

Spring Newsletter 2011

► Leacock Foundation Surpasses \$1M in Net Revenue

We are thrilled to announce that for the first time ever in Leacock history, we have surpassed \$1M in net revenue. Thank you to our dedicated members, donors, volunteers, and school partners. We truly could not do it without you! We hope you enjoy reading a recap of our 2010 activities, knowing that you helped make it all possible! THANK YOU!!!



Campers and teachers say "THANKS" to the Leacock Foundation for providing them with the opportunity for such a fun-filled learning experience. See you next summer!

► TRIANGLE OF HOPE PROGRAMS

Toronto Summer Literacy Camps

Almost 200 youngsters attended one of our three LEAP INTO LITERACY summer camp programs. The students, from Grades 1 to 6, were from schools in one of our three Toronto District School Boards: St. James Town, Keele-Finch and Scarborough, all areas with high-needs in our city.

Teachers recommend students based on lagging abilities in reading and writing. The program's primary aim is to prevent a summer slide back and provide these children with academic support in a camp-like environment.

Last summer, focused reading and writing activities were interspersed with field trips to places that included the Zoo, the Royal Ontario Museum, Loblaws cooking school, the Botanical Gardens, the Toronto Island and the Norval Outdoor Education Centre.

Thank you, Havergal College and Branksome Hall, our Triangle of Hope partners, for providing enthusiastic, dedicated high school volunteers plus fabulous facilities for the month of July. Thanks also to York University for their support in providing facilities to our Derrydown camp.



Reading and writing are so much more interesting when computers and teenage volunteers are involved.

Saturday Morning Programs

The Leacock Foundation is pleased to be funding two popular Saturday morning programs for the students at Derrydown Public School and Rose Avenue Public School.

On Saturday mornings, Derrydown is a community hub for neighborhood families: children take extra classes in literacy, mathematics and French, and choose from a long list of enrichment programs, such as robotics, computer animation, art, woodworking, drumming and dance. Parents attend workshops in nutrition and parenting while their children are in classes.

Rose Avenue's focus is on reading skills for Grade 2-3 students and writing skills for Grades 4-6. Lessons are conducted in small classes of 10 students with one teacher and

two volunteers. After working hard, children participate in enrichment activities, including art, sports, computer animation and even magic.

Both programs succeed through the dedication of teachers and volunteers from our partner schools. Thank you!

► **TORONTO AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMS**

Rose Avenue Public School and Branksom Hall



Wednesday after school Rose Avenue Public School is a hub of activity with three special programs linking senior students from Branksome Hall with learning buddies from Rose Avenue.

Over 50 students are paired, one-on-one, for assistance in reading or mathematics. The reading program supports struggling grade 2-3 readers while the JUMP math program provides tutoring to grade 5-6 students.

New this year was a special Public Speaking and Debating Club, initiated by a tenth grader from Branksome keen to share her experiences and passion for debating with young aspiring debaters from grade 5 and 6. Students explored expressive and interpretive reading, triple speak and formal debating while learning how to research, form arguments and listen carefully to the ideas of others.



Woburn Jr. Public School and Greenwood College

In January Woburn's grade 4 students were keen to return to school. They looked forward to opening school with their mentors and friends from Greenwood College. Our thanks goes to D'Arcy Bak, a Greenwood College student for submitting the following article to our newsletter.

A group of eight Greenwood Grade 12 students, including myself, have been volunteering in two Grade 4 classrooms at Woburn Jr. Public School in Scarborough as a part of the Grade 12 Challenge Week program, accompanied by Ms. Hacker, Ms. Lucas and Ms. Kanani.

The purpose of this project was to build leadership skills and create some new friendships with the children from Woburn. The theme of the week was Medieval Times, and all of our activities had something to do with this specific time period.

For example, all of the staff and students involved in this Challenge Week spent a day at Casa Loma learning about the medieval era and experiencing what it would be like to live in a real castle, and on Friday we hosted a Medieval Carnival for the Woburn students, complete with crown-making, cookie decorating, and Medieval games and dancing.

