

# ACTION READ

Community Literacy Centre



**Learn. Grow. Connect.**

Annual Report 2025-2026

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# Letter from the Director



## Mira Clarke

When people hear the word literacy, they usually think of reading and writing. While those skills remain at the heart of our work, Action Read learners remind us that literacy is also about confidence, opportunity and connection. It is about participating more fully in work and everyday life through improved reading, writing, math and digital literacy skills.

Every learner who comes to Action Read brings unique goals, strengths and challenges. In feedback this year, learners spoke about feeling welcomed, supported, and encouraged. One learner shared that Action Read helped her succeed after struggling in school for years. Another gained the skills to use a computer in his job for the first time. Others improved communication, problem-solving, workplace skills, and employment readiness.

Alongside learner successes, Action Read continued to grow and adapt. This year, the provincial Literacy and Basic Skills program was rebranded as Get SET (Skills, Education and Training), and we launched a major IT modernization project to strengthen technology, enhance data security, and improve organizational efficiency.

Our work is made possible through strong leadership and community support. We are grateful to our Board of Directors for their guidance, care and integrity. We extend special thanks to Paul Carter, Denise Hollingsworth, and Bruno Sengmany as they conclude their Board service.

Action Read is also made stronger by our amazing and talented staff, and our dedicated volunteers, funders, donors, and community partners. Thank you for helping create opportunities for people to learn, grow, and move forward with confidence. Together, we are strengthening our community in the most organic of ways.

As you read through this report, you will find statistics, program highlights, and financial information. Behind every number is a person whose life has been changed through learning; who has gained confidence, developed new skills, built meaningful connections, and discovered new possibilities.

I truly believe that Action Read provides a blueprint for building a more compassionate and capable society. I am so proud to be part of it!



**Action Read is a great resource for anyone seeking support with increasing their literacy as well as their employability. It is a warm and welcoming space with many wonderful resources. I am very grateful for the support.**

– Juanita





# Adult Program

## SNAPSHOT OF TRAINING

Through small group learning and one-on-one tutoring, Action Read provides practical, job-focused training and recognized credentials. Our programs help learners gain the confidence, knowledge and skills they need to reach their goals.

**13**

GROUP TRAINING PROGRAMS DELIVERED

**68**

CERTIFICATES AWARDED

**41**

TUTORING PAIRS SUPPORTED



**47**

FOOD HANDLER CERTIFICATES

**15**

SMART SERVE CERTIFICATES

**6**

WHMIS CERTIFICATES AWARDED

## ADDITIONAL TRAINING OFFERED



CUSTOMER SERVICE



CASHIER TRAINING



RECEPTIONIST TRAINING



FINANCIAL LITERACY



CAEC<sup>1</sup> PREPERATION

<sup>1</sup> Canadian Adult Education Credential



# Digital Literacy

Through ongoing groups and special workshops, Action Read helps adults gain the skills and confidence to safely and effectively use their computers and devices. Our work with the Guelph Wellington Digital Equity Coalition keeps us connected with other programs and opportunities in order to better serve learners.

