

interaction

November 2015

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A message from the

PRESIDENT

When I look back on this past year, I am reminded of the difficulties that teachers and educational workers in public education in Ontario have faced. It has been a

most difficult and challenging year for you and, although it is improving, the struggles for many of you continue.

I applaud your resolution in gaining a fair settlement which benefits the students in our classrooms.

On November 11, I was honoured to lay a wreath on behalf of Ontario's teachers in memory of those who had sacrificed their lives for our country and, at the same time, I wished for peace in our world.

I am appalled and saddened by the events which have occurred in the world. Terrorist attacks have brought home to us the horror and grief which such actions cause. The plight of refugees who seek a safe haven from the horrors of civil war and terrorism remind us of our need for compassion.

On Canadian soil, to date, we have been fortunate not to suffer the loss caused by terrorist actions on civilian lives. We can only imagine the pain and suffering which others are enduring.

Canadians have always been a peace-loving nation—we have always strived to be peace keepers, both at home and abroad. Our newly elected government is promising to be responsive to Canadians' desire for peace and also to give aid to



Francine LeBlanc-Lebel
President

others in dire circumstances. Let us hope that this spirit prevails.

This time of the year, we celebrate that desire for peace and good will. I encourage people of all faiths and beliefs to take the time to appreciate the security that living in Canada brings; but even more so, to reflect on the difficulties and horrors that others in the world face on a daily basis and give support when able. The holidays allow us to come together as families, as friends and as communities—to celebrate, to share and to consider and help those less fortunate.

I wish you, your family and friends a peaceful and festive holiday and may the future be bright!

Francine LeBlanc-Lebel



On October 6, OTF welcomed a delegation of Swedish educators to discuss best practices for Ontario's success in education. President Francine LeBlanc-Lebel and Secretary-Treasurer Rhonda Kimberley-Young received a thank you gift of Swedish glass



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Sign up for our *OTF News* Sign up for our *Professional Learning*



OTF HONOURED TO RECOGNIZE VETERANS

OTF has always observed Remembrance Day and this year for the first time, OTF participated in the Ceremony of Remembrance at the Ontario Veterans' Memorial at Queen's Park on November 11.

Francine LeBlanc-Lebel, OTF President, was proud to lay a wreath on behalf of teachers in public education in memory of those who gave their lives.



2015 OTIP Teaching Awards

AND THE WINNERS ARE



L to R: Francine LeBlanc-Lebel, OTF President; Jim Magwood, Secondary Teacher Category; Melanie Brown-Robson, Elementary Teacher Category; Sandra Dubreuil, Beginning Teacher Category; and Vic Medland, Chief Executive Officer, Ontario Teachers Insurance Plan (OTIP)

Melanie Brown-Robson
Elementary Teacher Category
Lakeview Public School
Grimsby

At the same ceremony, Groupe Média TFO presented the Prix TFO Éducation to Brian Saint-Pierre, École secondaire catholique L'Escale, Rockland.

Jim Magwood
Secondary Teacher Category
Lisgar Collegiate Institute
Ottawa

More information on the winners can be found at teachingawards.ca.

Sandra Dubreuil
Beginning Teacher Category
W.H. Morden Public School
Oakville

The awards, co-sponsored by the Ontario Teachers Insurance Plan (OTIP) and the Ontario Teachers' Federation (OTF), are presented annually at a ceremony in Toronto.

"OTIP and OTF are proud to recognize the excellence of teachers in the public education system," stated Francine LeBlanc-Lebel, OTF President. "The winners this year represented the best of the best."

2016



OTIP TEACHING AWARDS

Categories

elementary
secondary
beginning

\$1,000

each for the
winning
teacher and
his/her school

Deadline

March 31
2016



OTFFEO

www.teachingawards.ca

A message from the

SECRETARY-TREASURER

Each school year, OTF recognizes particular dates and events—some to celebrate, some to commemorate and others to provoke thought and action.

We recognized World Teachers' Day in October and acknowledged the talent and commitment of Ontario's teachers. We celebrated award-winning teachers with the OTIP Teaching Awards. We participated in an annual literacy festival and we noted events such as bullying awareness and prevention week.

