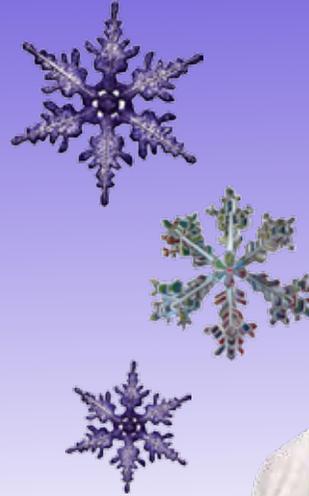


interaction



November 2011
Volume 14, No. 2

A Message from the OTF President



peace, joy and love of the season ... happiness in a world of peace

As I write this, the landscape is hastily preparing itself for winter; the most obvious is the trees saying good-bye for the long winter's sleep. But, despite the snow which may or may not cover the ground in your area, the cold, and the early darkness, we are entering a few weeks of light and warmth with families and friends as we celebrate the Christmas season.

As you also have probably experienced, the fall has passed quickly and busily. OTF's first major event was the **OTIP Teaching Awards** in late September, followed closely by **World Teachers' Day**, **Word on the Street** and the **Books of Life** conference in October. You will read more about these events in this issue.

And, of course, Ontario had the **provincial election** which ended with a minority government. OTF has worked with the Liberal Government over the past eight

years to bring publicly funded education in Ontario to being one of the best in the world. We hope that the Liberal Minority Government and the opposition parties will continue to improve our system.

As President, I have had a very positive talk with the new Minister of Education, Laurel Broten and look forward to working with Glen Murray, Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, concerning the faculties of education and the pre-service programs for the faculties.

A highlight this fall was the **Free The Children's We Day** in Toronto in September. This gathering of more than 18,000 youth as well as adults was an inspiration and impetus to play a role in local and global change. I was very impressed by the sense of togetherness and common purpose. We Day is a program of Free the Children, co-founded by Craig and Marc Kielburger. **We Day** and **Me to We**, a related program, have

much to offer to educators and young people. You can read more about them in this issue.

As has been the custom, OTF is not sending cards this year but is making a donation to the **North South Partnership for Children**, a union between philanthropic organizations, universities, and private citizens in southern Ontario and 30 remote First Nations communities in north-western Ontario. The objective is to find out what's needed and to provide pathways of hope for the young people.

Finally, but most importantly, I wish you, your family and friends all the **peace, joy and love of the season** and may your new year be one of **happiness in a world of peace**.

Francine LeBlanc-Label
OTF President

Excellence of teachers recognized

On September 29, 2011, three Ontario teachers received the **OTIP Teaching Awards** for excellence at Enoch Turner School in Toronto.

BRIAN ROBERTSON

Elementary Teacher Category
Land O' Lakes PS, Mountain Grove

ALISON MANN

Secondary Teacher Category
Parkdale Collegiate Institute, Toronto

ANNA FARAGO

Beginning Teacher Category
Weston Collegiate, Toronto

"These award winners are representative of the excellence of all Ontario's teachers," stated Francine LeBlanc-Lebel, OTF President, at the ceremony. "They ensure that students are receiving the education which will prepare them for the future."

The Ontario Teachers Insurance Plan (OTIP) sponsors these awards which are administered by the Ontario Teachers' Federation (OTF).



2011 WINNERS

L to R: **Brian Robertson**, Land O' Lakes PS, Mountain Grove; **Randy McGlynn**, OTIP CEO; **Alison Mann**, Parkdale Collegiate Institute, Toronto; and **Anna Farago**, Weston Collegiate, Toronto.



Now it's your turn!

Nominate a teacher for the 2012 OTIP Teaching Awards



Deadline for nominations is March 31, 2012.

The OTIP Teaching Awards are the chance for you to recognize a great teacher in your school.

those in their first five years of practice.

Nominations can be in any of three categories: **Elementary Teacher**, **Secondary Teacher** and **Beginning Teacher** for

Complete information about the rewards, the nomination process and the criteria for nominations is at www.teachingawards.ca.

Me to We... Social consciousness in our kids



We are always looking for ways to encourage kids to be more aware of social issues and to know that they can make a difference.

One organization which is going a long way in these areas is **Free The Children**. Founded by Craig and Marc Kielburger in 1995, what began as a dream in their very young minds has grown to an international organization. The focus is, and always has been, working to provide a quality education to children overseas and to empower young people at home.

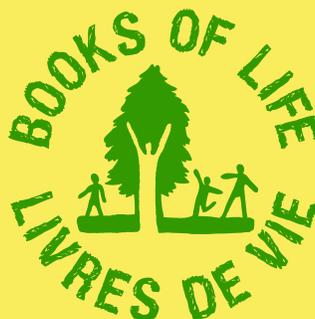
Last year, over 285,000 young people participated in various campaigns in Canada. **We Day**, for example, involved over 36,000 people in Vancouver, Toronto and Montreal.

