



2021-2022 Annual Report

“ **ALSO is a place to be for everyone**, regardless of your background, beliefs, ethnicity or race. They open their doors to everyone and treat everyone equally with so much respect. Going there as a placement student, I was never once treated less than others. I felt welcomed, supported, encouraged and was given opportunities to take charge and make decisions, which was a great learning curve for me. I am very grateful to have been part of the ALSO community and I will highly recommend ALSO to other students looking for learning opportunities and other members in the community who need services offered by ALSO. Special thanks to Mina and Farzana for all the support and encouragement. **ALSO is a place to be.**”

- *Minyu*, Student of Social Services Worker Program, Algonquin College

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**EMPLOYMENT
ONTARIO**

Ontario 

Canada 

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 since 1981. 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 team is a dedicated group of individuals. We are very fortunate to work with each of them. Our success with the adults and families we serve comes from the experience, talent and skill each staff member contributes. The ALSO Board of Directors supports and guides the work we do. They have each demonstrated their commitment to our program by offering their time, talent and expertise helping me navigate the pandemic and any other challenges that came our way. This year Kevin Scully stepped down as Board President and we welcomed Tim Klodt to take his place. Laura Hillier graciously agreed to take the role of Vice President. Kevin remains on the Board and continues to contribute significantly. We welcomed Joyce Chamas in February. Joyce brings a wealth of experience with her, and has guided us in terms of insurance and investing over the last year. We are happy to have her join us. I am very grateful to the Board and staff team for helping to make ALSO what it is today.

ALSO Board and staff went above and beyond during the pandemic allowing us to pivot and work remotely. We worked closely with both the City of Ottawa and the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development to ensure continuity of programming and funding.

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. Cheryl Stephen has volunteered with ALSO for over 11 years. We are very grateful that she continues to share her knowledge, creativity and expertise with us. We work with Carleton University, Algonquin College and the University of Ottawa providing student placements in our Children's Program and this year with ASL RAPP. We are happy to host the students and appreciate their contributions. Thank you to all of our donors and contributors.

Kim Oastler, ALSO Executive Director



Our Board of Directors

Tim Klodt
Board President

Robert Mawako
Treasurer

Lynn Asselin
Member at Large

Laura Hillier
Member at Large

Pavithra Raja
Member at Large

Kevin Scully
Member at Large

Joyce Chamas
Member at Large
(joined February 2022)

Kim Oastler
Secretary/Executive Director

A Year in Review

During the 2021-2022 year we were actively engaged with our community through participation with the Local Employment Planning Council, the Rideau Valley Learning Network, the Deaf Literacy Initiative 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 for students who cannot access the mainstream adult high school classroom. We continue to meet the expectations of our core funder, the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development (MLITSD). We continue to offer both in-person and remote learning for students as we respond to the waves of Covid-19. Teachers used a variety of on-line platforms, emails, phone calls and Canada Post to stay connected to ALSO students. We were among a small group of programs that met all funder targets for 2021-2022.

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 worked with four really wonderful placement students: **Minyu Hostencia** – Algonquin College – Social Services (Minyu came in as a volunteer for one month after her practicum), **Eve Haras** – Carleton University – Bachelor of Social Work, **Nyati Mistry** – Carleton University – Psychology, and **Asha Berbeck** – Carleton University – Bachelor of Science Psychology. It was a pleasure to have each of them in our program.

We are grateful to the Community Foundation of Ottawa and the Crabtree Foundation for funding the revision and relaunch of the ASL RAPP website this year. What an exciting project! Having the funding to make the changes needed and relaunch this incredible resource for families with Deaf children was definitely a highlight.

Highlights:

The ALSO staff and Board are really the stars of the show this year. ALSO came through a very challenging time, meeting funder targets and successfully supporting the adults and families we serve.

- The Children's Program served 53 children and 38 families.
- ALSO's Adult Upgrading Program served 79 adults.
- ALSO's Deaf Adult Upgrading Program served 26 adults.
- The ASL RAPP website was revised and relaunched in 2021-2022

Success Stories

Children's Program

Although Covid measures limited us in some areas of the Children's program (e.g. group sensory activities), we were able to work on all areas of development for our children ages 6 months – 6 years old. We focused on a sequence of physical and emotional development, speech and language development, and gross and fine motor development by observing each child and choosing activities for each individual child to develop and enhance their learning.