All of the children were extremely energetic and enthusiastic during the time that they spent with us. It seems as though the kids from Woburn learned a lot and developed many new relationships with the grade 12's from Greenwood.

The program allowed the grade 12 students to develop new leadership skills. Many responsibilities were placed on us and it was important that we followed through on everything in order to keep events running smoothly. After going through the experiences of this Challenge Week I now have a greater understanding of the jobs that teachers do every day. Teaching is not just about instilling information in the mind of the kids, but it is also about creating strong relationships with your students and learning from them as well.

► **VOLUNTEER TEACHERS IN SOUTH AFRICA**

Winter Booster Camp

In July, winter in South Africa, schools close for a mid-term break. Yet, for the third year running, Leacock hosted Winter School for over 100 Grade 11 and 12 learners from the Get Ahead College.

Canadian volunteer teachers worked alongside their South African colleagues to provide two weeks of extra classes in English, science and mathematics in preparation for the end of the year national exams.

For the Grade 12 graduating class, a winter school highlight is a trip to the Grahamstown Arts Festival. For many, this is their first trip outside the Queenstown area.

Leacock offers profound appreciation to the donor family for making funding for this invaluable project possible and to our volunteers for their time and expertise: Charlotte Danard (Branksome Hall), Oksana Jajeczyk (Branksome Hall), Jennifer Walcott (Greenwood College), Gillian Christie, Lydia Ding and Georgia Nowers.

Volunteers Made August “LIBRARY MONTH” in South Africa

The students at both the Queenstown and Whittlesea campuses are ecstatic over three new libraries.

At Get Ahead in Queenstown, volunteers Georgia Nowers (Branksome alum) and Verna Hafner (TDSB) spent their summer establishing separate libraries for primary and older students. While at Whittlesea, Pat Gareth, Salimah Gowa and Michelle Lawrence (Derrydown) and Jennifer Wyatt (Havergal) worked feverishly for two weeks to revitalize its library space. These three bright and beautiful spaces invite enthusiasm for reading and are now the site of class visits, new library programs and huge numbers of book borrowing by students of all ages.

These wonderful new libraries will go a long way in helping nurture a reading culture at Get Ahead.



Whittlesea classes visit the library regularly for read-aloud time and book exchange.

“You mean we can come here every week and get a book!”

► Grade 2 QGAP student

► **GET AHEAD PROJECT (GAP) BUILDS ON SUCCESS**

New College Building

Brick by brick, the Get Ahead College in Queenstown, South Africa has expanded to add six new classrooms. These classrooms, which opened in January 2011, accommodate a triple cohort of students from both the Queenstown campus and Whittlesea campus, 30 kilometers away. The College is expected to graduate 85 plus Grade 12 students per year. A photograph of the completed classrooms is to the right.



Create a Classroom

This year, the Annual Leacock Club Golf Tournament, Dinner & Auction netted its highest proceeds ever -- **\$230,000!**

In large part, this is due to the outpouring of generosity towards a new initiative called 'Create a Classroom'. This was a special year for us, with the extensive GAP College building project. We needed to furnish and equip the six classrooms that were being built, and when we reached out for help, you responded beyond our highest expectations. To the right, is a picture of a teacher unpacking and setting up her new classroom. Thank you for your generosity!



Technology at Get Ahead

For the past 18 months, Leacock has worked with Get Ahead to bring technology and the Internet into the classroom. We are fortunate to have Karen Lawrence, a Canadian technology educator, on board. Since June 2010, she has been in South Africa developing curriculum links with technology and providing teachers with professional development.

Erin Carey, a Toronto educator and technology guru, spent part of her summer in Queenstown where she helped develop the technology infrastructure and trained teachers in its application.

By the end of this month 23 classrooms at QGAP and 9 classrooms at WhitGAP will have a computer, LCD projectors and screens. Whittlesea and Queenstown each have a full computer lab with 36 workstations and intranet LAN setups. Queenstown is connected to the internet and it won't be long before it is available in Whittlesea, we hope!