What is a We Day? Thousands of young people come together to celebrate and to be inspired to work for global change. Speeches and performances by leaders, social activists, and entertainers fill those present with hope for a better world. The event is also webcast to involve millions of young viewers. Students really get into the We Day song and dance. But this is just the beginning. Students return to their schools eager to take the next step.

We Schools in Action gives students the tools to become more involved in their school and their community and in contributing globally. Free The Children provides all the resources a teacher might need for the classroom. All are free of charge: lesson plans, teaching tools, newsletters and social media. All activities and lesson plans are linked to the curriculum. The resources are only available in English but are in the process of being translated into French. Need a speaker? Free The Children will provide one.

Me to We sells socially conscious and environmentally friendly clothes, books and music. The goal is to transform consumers into socially conscious world changers.

Free The Children has all the supports available for these truly great programs. Check out www.freethechildren.com, www.metowe.com or www.weday.com.



Books of Life is an Aboriginal education awareness and literacy initiative of OTF, funded by the Aboriginal Education Office (AEO) of the Government of Ontario. The project promotes a greater understanding of First Nation, Métis and Inuit (FNMI) communities, so that teachers can confidently use FNMI themes, topics and perspectives in their teaching. **Frontier College** designed the training for the workshops.

Over the two days, teachers developed a personal book and story bundles—a practical exercise to assist with helping students create their books. Teachers were paired (or in some cases grouped) with another teacher who teaches the same or similar grades but, as far as possible, in different learning environments;

From October 23-25, over 90 participants attended a training program for the *Books of Life*.



L to R: Speakers Liz Haines, Story Planet and Jim Adams, Red Bear

for example, schools in the north with schools in the south.

These teachers will work with their students to create books about their lives—exploring who they are, what they value, what they celebrate, and how all of our lives are shaped by our cultural and historical contexts.

The final books that the class creates will be exchanged between the partner teachers in June 2012. Teachers will keep a copy of the original and OTF will receive a copy.

OTF will showcase the books at The Word on the Street book fair in Toronto in September 2012.

20
20th anniversary

Re-making history



Front, left to right: Marion Boyd, Minister of Education for the NDP Government in 1991, re-enacts the signing of the document creating the **Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan** on December 19, 1991.

Francine LeBlanc-Lebel, OTF President, takes the place of the late **Guill Archambault**, OTF President in 1991.

Back, left to right: Watching the re-enactment are those who were present in 1991: **Beverley Polowy**, FWTAO; **Horst Schweinbenz**, OECTA; **Jim Head**, OSSTF; **Ron Poste**, OPSTF and **David Aylsworth**, former OTF Pension Officer.

This agreement gave teachers an equal voice with the Government and has led to a dramatic increase in the value of the Pension Fund.

Enriching your professional life Join a subject or division association

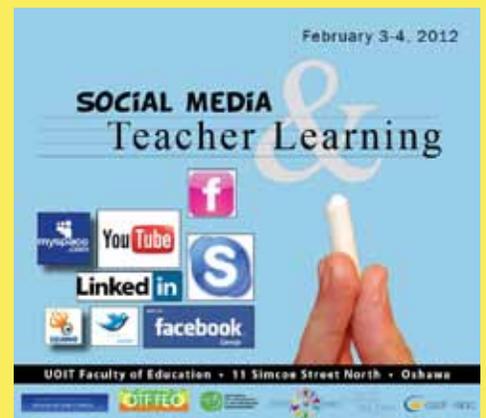
The **OTF Curriculum Forum** with representatives from 49 subject and division associations in Ontario has two associations representing elementary educators: the Consultants/Coordinators' Association of Primary Educators (CAPE) and the Ontario Association of Junior Educators (OAJE). Many elementary educators have become members of these associations and have joined other subject-specific ones for networking and sharing with colleagues.

Most subject-specific associations hold an annual conference, at which members participate in engaging workshops, listen to panel presentations and attend keynote addresses. The conferences are an excellent venue for networking, sharing resources and meeting others with similar interests.

The Forum itself meets three times per year. This school year, Forum members will participate in professional learning on a variety of educational topics including

- an interactive workshop on Critical Thinking/Critical Inquiry,
- children's mental health,
- the OSTA-AECO student/parent survey, and
- web 2.0 technology in the classroom.

For a complete list of the Curriculum Forum member associations, go to http://www.otffeo.on.ca/english/init_forum.php.



**A conference on trends in social media
February 3-4, 2012
UOIT Faculty of Education, Oshawa**

Want to catch up on the current trends or learn about emerging trends in social media? This conference may be the one for you.

For event details and registration, please see: <https://event-wizard.com/SMTL/0/welcome/>.

The official Twitter hashtag for the conference is **#otfoade**. The Social Media and Teacher Learning Facebook page can be found at **OTF/OADE Conference 2012**.

**Deadline for registration is
December 31, 2011.**



OTF booth a success at Word on the Street

On Sunday, September 25, 2011, the OTF booth at **Word on the Street** in Queen's Park was thronged by teachers, parents and kids from opening to closing. In short, OTF got the word out to the street and thanks all the volunteers for their hard work.