believe that was what made me get to where I am now. Don't get me wrong. I am not saying that I have already crossed the bridge, I am still thousands of miles away. But that smallest turn I made with the help of Action Read is enough for me to take it from here and go ahead. I love Action Read."*

## The Betty Bean-Kennedy Volunteer Award

Betty Bean-Kennedy was a passionate, creative and highly dedicated volunteer and supporter of literacy. This year we recognize two volunteers who demonstrate such qualities.

A few years ago Action Read received a donation of books. Our summer student facilitated a book club for learners with this donation. The group enjoyed reading and learning together. The Action Read Book Club was born! In order to continue offering this experience, we approached two volunteers to lead the book club.

**Kris Sturgeon** came to Action Read in 2016 with the hope of combining her experience in reception and as a reading tutor. Starting out as a front desk volunteer, Kris was also matched with a learner working on her numeracy skills. Kris has great energy and wonderful ideas. We asked if she would be interested in another volunteer opportunity. Along with her other volunteer responsibilities – front desk and tutoring, Kris immediately responded with a hearty 'yes!' to helping out with the book club.



The Book Club meets author Linda Wilson. Kris is third from left, Mary Ann is third from right.

### Mary Ann Riley

New to Guelph, Mary Ann's previous tutoring experience brought her to Action Read in 2017. Her experience in providing life skills training for adults with mental health challenges and physical disabilities in Toronto has been an asset to our organization. Mary Ann believes in life long learning and enjoys escaping into authors' imagination and fictional tales. Along with her one to one tutoring time, Mary Ann graciously agreed to help co-facilitate the book club.

Mary Ann and Kris create many different interactive activities including learning new vocabulary, activities around the theme of the book and much, much more. Thanks to Mary Ann and Kris's work and dedication, the Action Read book club is now in its third year.

## The Shirley Almack Award

### Courtney Townsend

Each year we honour a learner in the memory of Shirley Almack, a creative and dedicated learner leader.

Over the last 3 years, Courtney has demonstrated many leadership qualities. She came to Action Read with a goal of improving her skills for employment. Her love of reading & writing led her to joining Jan's creative writing group and the book club.



Courtney Townsend

Courtney is a poet and with the help of her tutor, self-published her first book of poetry. As her confidence grew, Courtney was willing to step out of her comfort zone. She volunteered to tell her story on many occasions for the United Way campaigns and most recently performed at the Action Read fundraiser 'For the Love of Words'. Ever the creative soul, she also created gorgeous original artwork to donate for this event!

Courtney is always setting an example for others at Action Read by lending a helping hand to others – getting coffee or helping another put on their coat. Last year Courtney joined our Board of Directors! Here she regularly shares valuable observations and insights.

## The Action Read Community Award - Vocamus Writers Community

This award is given to an individual or business that has demonstrated exceptional commitment to advancing our work. This year we recognize Vocamus Writers Community, established by Jeremy Luke Hill.



Jeremy Luke Hill

Vocamus's vision is to create a reading and writing community in Guelph. Luke has been a passionate and unshakable support to Action Read for years. He's performed, helped plan and volunteered at our annual poetry event since 2014. He has supply taught on short notice for the GED group many occasions. Through his Vocamus and Gordon Hill Press enterprises, he's made several financial contributions to Action Read. He even makes Action Read the charitable partner at his annual Book Bash event.

Furthermore, Luke has done much to support a reading and writing culture in Guelph. He runs ongoing writing groups and workshops in the community and in schools. Together with the library Luke oversees the writing and publication of the Etch Anthology – a writing and mentoring opportunity for kids from grades 7 to 12.

There are few community partners who demonstrate the depth of understanding and support of our work than Jeremy Luke Hill of Vocamus Writers Community. Thank you for everything you do Luke – you are a community treasure!

