



Action Read
Community Literacy Centre



creating roots for learning

Annual Report 2022-2023



a year of new growth

Letter from the Director

Have you ever wanted to learn something that other people find easy, but which for you is challenging and scary? Perhaps it's playing the piano, or figuring out an exercise regime that you enjoy and can stick to. Perhaps it's learning how to cook in order to improve your health and buy fewer ready-made foods.

Creating change as an adult can be hard. We have our routines, habits and workarounds. Believing you "can" is the essential first step. That is what makes the accomplishments of our learners this year so inspiring. For example:

- In two and a half years with the help of my tutor, I have been reading books and sending emails. Before I had not opened a book in my life.
- After I sustained a concussion, I could barely read. Now, I can and I'm so grateful.
- I am now so enthusiastic to apply for new positions. I feel encouraged to try new opportunities.
- After completing the Safe Food Handling course, I have more skills and knowledge, and I apply my learning every day in my job.
- Coming to Action Read greatly improved my ability to read, which improved all aspects of my life.

Sometimes in life there are periods where our fields lie fallow, and our soils are given the opportunity to rest, restore and revive. Other times our fields are ready for planting, which we do with careful planning and optimism for the future.

2022-2023 was a period of planting, growth and rejuvenation for Action Read. The learning centre was vibrant and buzzing once again. We launched new programs. We continued to offer remote learning programs. The Early Start Family Literacy Program returned to in-person delivery, and attendance was strong. Action Read met or exceeded all its performance targets.

A huge thank you to the many people who made it happen... our devoted and engaged Board of Directors who quietly work behind the scenes to ensure the organization functions properly, our incredible staff and volunteers, our generous funders and supporters, and our learners who bring grace, curiosity and persistence to their learning. They show us what it means to know ourselves in a deeper way, and to build strength through adversity.

Sincerely,
Mira Clarke
Executive Director



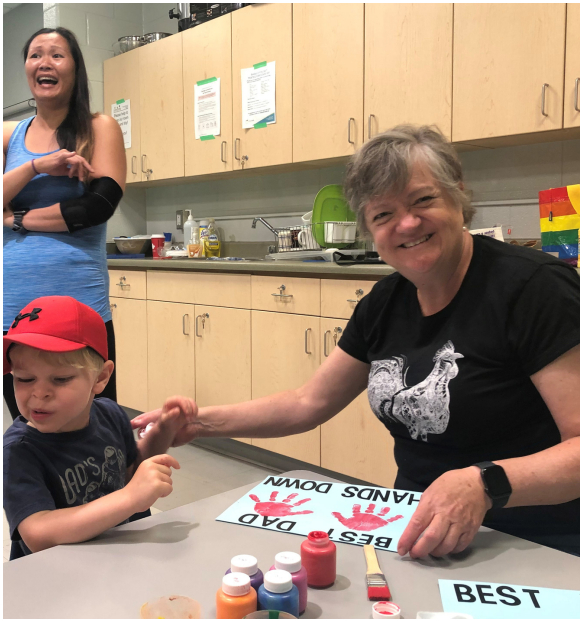
Action Read Board of Directors l-r Kimm Khagram, Paul Mesmen, Jeff Guitard, Junnivi Dedoroy, Marsha Wallace, Denise Hollingsworth, James Gray. Missing: Colleen Harper and Paul Carter

highlights

Family Literacy Program

107 children served
50 families served
366 hours of programming provided

"I absolutely love this program. It's helped foster my child's love of learning with the weekly themed activities, crafts and toys. They always include the alphabet activities, counting numbers and great books that the kids enjoy."



Adult Programs

187 adults served
162 group learning participants

Breakdown of Learner Goals:

72% Employment
20% Independence
5% Postsecondary
2% Apprenticeship
1% Secondary School Credit

Most Popular Learning Groups:

24% Northstar Digital Literacy
16% Safe Food Handling
15% Receptionist Training
12% GED Preparation Course
10% Smart Serve

Outcomes at Exit:

96% customer satisfaction
95% would recommend Action Read to others

"I have learned a lot of new things by taking this course. It was a great pleasure meeting everyone. We all worked well together."



Top to bottom: Family Literacy Program, Safe Food Handling Program and Tutor-Learner Pair Robert and Trisha

our mission



Action Read is dedicated to changing the lives of adults and families through improved literacy, numeracy, computer and other essential skills.

Action Read changes lives by:

→ Creating a Supportive Learning Space

- Ensuring that our programs are **welcoming to all**, regardless of race, religion, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age or ability.
- Supporting **mentorship** and tailored learning through our one-to-one tutoring program.
- Conducting intake interviews and learning assessments, and **helping learners set goals**.
- Building on **learner strengths** and meeting them where they are at.
- Having a variety of opening hours. Recognizing that people's lives are complex and sometimes the schedule needs to change. **Working at the learner's pace**.
- Creating a sense of **connection and belonging** through groups, workshops and tutoring.