For me, it was particularly important that, for the first time, OTF's President participated in the Remembrance Day ceremony at Queen's Park. Francine herself is the mother of a soldier who has done two tours in Afghanistan as a medical technician. Teachers collectively, through school assemblies, programs and events, have worked so hard to ensure that we not forget those who continue to put

themselves in harm's way and those who paid the ultimate sacrifice.

On December 6, teachers will also acknowledge and remember the 14 young women who lost their lives at École Polytechnique in Montreal. Days of remembrance and reflection such as these are important for our generation and future generations. Teachers help young people better understand the past, cope with the present and prepare to shape the future.

As the President has noted, we are in challenging times. Canadians have a strong sense of collective duty while valuing our civil rights and our democracy. Before, during and after the federal election, pundits, critics and pollsters dissected the candidates without fear of repercussion for exercising free speech. Voter turnout was up and more young people than ever participated in the parallel election through Student Vote—with the help of their teachers, of course. I like to think that with engagement comes more hope for the future. To quote Churchill, "Democracy is the worst form of government, except for all the others."

Challenges will outlive our generations; teachers are our best hope for the future generations.



Rhonda Kimberley-Young

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youtube.com/
OntarioTeachers'
Federation

OTF'S FEATURED CHARITY
FOR 2015-16

AUTISM ONTARIO

Autism or Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) affects all demographics of our society. The Autism Ontario website describes autism as a life-long neurological disorder that affects the way a person communicates and



relates to the people and world around them. It can affect behaviour, social interactions, and the ability to communicate verbally. All people will experience certain difficulties, but the degree to which each person on the spectrum experiences these challenges is different.

According to the National Epidemiological Database for the Study of Autism in Canada (NEDSAC), autism is one of the most common developmental disabilities in Canada. One in 94 children is diagnosed with ASD. According to the Canadian Medical Association Journal, approximately 1% of the Canadian population is affected, which means there are approximately 100,000 Ontarians on the autism spectrum.

Autism Ontario works to increase public awareness about autism and the day-to-day issues faced by individuals with autism, their families, and the professionals with whom they interact. Their work involves advocacy, government relations and responses to issues pertaining to autism.

The organization has 25 local chapters across Ontario which provide several services such as training and workshops, support for families and summer camps.

For more information, check out www.autismontario.com.

Also, Autism Ontario has supports for teachers at www.raisetheflagforautism.com.

OTF Connects

Developed by teachers for teachers



This free webinar program provides easy-to-access PD at your home computer or on your mobile device. Webinars focusing on such

topics as technology, math, financial literacy, the newly revised curriculum and critical thinking are available.

Check out the calendar of webinars at www.otffeo.on.ca/en/learning/otf-connects/calendar.

Also, past webinars are available at www.otffeo.on.ca/en/learning/otf-connects/resources/



INSPIRE FINANCIAL LEARNING

Sound financial literacy knowledge and skills help Canadians of all ages to make informed and responsible decisions and choices. In Ontario, financial literacy is infused and interwoven across subject areas in the

Ontario curriculum in Grades 4 through 12.

The Inspire Financial Learning (IFL) program, sponsored by the Ontario Teachers' Federation (OTF), provides resources

and strategies to assist teachers, students, parents and guardians in developing the skills to make responsible financial choices.

Click on www.inspirefinanciallearning.ca to view the site.

ONTARIO TEACHERS' FEDERATION

PARENT ENGAGEMENT

A resource to support elementary and secondary teachers and educators working with parents and guardians

www.parentengagement.ca



PARENT ENGAGEMENT

A website to promote teacher-parent relationships

This Ontario Teachers' Federation (OTF) website is a complete guide for educators to working with parents and guardians.

It includes short vignettes, podcasts, practical tips and other helpful resources.

www.otffeo.on.ca/en/learning/parent-engagement



OTF TEACHER RESOURCES

The place for educational web resources and lesson plans

To assist educators in the classroom, the OTF Teacher Resources page has two components:

- Useful Links to hundreds of websites, categorized according to topics to help focus your search; and

- Lesson Plans which have been developed by teachers in several of OTF's professional development projects. The plans are fully searchable by subject, grade, and topic.

Worth checking out at www.otffeo.on.ca/en/learning/teacher-resources.