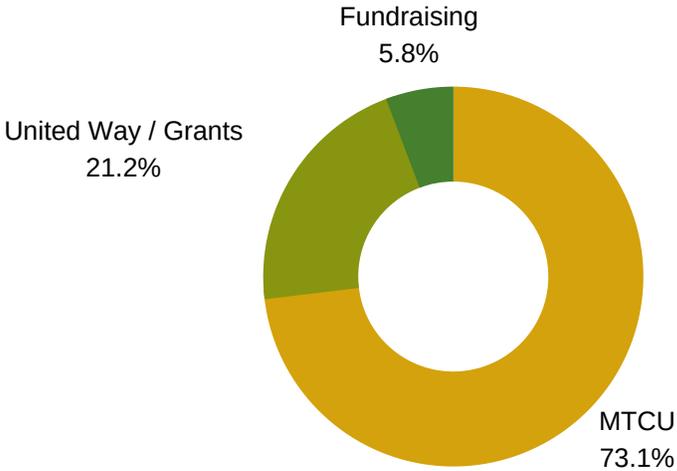
# Financial Statement 2018-2019

Year ended March 31, 2019

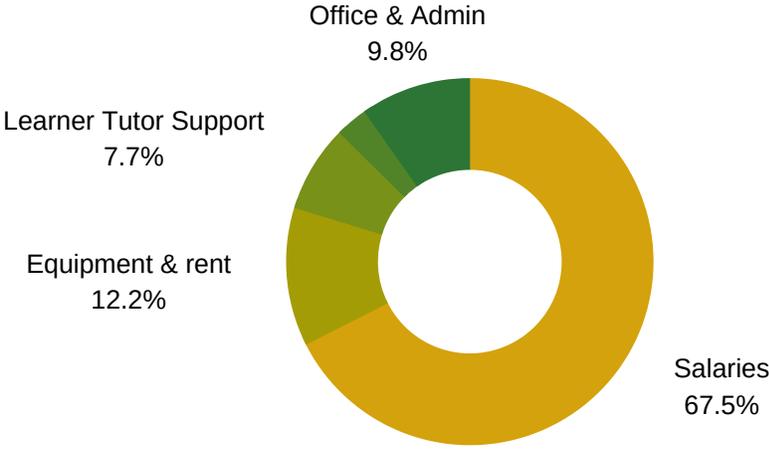
	<b>2019</b>	<b>2018</b>
opening balance, beginning of year	-11	1,595
<b>Revenue</b>		
Government Grants (MTCU*)	258,230	266,866
Grants (United Way, Rotary, City of Guelph, etc)	74,745	77,803
Fundraising	20,316	18,437
<b>Total</b>	<b>353,291</b>	<b>363,106</b>
<b>Expenses</b>		
Salaries and Benefits	237,435	226,486
Equipment	13,303	38,105
Rent	29,669	28,800
Learner and Tutor Support	26,947	28,141
Office	14,839	12,063
Materials and resources	5,196	5,046
Advertising and promo	3,225	3,896
Professional fees	3,010	3,106
Telephone	2,585	2,742
Insurance	2,989	2,736
Memberships	1,521	2,289
Books and subscriptions	955	1,299
Unspent TSA* (returned to MTCU)	0	0
Contingency fund	10,000	10,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>351,647</b>	<b>364,712</b>
closing balance, year end	1606	-11

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.

### Revenue



### Expenses



\* MTCU - Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities \*TSA -Training Support Allowance

# Financial Support

Action Read would like to thank the many wonderful individuals, families, foundations and companies who provided financial and in-kind support in 2018-2019.

39 Carden St. Bistro	Gordon Hill Press	Nancy Stevens
Action Read Community Fund	Grey Rock Clothing	Nancy Swinehart
Acqua Hair Salon	Guelph & District Labour Council	Nichola Martin and Art Kilgour
Ann Middleton	Guelph Music	Orangetheory Fitness
Anonymous	Guelph Storm Hockey Club	Persephone's Wardrobe
Arrive Yoga/ Jacqueline Gilbey & Ken Hood	James Clarke	Pilar Hernandez
Atmosphere café & etc.	Jan Sherman	Quick Chicken Pickup
Ballroom Class/ Michelle Ariss	Janet Wood	Randy Sutherland
Barbara Chance	Janus Books/ Kieran and Brenda Dunn	RBC-Citizens Engagement Program
Basilica of Our Lady Guelph	Jay T. Schramek	Renee O'Drowsky
Blooms + Flora/ Robyn Scott	Jeff Guitard	Robin Bergart
Borealis Grille and Bar	Jerome Schramek	Sandra Phair
Canadian	Jeremy Luke Hill	Sharon Nancekivell
Scholars/ Andrew Wayne	Joanne Morant	Sip Club
Cathy Quinton	Joyce Allen	Snap'd Guelph
Chaplin Renovation & Construction	Julie Horrocks	Stephen Aspinall
Chi Liu	Kathy McLean	Sweet Violets
Christian and Trish Boos	Knar Jewellery	Tambro Construction
Colin Chaplin	Liz Morant	The Albion Hotel
Community Literacy of Ontario	Lynda Lehman	The Bookshelf
Cynthia Macleod	Malcolm MacKenzie	The Family of Doris Middleton
David Middleton	Marian Thorpe	The Guelph Grotto Indoor Climbing Gym
Deb Ellis	Marilyn Clarke	The Retired Teachers of Wellington District 31
Dorothy M. Fisher	Martha Hirst	United Way Waterloo Region Communities
Atkinson Wood Designs/ David Atkinson	Marva Wisdom	United Way Greater Toronto
Emily Quinton	Mel Stronach	Vocamus Writers Community
EMM Graphic Design/ Liz Morant	McNeil Employees / Brenda Bergart	Wellington Brewery
Erena Moffat	Mijidaa café + bistro	Wellington Country Market
Fantescapes Escape Rooms	Millenium Clothing Co.	Wild Rose Consignment Clothing
Glen McMillan	Mira Clarke	WriteDesign
	Nancy Bligh	

## **The 'Action Read Community Literacy Centre of Guelph Fund'**

A few years ago an anonymous donor generously created this fund through The Guelph Community Foundation. By December 31st, 2018, the fund grew from \$30,370 to \$49,095, an increase of almost 62% after expenses! This increase was entirely the result of donations. Interest earned on the fund will generate income that will be given back to Action Read in the future.

**Donations made directly to Action Read, to CanadaHelps or to the "Action Read Community Literacy Centre of Guelph Fund" are tremendously appreciated. Thank you for your support!**



## Board of Directors

Leah Sadler - Board Chair  
Cindy Garland - Treasurer  
James Gray - Secretary  
John Dack  
Joyce Allen  
Colleen Harper  
Cheryl Turner - Trainee  
Paul Mesman  
Jeff Guitard  
Vanessa Morton  
Courtney Townsend

## Staff

Brenda MacDonald - Family Literacy Coordinator  
Don Peters - Computer Technician  
Jan Sherman - Literacy Facilitator  
Joanne Morant - One-to-one Coordinator  
Adam Gonsalves - Group Learning Coordinator  
Lynn Veronneau - Administrative Assistant  
Lynda Lehman - Finance Manager  
Mira Clarke - Executive Director  
Hazel Bernez - Computer Facilitator  
Paul Hannigan - University Student Placement





Celebrating Family Literacy Day at the Children's Art Factory, January 2019 | Photo Courtesy of Snapd Guelph and Carla Victoria Buela



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