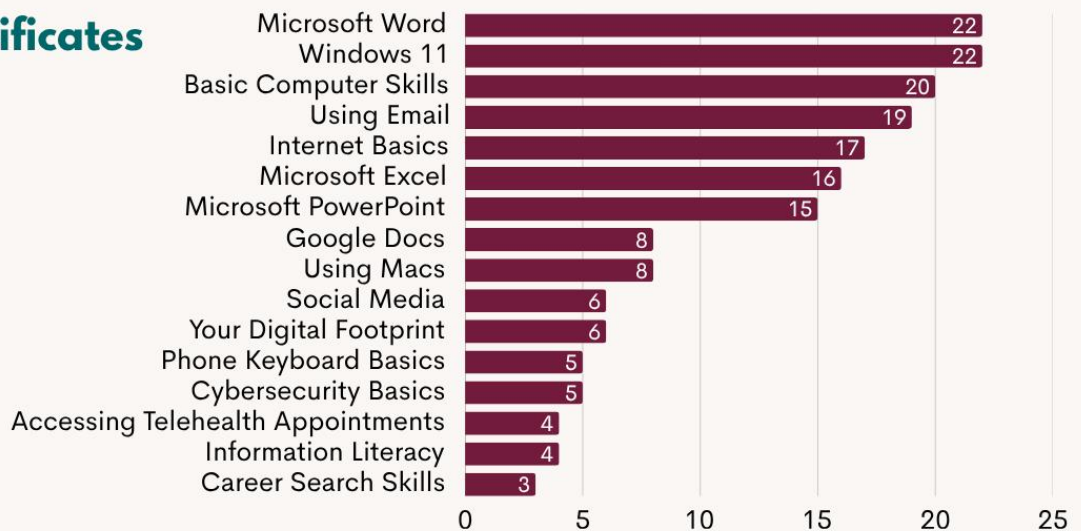
## Digital security workshops

- Safe online shopping
- Using the internet safely
- Using email safely
- Dealing with spam
- Privacy and security habits and settings
- Detecting false information & fake news

## Northstar digital literacy groups

Total certificates awarded: **180**

## Module certificates earned





# Early Start Family Literacy

## PEOPLE SERVED AND IMPACT

### PEOPLE SERVED



**80**

children



**37**

families



**43%**

of adults are  
parents or  
grandparents



**57%**

of adults are  
professional  
caregivers

### TIME IN PROGRAM



**20%**

new in  
2025-2026



**60%**

joined in  
2024-2025



**20%**

joined in  
2023 or before

### IMPACT OF PROGRAM



**360**

hours of programming  
provided



**100%**

of children are more  
confident in social settings



**93%**

of children experienced  
social skill improvements



**93%**

of adults rate their children's  
enjoyment as "very high"



**80%**

of adults rate their children's  
literacy and numeracy skills as  
having "significantly improved"



**80%**

have used ideas from  
the program at home



**100%**

of program evaluation  
respondents would  
recommend the program  
to others



# Our Volunteers

2025-2026

Our volunteers are at the heart of everything we do.

Thank you for making a difference!



Brandi-Lee and Sheila

# 72

## TOTAL ACTION READ VOLUNTEERS

2025-2026

### BREAKDOWN

# 46

#### VOLUNTEER TUTORS AND GROUP LEADERS

One on one tutoring; group facilitation, computer instruction

# 7

#### FRONT DESK VOLUNTEERS

Answering phones, helping people, administration support

# 10

#### BOARD MEMBERS

Organizational governance, planning and oversight

# 9

#### MISCELLANEOUS VOLUNTEERS

Photographer, musicians, holiday party crafts and more



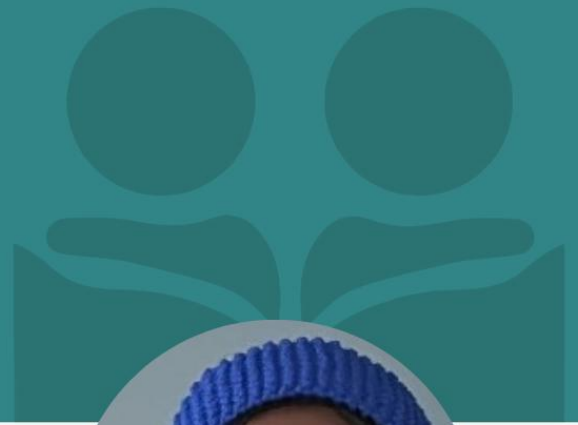
**My tutor was amazing, very helpful and encouraging. Helped me reach my goal and taught me very useful learning strategies.** - Lyle





*Clockwise from top right: Learners and staff at Action Read; Parkwood Gardens Early Start site; Tutor-learner pair Colleen and Jacques; Cashier Training course participants; Making friends at Action Read; Family Literacy Day celebration at the Children's Art Factory*

# Awards



## **Doris Middleton Award to Beatrice Jakoyo**

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.

It is with great pleasure that we present this year's award to Beatrice, celebrating her remarkable spirit of perseverance and personal growth. We can think of no one who embodies these qualities more fully.