Volunteer Teacher Program

One of our most valuable programs for our Get Ahead Project partner schools is our Canadian volunteer teacher program.

These volunteers bring Canadian expertise and experience, and generously partner with local colleagues to share teaching strategies, resources and professional development.

In exchange for a six-month commitment to work at one of Get Ahead's schools, Leacock provides three teachers at a time with airfare and accommodations in Queenstown. The volunteers are responsible for their own food, entertainment and recreational travel.

We are extremely grateful to those who have participated in the program to date. In December, Jessica Landis (York University) and Verna Hafner (TDSB) returned to Toronto after six months of hard work and time forming strong connections with learners and staff. Jessica is going back for another six months to set up a special education classroom at Whittlesea. She will be joined by Jan Siegel (TDSB) and Courtney Doldron (TDSB).

Leacock is currently interviewing applicants interested in teaching placements from July 2011 through to December 2011. Individuals must be certified Canadian teachers and should send their CV to jmaclellan@leacockfoundation.org ASAP if interested.



The Leacock Foundation is fortunate to have a group of talented teachers who generously offer their time outside our six-month program. In addition to those already highlighted in this newsletter, 2010 saw Herta Park (TDSB), Margaret Whewall (TDSB), John Bulger (Hillfield-Strathallen) and Doreen Laird (Woburn) donate enormous time and expertise to the local community. Herta was in Queenstown for 11 of the past 12 months, an exceptional commitment to Get Ahead. Margaret fell in love with the Get Ahead's 4 and 5 year olds and returned twice, for months at a time, to support the Grade R class. For John and Doreen, who gave over their summer vacations to Get Ahead, these were also return visits.

As you can see, a trip to Get Ahead has a way of getting into one's heart and the call to return is great. Anyone interested in visiting please get in touch with Leacock and let us know your plans.



Congratulations GAP Graduates

The Leacock and Get Ahead communities are exceptionally proud of last year's Grade 12 matric students. Thanks to hard work, commitment to their studies, and the dedication of their teachers, every single one of them passed the national graduation exams. The year was particularly challenging because of a mandated five-week school closing during the World Cup, followed soon after by a government teachers' strike that resulted in almost three more weeks of missed classes at Get Ahead.

In a country where the annual pass rate for Grade 12's hovers around 60%, with the Eastern Cape pass rate traditionally under 40%, a 100% pass rate for Get Ahead learners is a phenomenal coup. This is the second year graduates have achieved such terrific success. We look forward to following the careers of the Get Ahead College graduates.

GET AHEAD Student Sponsorship Opportunity

We are profoundly grateful to the Canadian families who currently sponsor 41 learners at Get Ahead Project Schools. The recipient families are so appreciative of the support enabling their children to receive an exceptional education. With the new school year just beginning, we have heard from the Get Ahead community that there are about six additional families needing help this year.

GAP Sponsorship includes tuition, books and a school uniform for a child. Both full and partial sponsorships have been requested. If you and your family are interested please contact Lindsay Dutton at lindsay@leacockfoundation.org or 416-489-9309.



THE LEACOCK FOUNDATION NEEDS YOUR HELP TO WIN

\$100,000

TO SEND 200 KIDS TO SUMMER LITERACY CAMP!

The Leacock Foundation has partnered with redseven charitable foundation, and has been accepted to the Pepsi Refresh Challenge to vie for top prize of \$100,000, to fund our 2011 Summer Literacy Camps.

The project with the most online votes, wins!

Redseven is a Toronto-based organization dedicated to youth education, working to improve the lives of Toronto's youth-at-risk. Join redseven and The Leacock Foundation and help make Toronto a better place.

HERE'S HOW YOU CAN HELP:

- Make your computer homepage www.refresheverything.ca/redseven
- **VOTE EVERY DAY** from March 1 to April 30
- Share the excitement. Get your friends and family to **VOTE EVERY DAY!** You can vote once a day for each email address you have.

Thank you for voting!



THE LEACOCK CLUB