

interaction

OTFFEO

November 2014
Volume 17, No. 2

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

DEAR COLLEAGUES,

As the days shorten, we know the holiday season is just around the corner. It can be a very busy time of joy, renewal, reunions and gatherings, but it also presents challenges and stresses for many of our students, our colleagues, and others in our communities.

As teachers, we are particularly sensitive to the difficulties others experience in their struggle for justice, fairness, peace and prosperity at home and abroad. So, it seems fitting that, at this time of the year, OTF should acknowledge and celebrate the amazing generosity of time, talent, and resources that teachers willingly

At OTF, we are very proud of our decades-long record of providing international assistance to struggling communities all over the world.

devote to improving the lives of others every day of the year.

With education as our focus, particularly sustainable access for girls and special needs children, OTF remains steadfastly committed to continuing this work. This year, my special charity is Plan Canada's Because I am a Girl campaign. It is unacceptable to me that many women and girls are denied their basic human rights in a world with so many riches and opportunities.

We know that the education of girls has profound and transformative effects on reducing poverty and building up communities. I encourage you to visit their website to find out more:
www.becauseiamagirl.ca.



Though I know the next few weeks will be hectic with report cards, parent interviews, classroom and school celebrations, I encourage you to find time for yourself to reflect on what positive differences you have made to your students and your communities this year and offer my best wishes for 2015.

Yours in education,
Rian McLaughlin
President



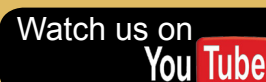
@otffeo @otf_pd



otffeo

Check out our
website!

www.otffeo.on.ca



OntarioTeachers'Federation - OTF

OTF INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE

For over 40 years, OTF's International Assistance Fund has provided support to locally-initiated educational projects in developing countries, undertaken by teacher organizations, schools and other groups. The fund is administered by a committee of teachers, representing each of OTF's Affiliates.

OTF received close to 600 applications for international assistance in 2013-14. OTF funded 160 projects, located in 23 developing countries.

The Blanche E Snell Estate Fund provides grants to foreign students or

educators who are enrolled in an educational institution in Canada and who indicate their intention of returning to their own countries to work within an educational environment.

The Ontario Lesotho Educational Sustaining Fund (OLESF) assists needy students in Lesotho in pursuing their education, particularly in the area of teacher training.

Check out [OTF's international assistance program](#).



Annually, OTF chooses one charity to support and promote. This year, that charity is Plan Canada's [Because I am a Girl](#) initiative.

The girl issue is real, and it's affecting girls and women around the world—but what is it? Girls in the poorest regions of the world are among the most disadvantaged people on the planet. They are more likely to live in poverty, more likely to be denied access to education, and more likely to be malnourished, simply because they are young and female.

And yet, studies show that when you invest in girls, the whole world benefits. If a girl has enough to eat, a safe environment, and an education, she'll work to raise the standard of living for herself, her family and her community. And in time, she can even strengthen the economy of her entire country.

You can help create a brighter future for girls everywhere! Support girls' rights in the developing world, and help break the cycle of poverty, by supporting Plan Canada's [Because I am a Girl](#) initiative. Girls can change the world, but they can't do it without your help!

<http://becauseiamagirl.ca>



KEEP THE PROMISE (KTP)

Twenty-five years have passed since the House of Commons passed the unanimous motion to end child poverty by 2000. In fact, since that time, child poverty has increased. Some stats:

- nearly 10% of Canadians still live in poverty —3.5 million;
- 17% of children in Canada are living in poverty —1,168,000;

- 40% of the indigenous population in Canada are children living in poverty—171,000 children;
- at least 10% of the 200,000 homeless in Canada are kids;
- 33% of immigrant and refugee children in Canada live in poverty—174,000.

In summary, nearly one in seven of Canada's children still live in poverty. KTP, supported by the Canadian Teachers' Federation, is working to change this.

For more information, visit the [KTP web site](#) or follow on Twitter: @KTPCoalition.



FRONTIER COLLEGE

For over a century, [Frontier College](#) has been helping Canadians improve their literacy and increase their opportunities. The organization recruits and trains volunteers to deliver literacy programs to children, youth and adults in communities across the country.