Since joining Action Read in October 2025, Beatrice has been an inspiration. Arriving from Kenya, she gratefully embraced every opportunity with an insatiable hunger for learning. Despite the profound challenge of being separated from her family, she possesses a rare resilience; each time life has knocked her down, she has risen with renewed grit and a grace that even finds room for humour.

Her hard work has culminated in her acceptance into a Personal Support Worker program, a vital stepping stone toward her goal of reuniting with her family. Beatrice, your future is incredibly bright. We are honoured to recognize your journey and cannot wait to see you thrive in your new career.

## **The Betty Bean Kennedy Award for Outstanding Literacy Volunteer to Lonny Howard**

It is a profound honour to present Lonny with The Betty Bean Kennedy Award for Outstanding Literacy Volunteer. Inspired by a tireless advocate, this award finds its perfect recipient in someone who embodies that same spirit of selfless service.





Since September 2023, Lonny has been an invaluable presence at our centre. His effectiveness is rooted in a lifetime of dedication; with over 20 years as a probation officer, he developed a rare capacity for empathy. He possesses an exceptional ability to connect with learners, making them feel truly seen and heard.

Lonny is incredibly patient, insightful, and kind. Whether acting as mentor or educator, he approaches every interaction with a humble warmth that empowers others. His commitment to lifelong learning, seen in his dedication to Mandarin and the guitar perfectly mirrors the growth he fosters in his students. We are deeply grateful for his wisdom and unwavering contribution to our community.

## **The Shirley Almack Award for Leadership to Mason Struna**



Mason has made a lasting impact on Action Read through his leadership, volunteerism, and remarkable commitment to learning, helping others and community service.

Mason has participated in numerous programs, including Safe Food Handling, Smart Serve, Customer Service Training, and others, consistently demonstrating thoughtful engagement and a genuine desire to learn.

In group settings, Mason stands out for his willingness to initiate discussions, share new perspectives, and encourage others to participate. His instructor noted that groups were stronger and more engaged because of his presence. He leads by example, showing respect, curiosity, and sincerity in every interaction.

Mason has also stepped forward to become an active board member, contributing thoughtful insights and strengthening discussions by sharing his unique perspective and lived experience. Beyond this, he volunteers at the front desk, answering phones and supporting daily operations.

Whether in the classroom, the boardroom, or as a volunteer, Mason demonstrates leadership through service, participation, and kindness. We are happy to present the award to Mason!



## The Action Read Community Award to Hope House Guelph

We created this award to recognize organizations whose partnership, support, and commitment to the community make a meaningful difference to Action Read. **This year, we are proud to honour Hope House.**

Through the leadership and dedication of their Executive Director and Staff team, Hope House consistently demonstrates compassion, respect, and inclusivity. **Their work strengthens our community, and reflects values that closely align with those of Action Read.**

We are grateful for the strong partnership Hope House and Action Read have built together. In 2017 Hope House welcomed Action Read to set up our business in their building. Their team regularly promotes our programs, makes thoughtful referrals, and helps connect people to the literacy and numeracy services they need. Later, we partnered with them to conduct an organizational needs assessment, giving us a deeper understanding of their remarkable impact in the community.

Many learners have found their way to Action Read through Hope House's encouragement and support, helping more individuals and families access opportunities for learning and growth. Congratulations to Hope House, and thank you for the incredible work you do in strengthening our community.





# Financial Statement 2025-2026

## Year ended March 31, 2026

	2026	2025
Opening balance, beginning of year	3	3
<b>Revenue</b>		
Government Grants (MLITSD)	283,430	260,230
Other Grants (UW, Rotary, City of G, Proj READ)	47,870	27,856
Fundraising	35,194	52,597
<b>Total</b>	<b>366,494</b>	<b>340,683</b>
<b>Expenses</b>		
Salaries and Benefits	269,592	252,070
Rent	37,200	37,200
Equipment	23,611	179
Learner and Tutor Support	17,768	31,584
Office	6,785	10,075
Materials, Resources, Books	6,675	6,606
Professional Fees	6,217	6,217
Insurance	4,823	5,234
Telephone	4,537	4,384
Hospitality	3,177	3,495
Memberships	1,765	461
Books and Subscriptions	560	291
Travel	534	505
Advertising and Promotions	368	410
Organizational Development	339	248
To or from Contingency (+/-)	-17,454	-18,276
<b>Total</b>	<b>366,497</b>	<b>340,683</b>
Closing balance, year end	0	3

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

Literacy changes lives. It opens doors to employment, strengthens families, builds confidence, and creates opportunities for people to participate more fully in their communities.