In 2022-2023 Action Read:

- Delivered 1342 hours of one to one tutoring.
- Supported 48 learner pairs.
- Completed 131 learning assessments.

Example of 'Coming from the Heart Group' session
"We read 'Gentle Goals for a New Year'. Each learner chose 3 goals that they responded to most strongly. We discussed how setting the intention to reach these goals would change the pathway of their life. Goals included being less stressed/more peaceful, feeling more balanced, focusing on the positive and building a stronger relationship with ourselves. We created a list of descriptors for how this could change how we feel and behave, which included eager, curious, grateful, persistent, focused, valued, and accepted."



Jan Sherman, Facilitator

Action Read changes lives by:

➔ Building Community Connections

- Fostering **relationships** with the people we serve. Creating a space where they feel comfortable to approach staff and volunteers.
- **Providing referrals, community information** and **learning opportunities** that link adults and families to the supports they need.
- **Sharing information** about community programs and services with learners.
- Participating on planning tables and training to **stay current** on trends, plan for change, and advocate for the needs of learners.
- Encouraging **relationships between neighbours** by locating our Family Literacy Program throughout the community.

In 2022-2023 Action Read:

- Coordinated referrals for 140 adults.
- Delivered programs to Ontario Works; the County of Wellington; the Upper Grand District School Board; HOPE House; The Arab Women's Society of Guelph; Three Guelph Neighbourhood Groups; Project READ; Community Living; Second Chance and the Guelph Community Health Centre.
- Participated in Guelph Wellington Employment Training Committees; the Waterloo-Wellington Literacy Service Planning Committee; the Guelph Multicultural Festival; Capacity Canada's "Creative Day for Social Good".
- Did outreach and advocacy to the 'Getting Ahead' program; the "All that Kids Can Be" Coalition; the Guelph Wellington Digital Equity Committee; Rotary Trillium.



Staff of the 'All That Kids Can Be' Service Network

Action Read changes lives by:

➔ Providing Practical Programming

- Targeting our programs to **local labour market needs**.
- Partnering with others to offer **certificates** in safe food handling, Smart Serve and WHMIS.
- Offering a wide range of **digital literacy skill building** opportunities.
- Offering **soft skill training** to work on competencies identified by employers as important such as work ethic, communication, dependability, self-direction, teamwork and interpersonal skills.
- Offering **instruction and resources** to meet the needs of learners with independence, apprenticeship or further education goals.

In 2022-2023 Action Read:

- 72% of our adult learners had employment goals. We provided 820 hours of ongoing learning groups, and 300 hours of modular training for 15 employment sectors with high vacancy rates. These include material handler, retail worker, customer service, food worker, receptionist, call center and more.
- Provided 46 learners with 432 hours of computer instruction through our Northstar Digital Literacy and Microsoft Certificate programs.
- Offered GED Preparation groups to 19 learners seeking high school equivalency certificates. Made referrals to Continuing Education to support learners for whom a high school diploma is a better fit.



Craig, Amol and Crystal, Leg Up to Retail Program

“Sometimes my job can be stressful, but I often think about the things I learned in the Retail course at Action Read. Ask questions about the other person first, get to know them, listen to what they say, be polite, work as a team. I’m so happy I took that course.” Maria

Action Read changes lives by:

➔ Offering Diverse Supports

- Offering **in-person instruction, remote and blended learning.**
- Providing a **variety of learning materials**, online resources, and certificate opportunities
- Encouraging **flexibility and choice.** If a learner isn't finding a learning strategy or resource effective, we offer another. If the way of explaining a math problem isn't effective, we try a different approach.
- Offering **laptops and Chromebooks** to take home, digital tech support, bus and childcare support and more.

Action Read changes lives by:

➔ Engaging the Community

Volunteers play a critical role in our work and help keep our programs cost-effective. Our incredible volunteers deliver literacy, math and computer instruction, support the development of self direction and self management skills in learners, and provide a listening and supportive ear. Volunteers touch lives every day. **We couldn't do our work without them!**

Similarly, Action Read is **financially supported** by countless generous individuals, donors, foundations and government organizations. These funders provide the stable foundation from which our work grows and flourishes.



Book donations from The Retired Teachers of Ontario, Wellington District 31

Awards

Doris Middleton Award to Bruno Sengmany

Doris was a member of Action Read who was loved and respected for her outstanding desire to learn, and who overcome challenges with dignity and humour.



