



2018-2019 Annual Report

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Our Employment Ontario Literacy and Basic Skills Programs are funded in part by the Government of Canada and the Government of Ontario and through the Canada – Ontario Job Fund Agreement.

The Children’s Program is funded by the City of Ottawa.

About ALSO

ALSO has been serving the Ottawa community for the last 39 years. We are a safe and caring community learning center providing opportunities for both adults and families. We support the development of the skills needed for employment, future education or training, increased civic engagement and family life. ALSO students want to get a job, keep a job, finish high school, access training and/or participate more fully in their community.

The ALSO staff is a dedicated team of individuals. Their collective and individual contributions to the success of the students and families is greatly valued. We are always impressed by the level of caring and willingness to go the extra mile in order to serve our adults and families well. Our volunteer Board of Directors gives generously of their time and expertise. This year the Board completed a tremendous amount of work setting the stage for ALSO to continue to thrive. We are fortunate to have the ongoing support of our Board. We thank them for their commitment.

ALSO volunteers contribute significantly to the success of our program. We are very fortunate to receive support from the sign language interpreters at the Sign Language Interpreters Association of Ottawa. In the Children's Program this year we were fortunate to have three students from the University of Ottawa, who as part of their Child Development class chose to do their placement at ALSO to gain practical application of their theoretical learning. Thanks to Leyla Marfo, Marissa Vasko and Tobi Matzek. Leyla has continued to volunteer in the Children's Program since her course finished. We also had support this year from Stephanie Pink, a valuable former placement student. We wish Stephanie well as she recently moved on to pursue her Masters of Social Work at Sir Wilfred Laurier University. A huge thank you goes out to Cheryl Stephen who works tirelessly on our marketing and promotional materials. The quality of her work, her attention to detail and her flare for design have a huge impact on the success of our marketing initiatives. And Shirley Trott, who supports our family literacy library and shares story time with the children. Thank you to all of our donors and supporters including Farm Boy and Starbucks for your dedication to ALSO and willingness to contribute time and time again!

Our Board of Directors

Fiorella Jansen-Nicorescu
Board President

Kevin Scully
Vice President

Robert Mawako
Treasurer

Lynn Asselin
Member at Large

Gemma Follini
Member at Large

Tim Klodt
Member at Large

Kim Oastler
Secretary/Executive Director

A Year in Review

During the 2018-2019 year we were actively engaged with our community through participation with the Local Employment Planning Council, the Rideau Valley Learning Network, the Centre for Innovation in Social Enterprise Development and the Heartwood House Collaboration Project Planning Committee.

We continue to build on our relationship with the Continuing Education Department of the Ottawa District School Board allowing us to offer PLAR (Prior Learning Assessment Review) and high school credit study on site. We continue to meet the expectations of our core funder, the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU). We are fortunate to have ongoing funding from the City of Ottawa for our Children's Program. Without the City's support we would not be able to offer our program to the families at Heartwood House.

We received funding from the Ottawa Deaf Centre Legacy Fund to continue to strengthen our ASL RAPP (American Sign Language Reading and Parents Program) online web portal. This web based resource offers parents with Deaf children an ASL language tool fostering family connection and supporting family communication. The funding we received from the Ottawa Community Foundation and the Groupe Convex allowed us to continue to support our growing social enterprise, EAT MORE SOUP!. EAT MORE SOUP! provides pre-employment training for highly barriered adults in our community. EAT MORE SOUP! makes delicious, from scratch, vegan and vegetarian soups which sell in 13 local retail stores throughout the city.

Highlights:

- As part of the Deaf Adult Upgrading Program we continued to offer a weekly beginner ASL class for ALSO students, volunteers and community partners. Many thanks to our amazing volunteer ASL teachers.
- Our Souper Wednesday program continued this year with support from Bon Appetit Ottawa. Souper Wednesday teaches ALSO students how to cook vegetarian soup from scratch. We ran Souper Wednesday from September to June. This year we fed between 35-40 Heartwood House participants, volunteers and staff each week for \$1.00 or \$2.00 a serving.

- The Children's Program served 48 children.
- The Children's Program uses an emergent curriculum which this year included the science of butterfly life, carving a pumpkin and roasting the seeds, the science behind snow and making our own snow cones, exploring eggs raw and cooked, water activities in our play yard where we experimented with sinking and floating and learning about mass, space and weight; evaporating, freezing and melting.
- ALSO's Adult Upgrading Program served 79 adults.
- ALSO's Deaf Adult Upgrading Program served 26 adults.
- EAT MORE SOUP! worked with 10 interns. Six successfully completed their internship, four were connected to jobs, and one secured a volunteer placement.
- The BIG COOK continued in partnership with the Ottawa Boys and Girls Club. Our EAT MORE SOUP! chef and interns work with 220 children and youth each year, teaching them how to prepare healthy meals with food they would have at home or receive from the food bank.
- Deaf Learn Now partnered with ALSO to help Deaf students prepare to pass their Canadian Citizenship test. Four of the six students were successful in the preparation course, passed the citizenship test and are now Canadian Citizens.