**Heartfelt thanks to our generous donors.**

Agricorp c/o Stephen Case  
Andrea Martin & James Ball  
Ann Middleton  
Ann Wilkinson  
Anonymous  
Ava Chaplin  
Barb Hale  
Barbara Chance  
Beverly Green  
Canada Helps Literacy for  
All Fund  
Carin Headrick  
Carl and Peggy Nigro  
City of Guelph  
Colleen and Raymond Biffis  
Cristian Hernandez  
David Middleton  
Dawn Schwaderer  
Denise Hollingsworth  
Dorothy Fisher  
Gary and Irene Hearn  
Grange Road East  
Neighbourhood Group  
Greta DeLonghi  
Howard Kennedy  
Jane Tuer  
Janet Wood  
Jason Coffin

John Carere  
Kathy MacLean  
Keri Johnson  
Kirstin Rowley  
Kortright Hills  
Neighbourhood Group  
Lisa Stokman  
Marsha Wallace  
McGraw Hill  
Megan Butterill  
Melissa Cameron  
Michael Lohuis  
Michael and Sheila  
Noonan  
Nancy Baker  
Nancy Dingwall  
Nancy Stevens  
Nancy Swinehart  
Nigussie Gezmu  
Nichola Martin and Art  
Kilgour  
Parkwood Gardens  
Neighbourhood Group  
Paul Carter  
Paul Freudenthaler and  
Catherine Goddard  
Patricia Weiler  
Peter and Judy Lucas

Phil and Leah Sadler  
Rebecca McCreith  
Rebecca Shine  
Retired Teachers of Ontario /  
Entente Wellington  
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Peter and Tonny Bulionis  
Robert Tims  
Rosanne Luckevich  
Ross Ireland  
Rotary Club of Guelph  
Trillium  
Ryan Scott  
Sam at Wellington Country  
Marketplace  
Sarah Dermer  
Second Chance Employment  
Sleeman Centre  
Sue Cavanagh  
Sharon Nancekivell  
Stephen Aspinall  
Tom Kosir  
Tracey Smale  
Upper Grand District School  
Board  
Victor Davis Memorial Court  
Non-Profit Housing  
Wellington Country Market  
Place

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](http://www.guelphcf.ca), and click on the secure 'Donate' link.



Farida and Lili



**I feel a big difference learning new things. I got my confidence back and Action Read helped me do that. They were very supportive and helped me along the way. Action Read helps people to move on and get the skills we need.** - Lee Ann



## A Word about our Volunteers

The impact described in this report would not be possible without the remarkable volunteers who generously share their time, talents, skills, and energy with Action Read. Whether tutoring learners, facilitating groups, supporting administration, helping at special events, or contributing their unique expertise, our volunteers play an essential role in creating opportunities for learning and growth. On behalf of our learners, families, staff, and Board of Directors, thank you for your dedication, generosity, and commitment to strengthening literacy and lifelong learning in Guelph.



# Board and Staff

## BOARD

Bruno Sengmany  
 Denise Hollingsworth, *Secretary*  
 Jacques Mireault  
 Kimm Khagram, *Board Chair*  
 Mary Ann Riley  
 Mason Struna  
 Melissa Dale  
 Mena Sahak  
 Paul Carter, *Treasurer*  
 Phil Sadler

## STAFF

Brenda MacDonald, *Family Literacy*  
 Jan Sherman, *Literacy Facilitator*  
 Kirstin Duke, *Adult Programs*  
 Lynda Lehman, *Finance Manager*  
 Lynn Veronneau, *Admin Assistant*  
 Mira Clarke, *Executive Director*  
 Naomi Nwabuoku, *Program Assistant*  
 Thom Campbell, *Group Facilitator*



# Our Funders



**Special thanks to Greta Delonghi and Ava Chaplin for their help and expertise in creating this report.**



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