

**December 2013**

**Dear colleagues,**

The coming festive season brings the messages of sharing, hope, generosity and humility; all of which relate directly to us, as teachers in the classroom. In the past few months, I have attended several conferences and workshops and have heard many prominent speakers such as Pedro Noguera, Professor at New York University; Annie Kidder, Director of People for Education and Liz Sandals, Minister of Education. What resonated with me was that the message in every address was the same: there is no profession more important than teaching. Why? Because teachers have a profound impact in shaping the lives of students and future generations. Often unnoticed by the general public, teachers are selfless and give freely of their time and expertise to make a difference in their students' lives. This generosity and deep caring is rarely motivated by praise or recognition. It is motivated by the passion one has for teaching beyond the lessons in the textbooks and by those students who are motivated to learn as a result.

What truly captured my attention at these conferences was the number of teachers who volunteer their time to share their knowledge by leading professional development activities. At the Teacher Learning and Leadership Program (TLLP) *Sharing the Learning Summit*, sponsored by OTF and the Ministry of Education on November 8 and 9, 2013, I was overwhelmed by the more than 200 teachers from across Ontario who displayed their high caliber projects and resources designed with student success in mind. At the same time, these teacher participants were eager to share their creative and innovative strategies with other teachers. It is professional learning through collaboration by teachers with teachers that makes this initiative so meaningful.

Our fascination with students' eagerness to learn inspires us to life-long learning and sustains our hope to make a difference in the lives of the students we encounter. In our profession, the time for sharing and giving and for having hope and humility, although beautifully tied to the Christmas and holiday season is, in fact, present year round among our colleagues and in our schools.

To my colleagues across this province, thank you for your dedication and hope for a better future for our students. Thank you especially for being the light that sparks learning among our students.

Wishing you a well-deserved peaceful and festive holiday with family and friends,

Julie Pauletig  
OTF President