

Critical Thinking

OTF hosted a very successful two-day conference, *Thinking About Thinking: Developing Curriculum to Nurture Critically Thoughtful Learners* on November 27-28, 2009 in Toronto. This conference was held in partnership with The Critical Thinking Consortium and facilitated by Garfield Gini-Newman.

More than 190 teachers from all of OTF's Affiliates participated in this very exciting professional development activity. President Reno Melatti brought greetings on behalf of OTF. The purpose of the conference, and the whole project, is to support classroom teachers in their own professional learning. By providing teachers with effective strategies and a critical thinking framework, we help teachers improve their classroom practice.

Beyond the introductory two days, teachers will be able to participate in OTF's Critical Thinking program throughout the year. Each



Facilitator Garfield Gini-Newman addresses participants at the Thinking About Thinking Conference.

teacher will receive ongoing support. They will have the opportunity to collaborate through the use of wikis and to participate in online conferences presented by experts in the field of critical thinking.

The teachers themselves told us how much they appreciated this opportunity. Some comments on the evaluations tell the story...

"Overall, this has been a wonderful opportunity to collaborate, to network, to learn, to tweak already made lesson plans. Thank you for the opportunity!"

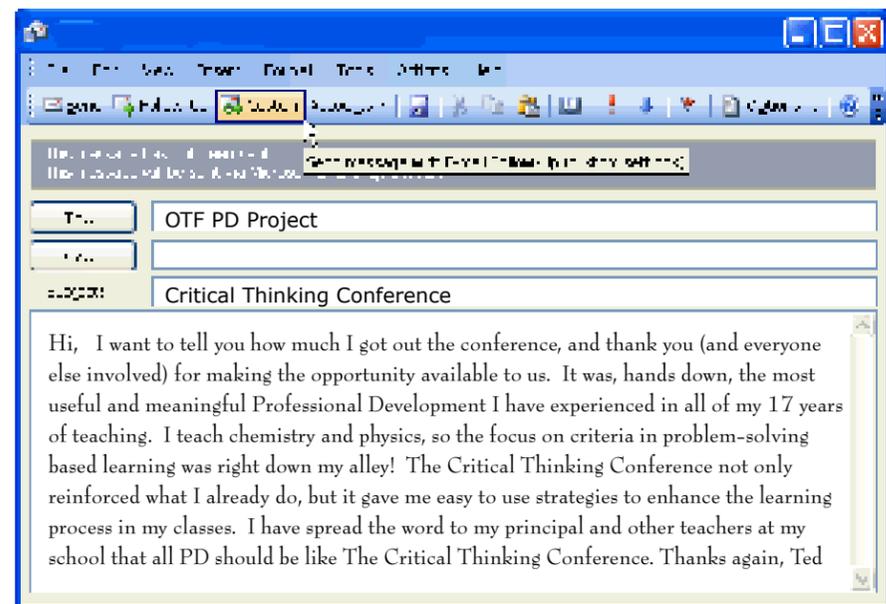
"Fabulous PD...ready to use ideas...gave me new information...gave me time to discuss with colleagues."

"Thinking about Thinking Conference gives clarity to the delivery of my topics within various subject areas."

"Excellent session. Provided new techniques that are directly applicable to the classroom. Great idea to have online sharing session."

"It was excellent! Super great hands-on ideas. I am ready for next week!"

We even heard by email afterwards...



Teachers Gathered to Share Work...



Two hundred and twenty-nine participants in the Teacher Learning and Leadership Program (TLLP) gathered at Sharing the Learning Summit on November 29-30 at the Delta Meadowvale Hotel in Mississauga. The Ontario Teachers' Federation and the Ministry of Education sponsored this unique and exciting opportunity for the individual teachers and teams from the first two cohorts of the TLLP to both share and display their work.

Teachers across the province, in this innovative professional learning program, engaged in action research projects in their schools and boards. Applications to the program were approved by a joint Ministry-OTF and Affiliate committee. The Summit showcased 118 projects, which began in 2008 and were completed in June 2009, demonstrating the success of the projects for students and teachers. President Reno Melatti brought greetings on behalf of OTF. Speakers included: The Honourable Kathleen Wynne, Minister of Education and Annie Kidder, Executive Director of People for Education. Dr. Lorna Earl provided insights into her research on the TLLP professional learning program; and Dr. Samantha Nutt, co-founder of War Child Canada spoke about how individuals can take an idea and make a difference in the lives of others. Participants also had the first public screening of "Taking the Lead", a DVD explaining the initiative and showcasing five representative projects.