The children in our program worked on a special craft - building a birdhouse and placing it in the yard. During the beautiful summer days we took trips down to the community pool and park, where we were able to have snack picnics and work on our physical skills. The children also took advantage of planting seeds and watching their plant grow.

Mina Fahim, ALSO Child and Family Educator

Adult and Deaf Adult Upgrading Programs

ALSO teachers and students continued to adapt this past year to the changing conditions brought on by the pandemic. ALSO offers a hybrid model which saw many students choosing online schoolwork, and a smaller number of students choosing in-person learning in 2021-2022. Online students chose to work through video-conferencing tools (such as Zoom) or chose to work independently and communicate with their teacher by phone and email. This allows for flexibility and ease for students, many of whom are trying to navigate schoolwork while managing demanding work schedules or caring for children. In addition to direct instruction, teachers also provide students with information and access to mental health supports and assistance accessing community resources, in addition to other pandemic related issues.

Emmanuella had struggled to manage her work schedule as a PSW and her classes in the past, but during the pandemic she was able to focus and complete four remaining English, science, and math credits. She is currently enrolled in Algonquin College's Practical Nursing Program.

Melissa has always loved animals, but has struggled with consistency in school and was recovering from the adverse health effects of addiction. Melissa committed to in-person classes, received the support she needed to complete Grade 11 biology, and is currently enrolled in the Veterinarian Technologist program at Algonquin College.

Williams has always enjoyed cooking, and wanted to upgrade his employment and find a well-paying job in the food services industry. Through the PLAR program and after completing his remaining four credits with ALSO, Williams was able to receive his OSSD. Williams was hired by the Ottawa Hospital and is currently working in food services at the Civic Campus.

Saeeda is very interested in gaining the skills she needs to become a Deaf Adult Literacy Practitioner. She has been working on the Deaf Literacy Initiative e-course to receive an LBS Practitioner certificate. She passed the 101 level course and has moved onto the 102 level course. She is receiving mentoring, as well as instruction and support for skill development at ALSO. She is doing very well.

Samnang has worked hard to prepare for his G1 test. He has also been upgrading his skills, in the hopes of gaining employment. This year he passed his G1 test and secured a job with Amazon. Both wonderful achievements.

James had been working for 30 years and came to ALSO while employed with TMSI (Thunderbird Sports), in their golf program. Due to a lack of a HS diploma, James was never confident about trying to go further in his career or talk about his educational history. He was ashamed at not having graduated from high school but was determined to rectify this, and pursue his career aspirations. He completed four courses virtually, within a year - all to a very high level - and was able to add a HS diploma to his list of achievements. He is now pursuing a promotion to a senior level position, while also looking at becoming a golf professional.

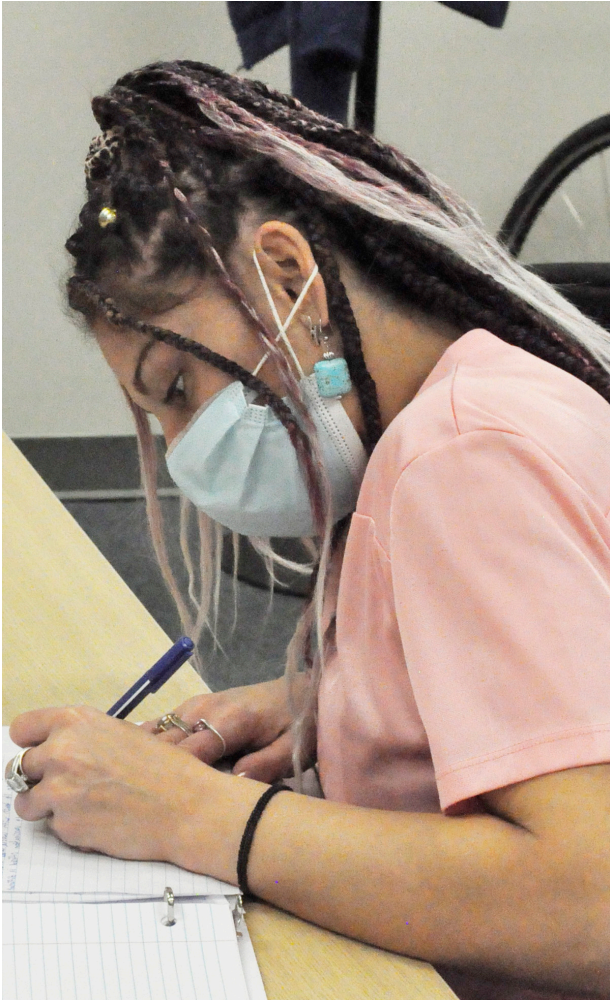
Spencer had struggled with his education, and was seven credits shy of completing high school when he joined ALSO. His employment was affected by COVID shutdowns, but he used the time wisely and started to earn HS credits. After some of the COVID restrictions were lifted, Spencer was able to start work again and earn more credits through the co-op program run in conjunction with the Ottawa Carleton District School Board. As he completed his co-op credits, he was also able to complete College level math and English courses which enabled him to graduate and contemplate applying to college.