[Frontier College](#) has been offering the Lieutenant Governor's Aboriginal Summer Literacy Camps since 2005. The camps provide learning supports for Aboriginal children during the summer months.

www.frontiercollege.ca

They have grown from the original five communities in Northern Ontario to over 80 communities across Canada. In the summer of 2014, a total of 39 camps were offered in 24 Ontario First Nations communities to 2,904 children and youth. More than 8,000 free, high-quality books were donated to the communities.

[Frontier College](#) and the aboriginal summer camps prepare these young people to become tomorrow's leaders, workers, parents and caregivers.

MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY-TREASURER

As we near the holidays each year, regardless of our own beliefs or backgrounds, somewhere behind the twinkling lights and commercial fanfare, we are reminded of the values inherent in this time of year—the importance of family, kindness, compassion and caring.

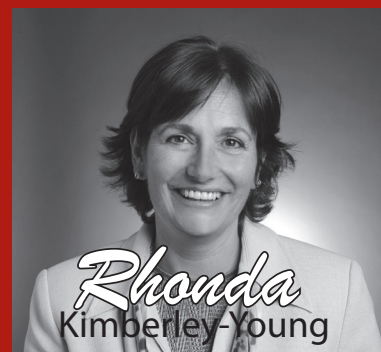
Reminding ourselves to take stock of what is truly important in our own lives and in our society is never a bad thing. OTF and the Affiliates demonstrate these values throughout the year in several ways. This issue of *Interaction* gives readers a glimpse of some of our support for worthwhile causes and movements.

OTF makes modest contributions to a number of organizations such as the Coalition for Better Childcare, the Broadbent Institute and Canada without Poverty. Last year, we held a special fundraising event to support Student Vote (CIVIX), Frontier College and Kids Help Phone. Annually, the OTF President selects a charity for

a holiday donation. This year, we are supporting “Because I am a Girl.”

We respond to urgent appeals from Education International. OTF and the Affiliates rallied behind the teachers in British Columbia last summer. The OTF International Assistance Committee receives and responds to applications for support from around the globe. Over \$75,000 in grants is donated annually to organizations assisting those who are struggling to meet the necessities of life and working to provide children with an education.

OTF has sponsored a summer literacy camp in a remote First Nations Community as part of the Frontier College and Lieutenant Governor’s Aboriginal Literacy Camp initiative for eight years. We are proud of this



ongoing commitment and the positive results this program has shown.

We support and engage with organizations committed to social justice and equity as well; these organizations help us all remember that these causes are not just important one season of the year, but, in fact, all year long.

Wishing you all the best in this festive season and in the new year!



WHO DOES WHAT?

Public education in Ontario

OTF answers this question in a series of five videos which assists teachers in understanding the organizations and bodies in Ontario which impact their careers and lives.

Each of the five videos is approximately two minutes in length. They focus on the Ontario Teachers’ Federation, the Ontario College of Teachers, the Ontario

Federations, the Ontario Teachers’ Pension Plan and the Ministry of Education, School Administrations and School Boards.

Check them out on YouTube or easier yet, go to our [web page](#). While on this page, take a look at the brochure, *Public education in Ontario: Who does what?*.

MANDATE OF THE ONTARIO COLLEGE OF TEACHERS

For several years, the Ontario Teachers’ Federation (OTF) and the Affiliates (AEFO, ETFO, OECTA and OSSTF) have expressed concerns about what they have regarded as the increasing activity, beyond its mandate, of the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT, the College).