In two "marketplace" settings teams had an opportunity to share their learning with interested colleagues. The marketplace was an opportunity for everyone to visit other TLLP participants' tables, ask questions, learn some details about the findings and experiences of others, and possibly see some samples of student or teacher work, communications or other materials. You can see a short video report of the Summit on the OTF website.

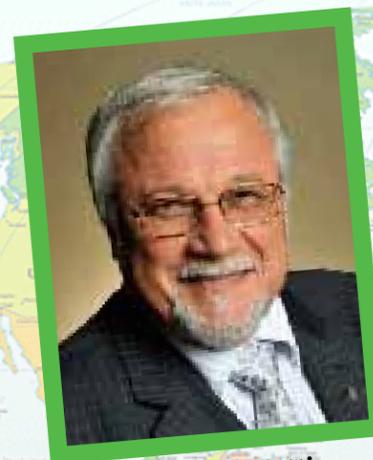
interaction



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A Message from the OTF President

As we come to the end of December, schools are very busy places. Winter concerts, report cards, holiday planning and dealing with early winter absences. This is also a time of year when we all think of those who are less fortunate.



Reno Melatti

Fellow Teachers,

Given the current economic situation, we don't have to look very far from home to see our friends and neighbours struggling. But beyond our borders, teachers and students face hardships we can only imagine. It takes so little to make a big difference in their lives and their education. This reality is the driving force behind OTF's International Assistance Program.

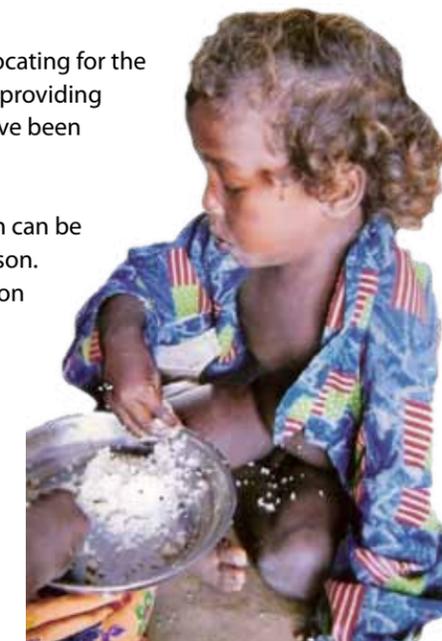
In this issue of *Interaction*, we are featuring OTF's work in *International Assistance*. Grants of just a few hundred dollars or less can build a school, develop a program that will encourage the education of girls or provide much needed school supplies. Our work in this area is not just a seasonal event, this very important work continues throughout the year. You can read more about OTF's International Assistance Program in the following pages.

We are also reporting to you on a very active fall for OTF. From reaching out to the public advocating for the profession and for publicly funded education, to honouring teachers for outstanding work, to providing amazing professional development activities of a wide variety, your Federation and its staff have been working hard on your behalf.

As the days continue to grow shorter and the temperatures drop, the excitement of the season can be felt everywhere. I would like to take the time to wish each of you the very best this festive season. It is time for family and my wish is that you spend time with yours, knowing that your Federation family will again, in the New Year, be working for the betterment of the profession and for publicly funded education.

Yours in education,

Reno Melatti



International Assistance

For more than 45 years, OTF has been active in the field of International Development. While our efforts are not on the same scale as CIDA or UNICEF, this undertaking is one where small efforts have large impacts. If we are feeling the sharpness of the economic situation here at home in Ontario, we can only imagine how the ripples move through communities that have so little to begin with. We can, however, make some judgments based on the fact that this year we received the highest number and most heart-wrenching requests in more than four decades.

The actual work is done by an OTF Committee. Each Affiliate nominates a representative to the committee and OTF staff supports their work. Lindy Amato, Director of Professional Affairs, has had this responsibility since she started at OTF over 15 years ago. Her assistant Margaret Cunningham is as familiar with the stories as any member of the Committee. This year's members are: Alphonse Yongoua, AEFO; Fatma Ibrahim, ETFO; Micheal Wozniak, OECTA; and Marianne Saade, OSSTF.

Last year, we received and processed 279 requests, and provided funding to 128 of these, spread across 20 developing countries. The hardest part of the Committee's work is deciding who will benefit from what, to us, is very small amounts of money. For example:

- \$380 to the Association for Poor People's Livelihood & Employment in Proddatur, Kadapa District, India, to support a day school for 35 children.
- \$650 to the Nomvume Junior Primary School in Alice, South Africa to construct four classrooms, a principal's office, staffroom and toilets.
- \$650 to the Great Knowledge Learning Center in Manila, Philippines, to provide educational supplies and school uniforms for 426 children.



