

# NEXT STEPS

THE NEWSLETTER OF ALSO | ADULT AND FAMILY LITERACY IN OTTAWA

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Phone: 613-233-8660 E-mail: [kim@also-ottawa.org](mailto:kim@also-ottawa.org)

Address: 404 McArthur Ave, Ottawa, ON K1K 1G8

# Kim's Comments

I love the Fall. It feels like a celebration of the life given during the spring and summer months. It is, for some, a beginning.

Many of our ALSO students begin in the Fall. They come to us wanting to make changes, work towards their goals and build something better for themselves and, in many cases, their families. We celebrate each student's decision to begin; to believe that they can do the work needed, to have hope for more or for better.



Returning to school is daunting and can feel overwhelming. It is our job to help make this less so. All of us at ALSO are committed to providing the safe space adults need to learn. I am thankful to work with our amazing teachers and early childhood educators to support the adults and families we serve.

September is also my birthday month. I love birthdays. What I especially love about celebrating my birthday at ALSO is Mark's vegan pumpkin cheesecake. This year, Fall is also a time of transition for us. Mark is moving on and we are welcoming a new teacher, Eduardo. It has truly been my pleasure to work with Mark over the last almost 10 years. He will be missed.

*Kim Oastler*  
Executive Director, ALSO

# Success Story

Our Children's Program is a vital piece of the story for many of the young parents' we serve, in their journey back to learning. It certainly was for Anna and her daughter Sam who required this most basic level of support to get her life back on track.

Anna moved to Ottawa before her daughter was born last year. She is on her own here with her family all living in the Toronto area. With a baby and without a high school diploma or child care, it had been impossible for her to get a job.

Anna has very high anxiety and is challenged to leave her apartment most days. When we met Anna she wanted to come to ALSO and work on the credits she needs to achieve her high school diploma, but wasn't sure she could do it. ALSO's Children's Program allowed her to attend in person and study while her daughter was in our care, down the hall from the classroom.

Our free, on-site, child care program is one of a kind. Our amazing staff worked with Anna and her daughter, creating trust, supporting both Anna and Sam. Anna was able to overcome her anxiety, earn a credit towards her diploma and gain valuable parenting skills while at ALSO. When she was ready, our Children's Program staff helped Anna fill out the forms to apply for subsidized day care. Anna now has a full-time daycare spot for her daughter. She has transitioned to the Adult High School so that she can work on more than one credit at a time. She is well on her way to achieving her goals. Her plan is to attend Ottawa University next year. She hopes to study cognitive-behavioral science.

Anna's success is a wonderful testament to the ALSO teachers and the ALSO Children's Program. And, of course, most of all, to Anna.

Well done.



# Get Involved

## Our Children's Program

ALSO has been offering free, on-site child care to families for almost 20 years. We are very thankful to have funding from the City of Ottawa. Our reality is that we rely on fund-raised dollars to add to this funding to continue to run our program.

**YOUR GIFT WILL BE MATCHED WITH JUST ONE CLICK!**

Thanks to the support of our generous partners at **McCay Duff LLP** your gift which allows us to help children and families right here in our community, will be matched dollar for dollar up to \$500.

What would you say if I told you that:

- more than one in six Canadians do not pass the most basic set of literacy tests, and;
- approximately half of Canadian adults cannot understand information in lengthy and complex texts.

This sobering reality, which takes hold early on in a person's life, is what we strive to address every day with our Children's Program, which helps just under twenty children every month to develop the tools they need to succeed in life.

Many of the parents coming to ALSO have never left their child with anyone. Often, they do not have family living nearby. Our program is a gentle introduction to a child care setting. We spend time building trust and relationships with both the parent and the child, supporting the transition into child care. Our Children's Program is down the hall from our classrooms. Parents are welcome to move in and out freely. Our early childhood educators and teachers work closely together to ensure success for each ALSO parent and child.



Funds raised support the purchase of new toys and equipment allowing us to replace broken or worn out items in a timely manner.

When you send in a gift today to ALSO Adult and Family Literacy, you will be helping families to overcome barriers that prevent self-sustainability while successfully enabling each child to develop the physical, emotional, social and language skills needed for the next phases of their lives.

**Please take a moment to make a gift today. And don't forget, your gift will be matched dollar for dollar thanks to a special supporter who understands just how great the need is.**

**DONATE NOW!**

### Another way to give.

If your organization is doing a **United Way Workplace Charitable Campaign** or a **Government of Canada Workplace Charitable Campaign** – they have made it easy for you to become an ALSO CHAMPION! You can **donate directly to ALSO** through your workplace by specifying Alternative Learning Styles and Outlooks, Ottawa Inc. and providing our registered **charity number 106704570RR0001** on your donation form. If you have questions, or are speaking of fundraising opportunities at your workplace, please reach out to Kim at [kim@also-ottawa.org](mailto:kim@also-ottawa.org). Through ALSO, you are supporting your community.

# ALSO ChangeMaker

## Mark Caulfield

This Fall we are saying good-bye to Mark Caulfield, our amazing ALSO teacher.

Mark started working at ALSO almost 10 years ago. He is a wonderful human being and a gifted teacher. We have been fortunate to have him as part of our staff team. Mark is a lover of soccer and the British panto. He is a poet and a runner. Mark is a gentle soul who laughs easily and gives much of himself. He is the ALSO Change Maker we are celebrating this Fall.

Over the years many students have benefited from Mark's patience, humour and commitment while working with him. He will be missed.

So here's to you, Mark! Wishing you the very very best for your next adventure. Thank you for your dedication to the ALSO students. You are our Change Maker.



### Ode to Mark

We met Mark early that Fall  
He came in answer to our job call  
We served tea at lunch  
and he had a hunch  
that ALSO could be the end all  
We 'panto' - ed at Christmas  
with bluster and glee  
He included us all  
in his British reverie  
Always there with a smile  
Mark goes the extra mile  
and can be counted on through thick and thin  
While we won't miss your clothes  
hanging up damp and soggy  
We will miss the chats, the pumpkin cheesecake and the folly  
All the best to you Mark  
looking ahead to the next year  
Know that your friends at ALSO send you off with a cheer.