Bruno's outstanding desire for learning brought him to Action Read many years ago. He is working in the one to one program as well as attending several groups like safe food handling, landscape maintenance and recently the janitorial program.

Bruno's learning didn't stop with Action Read. He is enrolled in the LBS programs at the Upper Grand District School Board and the Learning Hub E-Channel.

Despite facing some personal challenges, Bruno's positive and respectful attitude, his great listening skills and polite manner is something we admire and appreciate. His kindness and tireless learning spirit inspires us all! Congratulations Bruno, we wish you every success.

The Betty Bean Kennedy Award for Outstanding Literacy Volunteer to Carol Brazil

This award was inspired by a passionate and tireless literacy volunteer.

Carol began tutoring at Action Read in 2012. She taught Elementary School for 35 years and brought an abundance of experience, knowledge and skill to our one to one tutoring program.



Over the years, Carol has worked with several learners who struggled with basic reading, writing and computer use. She understands the challenges that learners faced each day, and works diligently and creatively to help them improve their skills.

Carol creates a warm and safe learning environment that results in the success of those she works with each week. Carol has been a huge asset to the Action Read community over the years. We truly appreciate her time and commitment to the organization and the learners she serves.



Awards



The Shirley Almack Award to Shari Avison

Shari joined our cashier training program in 2020. Since then she has taken many courses including computers, call centre training, Smart Serve, safe food handling, Rent Smart, receptionist training, creative writing group, book club, and participated in Project Read's Skills for Success assessment project.

Shari is the first person to welcome new learners to the centre - get them a coffee or tea and show them the sign-in book. She is always the first to engage in group discussions which leads others to join in. She freely contributes ideas on how to make Action Read a better place, and readily shares community information and resources she comes across. Her enthusiastic and warm personality is appreciated by everyone. Shari is a natural leader and a friend to many.

The Action Read Community Award to Don Peters

Don came to Action Read in the year 2000 as a much needed computer tech volunteer. Since that time, he has gone above and beyond in maintaining a safe and smooth functioning computer network at Action Read. Don has been a worthy and valiant protector of Action Read's computers, proactively planning for problems and change, and keeping the "bad guys" away!

Don is always generous with his time. He is patient and responsive to questions and concerns. His steadfast support and tremendous expertise allowed our staff and learners to work with confidence and success over the years. We always knew Don "had our back". Action Read's digital literacy programs are crucial for individuals with no computer knowledge living in a technologically driven world. Don has been the technological backbone to our work. We are eternally grateful for his many contributions, and wish him all the best in the future.





Financial Statement 2022-2023

Year ended March 31, 2023

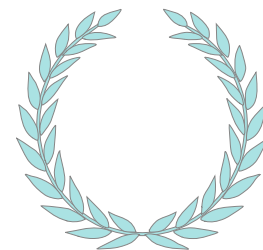
	2023	2022
Opening balance, beginning of year	1,744	4,188
Revenue		
Government Grants (MLTSD)	255,230	255,230
Other Grants (United Way, Rotary, City of Guelph)	64,451	80,484
Fundraising	17,285	23,112
CEBA Loan Forgiveness	0	10,000
Total	336,966	368,826
Expenses		
Salaries and Benefits	235,015	256,774
Rent	35,400	34,320
Learner and Tutor Support	15,539	16,853
Office	9,342	7,378
Materials and Resources	4,547	7,079
Professional Fees	4,134	3,136
Telephone	4,049	3,997
Insurance	3,556	3,409
Hospitality	1,973	150
Travel	1,665	703
Equipment	1,122	2,771
Memberships	808	210
Books and Subscriptions	695	819
Advertising and Promotions	669	706
Organizational Development	214	0
Office Renovations	0	12,965
Contingency	20,000	20,000
Total	338,728	371,270
Closing balance, year end	-18	1,744

This statement is a summary of the Income and Net Assets Statements as they appear in the Financial Statements provided by Curtis-Villar Chartered Accountants. Copies of these Financial Statements are available upon request



Donors

Heartfelt thanks to our donors.



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Upper Grand District School Board
Victor Davis Memorial Court

Thanks also to donors of the **Action Read Community Literacy Centre of Guelph Fund** held at the **Guelph Community Foundation**. Anyone can make a donation to this fund and no gift is too small. To donate, please visit the Guelph Community Foundation's website at www.guelphcf.ca, and click on the secure 'Donate' link.

Special thank to Community Literacy of Ontario for their research paper "Supporting LBS Learners Facing Multiple Barriers". Their work inspired this report. Check them out at www.communityliteracyofontario.ca.

Thom and Raju



WITH GRATITUDE TO OUR BOARD AND STAFF

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Brenda MacDonald, *Family Literacy*
Don Peters, *Computer Support*
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