Just imagine, for what we would pay for three months of high definition cablevision, 35 children can go to school for a year in Proddatur, India. Or with \$650 we can build a school in South Africa or buy a fancy mountain bike. The same amount can remove one of the greatest barriers to education for children living in poverty by buying them a school uniform.

The 2008-2009 report of the International Assistance Committee can be accessed on the OTF website. The report also outlines the Terms of Reference of the Committee.

The gratitude of those who use these funds to make education better for children around the world is overwhelming. You can see for yourself what you have accomplished through OTF's International Assistance on OTF's website.

Applications

Right now, OTF is receiving new applications for the current year. The needs are shaping up to be even greater than last year. But if you know of a worthy project, it is not too late to submit an application. The application form is also available on the OTF website.

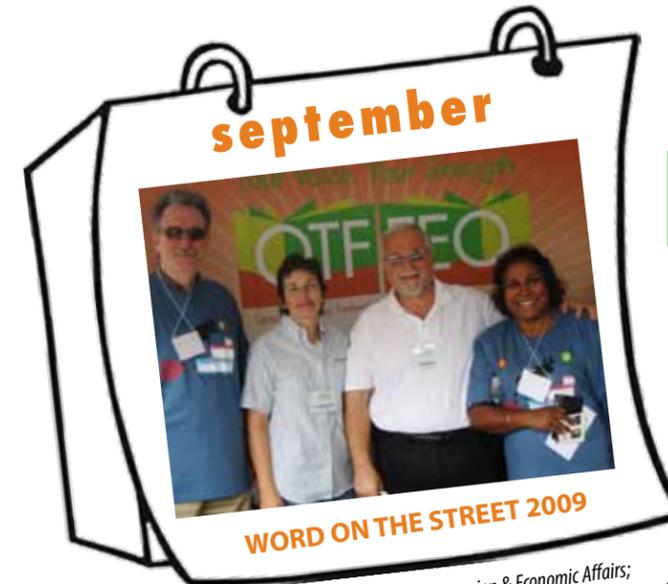


Advocacy

Every fall, OTF is very involved in several community-based activities showcasing teachers and teaching.

SEPTEMBER

On a sunny Sunday in late September, OTF was present at the **TORONTO WORD ON THE STREET BOOK AND MAGAZINE FESTIVAL** meeting teachers, parents and students.



L to R: Jeff Holmes, OTF Director, Pension & Economic Affairs; Rhonda Kimberley-Young, OTF Secretary-Treasurer, Reno Melatti, OTF President; and Marlene Colla, teacher, St. Barnabas Catholic School.

OCTOBER

October 5 is World Teachers' Day. This year, to mark the day, OTF held several events. On October 2, we held the Ceremony for the **2009 OTIP TEACHING AWARDS** at Enoch Turner Schoolhouse. On the same day, OTF, in partnership with the *Toronto Star*, published a Special Supplement in honour of World Teachers' Day.



L to R: Randy McGlynn, Chief Executive Officer, OTIP/RAEO; Cindee Karnick-Davison, Elementary Teacher Winner; Eyal Levine, Beginning Teacher Winner; Greg Rogers, Secondary Teacher Winner; and OTF President Reno Melatti.



L to R: Mike Cosentino, Maple Leaf Sports and the Toronto Marlies; Clare Wittmann, Kids' Help Phone; Past President George (Joe) Lamoureux; and OTF President Reno Melatti.

For the first time ever, we had **TEACHER APPRECIATION DAY WITH THE TORONTO MARLIES**. We had a family skate and special rate tickets. Teachers and World Teachers' Day were honoured throughout the hockey game. OTF is pleased to report that \$2,500 was raised from ticket sales and donated to Kids Help Phone.



L to R: Derek Martin, Smoke Dancer with the Lost Dancers of Six Nations and OTF President Reno Melatti.



EDUCATION DAYS, CANADIAN ABORIGINAL FESTIVAL 2009

For more than 15 years, OTF has been a supporter of the **EDUCATION DAYS AT THE CANADIAN ABORIGINAL FESTIVAL**. This year, it moved from the Rogers Centre in Toronto to Copps Coliseum in Hamilton.

L to R: Tory Benevers, Traditional Dancer with the Lost Dancers of Six Nations Reserve and OTF President Reno Melatti.