Success Stories

Eliana H: Eliana was a member of the Laundry Coop. She was able to complete her one remaining high school credit and graduate. She is currently employed as a manager at a bed and breakfast.

Matthew K: Matthew completed a chemistry credit and was accepted into an HVAC apprenticeship program. ALSO's partnership with Private Study allowed Matthew to study at a flexible pace in order to maintain his employment with a City of Ottawa ice pad.

Carole L: Carole completed her final high school credit, graduated and was able to upgrade her employment. She has since been able to apply to the office administration program at St. Lawrence College.

Jessica L: Jessica had been an ALSO student for several years, before enrolling in Private Study. She completed her remaining high school credits, including a co-op credit through a volunteer position with Heartwood House reception staff. Upon graduating, she was able to remain in a paid position with Heartwood House which allowed her to slowly transition to an office job with a warehousing and logistics company.

Sehrin B: Sehrin came to us for help in achieving his goal: joining the military. We worked with him for six months and he was granted acceptance into basic training. He will be sent to his first posting soon.

Mike B: Mike has been upgrading his English reading and writing skills in the hope of getting a job. He was successful at the interview with Amazon and was hired for a few weeks of training last August. He has learned how to be more responsible and how to prepare and package Amazon orders. He has been officially hired at Amazon.

Samsung K: Samsung really wanted to work at Amazon. He persisted in applying and ended up getting an interview. He has been accepted on a trial basis for a few weeks of training. He is very happy. Sam's goal is to be offered a job after his trial period.

Sarina B: Sarina wanted to upgrade her English reading and writing in order to go to college. She applied to Algonquin College for September 2019 and is currently taking a course focussed on Indigenous Studies.

From the Board President

If there is one way to sum up ALSO's activities in the previous year, it would be "positioning ourselves for growth." ALSO's board focused on strengthening ALSO's foundation and mapping out the way ahead.

Solid Operations

This past year we set out to revisit and update how we do things. The board's goal was to continue supporting ALSO through well-documented operations and procedures, that free the staff to focus on ALSO's mandate. We updated ALSO's Bylaws, as well as Policies and Procedures Manual.

Positioning ALSO for Growth

A healthy surplus and the support of the Ottawa Deaf Centre Legacy Fund made it possible to invest in positioning ALSO for growth. We hired subject matter experts to help us conduct a strategy evaluation for ALSO and create a marketing plan for ASL RAPP.

Throughout this past year, we identified objectives to create a vision where we see ALSO growing. We also set out to develop a plan for growing ASL RAPP's usage. Additionally, the board maintained its attention on the growth and cost management of EAT MORE SOUP!.

Building a Strong Board

Recognizing the importance of the board in helping ALSO fulfill its mandate, we changed how we recruit board members. We now have objectives around board composition. New board members are recruited based on skillset needed to support ALSO's objectives, but also based on interpersonal skills that are conducive to a collaborative environment. We now have a Board Skills Matrix to inform us of the skills available and the ones needed. We also introduced a Board Onboarding Manual to provide information to help new board members get up to speed faster and contribute sooner.

Looking Ahead

As I step down as Board President at ALSO, I wish to thank ALSO's hardworking staff, Executive Director, board members and volunteers for all they do.

While you continue to assess opportunities to grow and fulfill ALSO's mandate, keep in mind this quote by John A. Shedd, second president and chair of the board of Marshall Field & Company, "A ship in the harbor is safe, but that is not what ships are built for."

Much success ahead and keep on leaping towards growth. - *Fiorella Jansen-Nicorescu*

Financial Report

2018/2019 has been a year of sustained growth in our service provision. It also saw the expansion of the Eat More Soup! initiative as a way of bringing in additional income, while at the same time providing Internship opportunities for students to better equip them for the job market.

From a financial perspective, Net Revenue for the year was \$518,306.00 while Total Expenses were \$524,570.00. The bulk of our revenue continues to come from the Province of Ontario's MTCU contract (65%), Service Contracts and Daycare Fees (22%) and Foundation Contributions (8%), for a total of 95% from these three sources of funding. This was the impetus behind our drive for a more diversified source of funding, which led to the EMS project and investments towards improving our donation strategy and the social enterprise products.

The most notable disbursements were from Teaching Salaries & Benefits (61%), Childcare Salaries & Benefits (17%) and Rent & Facility Costs (11%), bringing the total to 89% from these three expense types. Most notable here was a 9% increase in total salaries which was offset by a 59% decrease in Training Materials & Supplies, and a 99% decrease in Equipment & Technical Support.

Sound Financial Statements

The year finished off with a planned deficit of just over \$6,000.00. The Board voted to spend up to \$7,000.00 from our reserve fund on a strategic plan for ALSO. We worked with the Vectors Group. I am pleased to report that our financial position continues to be very sound. Our cash position also supports this view, with ALSO's cash balance opening at \$128,941.00 and closing at \$125,890.00.

Commitment to our Clients

A significant portion of our funding is contingent on achieving required performance indicators. Meeting all accountabilities is therefore critical and a testament to the contributions of many. ALSO continues to both meet and exceed performance obligations as indicated in our service contracts and the continuance of both public and private funding.