Richard had been struggling with mental health and addictions issues when he started with ALSO. His goal was to improve his English literacy skills. He was dedicated, even though he was still receiving support for his addictions and had to take time away from ALSO. Richard was one of those greatly affected by the COVID lockdowns in 2020 and 2021, as he was in need of the one-on-one support ALSO offers. We continued on with phone calls and sending work through the mail, which wasn't ideal but Richard stuck with it, and over time his confidence and skills improved so much that Richard felt he could volunteer his time to help others.

Joseph had been working in a variety of positions within the car industry for about 25 years, and had reached a point where his lack of English skills was holding him back. He worked with ALSO for a year, receiving support via Zoom lessons to upgrade his English. He completed a Grade 12 English course and applied for a number of positions within his field of expertise. He achieved his goal of obtaining a better job when he was hired into a Parts Manager position by Myers VW in Barrhaven during the latter part of 2021.

- ALSO Adult and Deaf Adult Program teaching teams



From the Board President

The last two years have been challenging for everyone in so many ways, just as it has been for ALSO. I am happy to report that because of the efforts and ingenuity of our great staff under Kim's outstanding leadership, the organization has not only endured, but found ways to adapt programming to be even more relevant for the times with the addition of hybrid and remote learning options.

As the only constant in this world is change, we can expect ALSO will continue to need to evolve and pivot due to shifting circumstances. This is why the Board has been keeping its sights aimed toward the future by prioritizing strategic planning, long-term investments, and exploring new funding opportunities. The Board added a new director this year, Joyce Chamas, whose expertise in financial planning has already been a valuable addition.

This has also been a year of change on the staff front. Long-time employee Mark Caulfield decided to take a well deserved retirement. On behalf of the Board, I would like to thank Mark for all of his tremendous contributions to ALSO's mission over his nearly ten years of service. I would also like to welcome a new team member, Edouardo Lagayan, who recently joined our organization.

I wish everyone in the ALSO family - our amazing staff, volunteers and learners - a restful holiday season and happy 2022-2023.

Tim Klodt, ALSO Board President



Financial Report

This was another highly unusual year with the rest of the world having to navigate through uncertain times like we've all had to. The Board and Executive Director were kept on their toes to ensure the continued viability of ALSO.

Stand out changes from a quick browse of the year-end financial statements include a decrease in Foundations Revenue and an increase in our Donations Revenue. ALSO did not have significant project-based funding this fiscal year. Our focus was on ASL RAPP and the donation strategy, in addition to finding our way back into the classrooms through the pandemic.

Special mention goes to our Executive Director whose Grant writing skills and knowledge of funding initiatives have ensured that ALSO continually makes use of all available alternatives in pushing forward our vision. She ensured that our savings in expenditures far exceeded the decreased revenue, allowing ALSO to close the year with a surplus.

Key financial indicators are continually being monitored with the agreed reserve balance well above the threshold \$85K. 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 especially our staff. From a key financial indicators standpoint, I'm glad to say that we continue to both meet and exceed expectations.

Robert Mowako, ALSO Treasurer

