

NEXT STEPS

THE NEWSLETTER OF **ALSO** | ADULT AND FAMILY LITERACY IN OTTAWA

Fall 2021

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ALSO

ADULT AND FAMILY LITERACY

Kim's Comments

We are all happy to have students back in the classroom. The ALSO staff team has been doing their best to support students and stay connected, whether we are in the classroom or online.

Connection is so important for all of us. True connection, the feeling that you have someone's full attention and that they see you, is vital for each of our well-being. Giving our full attention to our students is something we value highly.



I no longer have students dropping into my office to chat for 30 or 40 minutes at a time. Almost half of my day used to be spent giving my full attention to a number of our students. It is not that I had many or any pearls of wisdom to offer. Quite the opposite. Most times I wouldn't really speak at all, other than to let the person know I heard them, I was happy to listen, and I thought they had in themselves what was needed to overcome whatever challenge they were facing. In this continued time of social distancing and limited personal connection, each small kindness takes on new layered meaning. In each small kindness is the message, *I see you*.

I hope that in the next year, we will be able to continue supporting students in this way and hope that I can count on the generosity of donors and our community to help make that happen. I am looking forward to having students drop into my office again. Until then, we will all continue to do our best to let our students know they are seen and heard. And we will continue to do that for each other.

Kim Oastler

Executive Director, ALSO

Success Story

Seven years ago, a repetitive strain injury to her wrists and shoulders forced Wendy to give up hairstyling, a career she loved deeply. With a learning disability and poor reading and writing skills, the prospect of starting over in a new job was daunting to say the least. She knew that in order to move forward she would need to make some changes.



Wendy was an ALSO student for several years. We had the privilege of watching her gain confidence and succeed in her goal of achieving her high school diploma. As we developed our relationship with Wendy, she became more comfortable in the classroom. She developed a stronger voice for herself in both her writing and personally. She laughed easily and always had a kind word for staff and students. At the age of 63, she received her high school diploma. Wendy went on to succeed in an employment training program in landscaping.

I am always impressed by the dedication and compassion of our ALSO teachers. They have a genuine love of teaching. The work they do can be challenging. They rise to this challenge with each new day, giving their best to the students we serve at ALSO.

Kim Oastler

Executive Director, ALSO

Get Involved

This Fall we are asking for support with our Adult Upgrading Program.

We very gratefully receive funding from the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development, allowing us to offer our Adult Upgrading Program. (THANK YOU). **This funding covers most, but not all, of what it costs to run our program.**



At ALSO we work with adults who are not comfortable working in a mainstream classroom. They often have been welcomed out of other programs. ALSO is chosen because we have a reputation in the Ottawa community for being flexible, patient and highly supportive.

When adults have not had positive school experiences earlier in life, the prospect of returning to school can be overwhelming and very triggering. There is often shame attached to the return to school. For some, these feelings stop them from ever achieving their goals. For others, having the courage to reach out and explore returning to school is life changing. It is very important that the program they engage with understands the potential barriers each person may face and is able to meet each person where they are, in order for them to begin to make changes, commit to learning, and imagine a different future for themselves.

We are privileged to be a part of each student's journey, as the idea that everyone deserves the opportunity to learn and participate more fully in both the community and the economy takes hold and becomes real.

Our goal is to raise \$5000 to provide support to over 100 adults each year and we are confident we can make this happen. Your donation, either as a single donation or by becoming one of our valued **Champion Monthly Donors**, is how we can positively impact the lives of so many people. Becoming a **Champion** is only a click away and is one of the easiest and most cost-effective ways you can support adult literacy in Ottawa. For example, for as little as \$16/month (roughly the cost of a weekly lottery ticket), your generosity can help us fill the gap in funding for our Adult Upgrading Program.

With much gratitude,
Kim Oastler - Executive Director
kim@also-ottawa.org

DONATE NOW!



ALSO ChangeMaker

Kevin Scully

ALSO is about community, making changes and moving forward. Our change-makers are people who continue to give of themselves, who believe in the work that we do at ALSO and who figuratively or literally get back up, even when knocked down.



We are celebrating the President of our Board of Directors, Kevin Scully, this Fall. Kevin has been with ALSO on and off (more on than off) for the last 12 years. He has played a number of roles on the Board. He has given of his time and expertise generously. His vision has shaped our path forward. One of Kevin's key objectives was to establish a pension for ALSO staff. Recognizing the historic inequities between the public and private sectors when it comes to benefits for staff, he forged ahead, in his quiet way, towards a time when ALSO could make this a reality. That day is here. In October, the ALSO Board voted in favour of joining the OPTrust Select Pension Program. This is a significant milestone for ALSO. Well done Kevin.

Kevin will be stepping down as President this month. Tim Klodt has graciously agreed to take up the charge. We are fortunate that Kevin is willing to remain on the Board for the next year to aid with transition. I am very thankful to have a group of 6 very talented, very giving, and very compassionate Board members supporting ALSO.

Here's to you, Kevin, thank you for all you have done, for your inspiration and your unwavering support of all that we do.

ASL RAPP Update

IT IS FINALLY READY!

Thanks to the Crabtree Foundation and the Ottawa Community Foundation, we have been working hard to revitalize and relaunch our ASL RAPP website. It has truly been our pleasure to work with Michelle and Ashley at KarmaDharma Marketing and Strategy over the last 10 months. We have consulted with stakeholders to get their feedback on the new layout and content. The new site is very user friendly. All in all, it is pretty fantastic, if I do say so myself! It is free for families with Deaf children in Canada. Our hope is to provide language learning resources that make learning ASL less intimidating and more fun for parents, while supporting both the development of ASL and English reading language skills for Deaf children. **Our new launch date is November 26th.** Check it out at aslrapp.org. Drop me a note to let me know what you think!



Contact Us

Phone: 613-233-8660 **E-mail:** kim@also-ottawa.org
Address: 404 McArthur Ave, Ottawa, ON K1K 1G8

With 70% of employers reporting awareness of significant workplace literacy issues, ALSO is structured to accommodate a variety of learning, social, and family needs and empowers people to develop the skills required to secure employment and participate more fully within the greater Ottawa community.

The goal for ALSO is to be in a position to continue this important work and we know that we cannot make this happen without support from donors.

DONATE NOW!