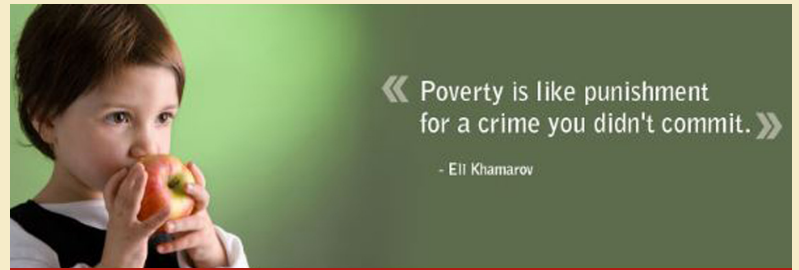
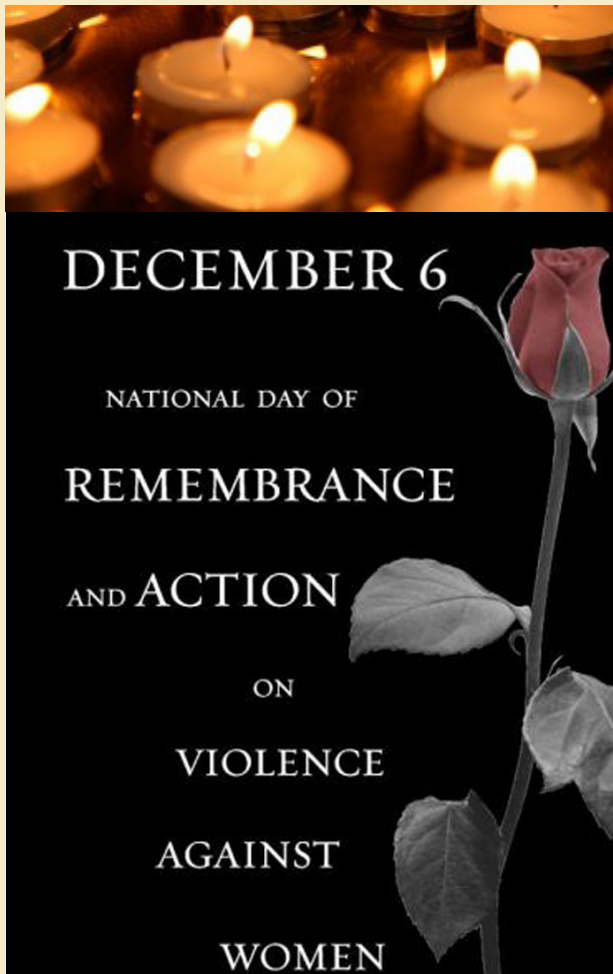
In January 2014, OTF completed the report, *Course Correction: A Renewed Focus for the Ontario College of Teachers*, which outlines how the mandate of the OCT has come to be interpreted and applied since its inception in 1997.

In October 2014, Rian McLaughlin, OTF President and Rhonda Kimberley-Young, OTF Secretary-Treasurer made a presentation to the OCT Governing Council about the on-going concerns of OTF and the Affiliates.

On October 29, 2014, OTF published a backgrounder on the issues.

OTF and the Affiliates have met with several appropriate groups during this time, including the Ministry and the College and they continue to do so.

Click [here](#) to check out these documents.



CANADA WITHOUT POVERTY

Canada Without Poverty works to address the structural causes of poverty, such as public policies that advance or constrain the social and economic development of individuals, families and communities.

It is a small organization which organizes conferences and workshops, conducts research and assists people in finding government programs and offices for accessing benefits.

Check out **Canada Without Poverty**.

ONTARIO COALITION FOR BETTER CHILD CARE

The **Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care** (OCBCC), a non-partisan public awareness and advocacy group, advocates and lobbies for universally accessible, high quality, not-for-profit, regulated child care in the province of Ontario. The coalition has members from education, labour, student, women and francophone communities.

Check out the work this **coalition** does.



THE BROADBENT INSTITUTE

As stated on its website, **the Broadbent Institute** is an independent, non-partisan organization championing progressive change through the promotion of democracy, equality, and sustainability and the training of a new generation of leaders.

The institute focuses on the social democratic values that guide Canada as a society. It works in the areas

of research, training and public education.

Press Progress, a project of the Broadbent Institute, has become the source for news and analysis on such issues as democracy, economy, environment and politics.

If you are interested in weekly updates, go to **Press Progress** to sign up.

Professional Development

OTF Connects:

Bringing teachers together for rich, relevant PD



OTF Connects is our ongoing, online webinar program developed by teachers for teachers. This program continues to bring our members together from across the province to learn, share and collaborate through many rich and relevant opportunities for self-directed learning.

This year's program focuses on supporting teachers in enhancing classroom practice with the effective use of technology and in gaining skills and confidence for instruction in the area of Mathematics. The winter and spring program will also offer inspiring sessions

in critical thinking, environmental education, financial literacy and violence prevention.

The fall **OTF Connects** program was extremely well received. Here is what teachers had to say.

Safe, strong and free Safe@School

The Centre ontarien de prévention des agressions (COPA), in partnership with OTF, has excellent resources for teachers, parents and young people.

One worth checking out is the **Safe@School website**. COPA's latest project is a mini-series,

"Safe, Strong & Free Stories," on their new website for parents, **Habitat for Parents**.

Also, in January, Safe@School will debut a book on parent engagement.

"I had been wondering how to use inquiry in mathematics, and this was very helpful in helping me to conceptualize that."

"Being able to interact with others on the discussion board enabled a professional discussion while the topic was presented."

"This was a terrific session —with lots of practical application. It was great to see samples of student work."

"I really enjoyed this session and found it extremely useful and relevant. I look forward to more sessions by the same presenter who did an awesome job in providing explanations and demonstrations of the various resources."

Loaded with PD activities OTF PD Calendar

This **calendar** tracks all the professional development activities happening across Ontario. It covers all subject areas and levels. For example, as of writing, there are 605 activities listed for January 2015.

Be sure to visit the **OTF website** in mid-December to register for our winter OTF Connects PD offerings!

Inspiration unleashed November's TLLP Sharing the Learning Summit

What happens when you bring together 250 teachers from 102 **Teacher Learning and Leadership Program (TLLP)** projects to share their incredible learnings? Participants at this year's TLLP Sharing the Learning Summit, held in Toronto November 7-8, would probably say, "Inspiration happens!" And if you don't believe us, here is how ETFO member Cathy Griffin of Bluewater DSB described her time at the two-day summit: "My mind is racing with new ideas, self-reflection and networking possibilities. But best of all, I am infused with a positive sense of peace in the world because of the energy, hope, creativity and drive that is TLLP!"

Three days after the summit, OECTA member Leslie Boerkamp blogged that her head was "still swirling with ideas, inspiration and connections." According to Leslie, "The sharing summit allowed for a

unique opportunity that I haven't experienced in a long time. The electricity and energy in the room was so alive! Each participant, group leader, and teammate radiated with enthusiasm and dedication to their project. It oozed out during lunch, coffee break, and even at the end of Friday when we were sent off to prepare for Saturday.... This is what PD in our schools should look like!"

Sound interesting? Many TLLP teachers are sharing their innovative practices via webinars offered on **OTF Connects** and on TVO's new **TeachOntario**.

TeachOntario TVO supports for teachers

OTF was proud to partner with TVO and the Ministry of Education over the last 12 months on the development of **TeachOntario**, a new online community that supports sharing, collaboration and knowledge exchange among Ontario's teachers.

Created for Ontario teachers by Ontario teachers, it features your content and discussion groups that you create. You can read up on the latest research and information on education in Ontario, follow other inspiring educators, write your own blog posts, upload videos and artifacts from your classroom, start a new online community based on subject matter, grade or interest, and share and exchange your professional knowledge.

OTF Connects is already using this site so that users can post and share comments following a webinar session with such topics as "Working the math process with BYOD" and "Five-minute science: the separating oil experiment."

This is a great resource for making connections with other educators across Ontario and for supporting you as you continue to make a difference in your classroom with your students.

www.teachontario.ca

OTF Planboard

Need some ideas for a lesson plan or assistance with scheduling? OTF Planboard may be the answer for you. This is a web and iPad app where teachers can create, edit, share and organize their lesson plans.

Over 250 sample lessons, created by Ontario teachers for Ontario teachers, are already available and can easily be added into your daily lesson plans. These plans can be

personalized for particular classes or courses using the integrated planner. Best of all, Ontario curriculum expectations are all built into OTF Planboard.

Click [here](#) to set up your free OTF Planboard account.

Check out the [OTF Planboard webinars](#) at OTF Connects to receive training in the use of OTF Planboard.

