

STRONGER TOGETHER

Creating Impact through Community Connections



2016 ANNUAL REPORT

THE LEACOCK FOUNDATION

WHO WE ARE

At the Leacock Foundation we believe that there is a deficit of opportunity, not ability, for children born into challenging economic circumstances. All children, regardless of financial resources, are born with boundless potential.

By providing fully subsidized access to educational enrichment and leadership development, we are helping to change the trajectory of a child's life by giving him or her the tools they need to succeed in school and in life.



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A LETTER FROM PETER OLIVER

President and Founder of
the Leacock Foundation

Dear Friends,

As I think back on 2016, and the impact of the Leacock Foundation on the communities we serve, I am struck by how far and fast we have grown over the past 14 years. In Toronto we now have over 1,300 children enrolled in our programs. These young people aged 6–14 are provided with quality academic instruction, meaningful experiences and lasting mentorship that will help them succeed in school and in life. In South Africa, over 1,400 students are enrolled at the Get Ahead Project School, and are receiving a life changing education to which they would not otherwise have access.

There is a South African proverb which states “The best time to plant a tree is 20 years ago; the next best time is now”. I can see Leacock reflected in those wise words.

Leacock began as a vehicle to give back, and to acknowledge our privilege by extending opportunity to those less fortunate. From this simple premise, a vast network of students, teachers, volunteers, parents, academic leaders, administrators and community advocates have engaged in our work and moved it forward in ways I never could have envisioned so many years ago. The seed we planted has flourished into a mighty tree.



However, I believe that now is the time to plant our next tree, that we must dig deeper, and create an even greater impact. In Toronto this means strengthening our existing programs and finding ways to reach other communities in need. We were thrilled to have received funding from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, the Canada Post Community Foundation, the TELUS Toronto Community Board and the President’s Choice Children’s Charity who recognized the potential and value in our programs and joined us in furthering their impact.

In South Africa, our newly hired Executive Director, Mariette Visser, has worked tirelessly to improve the strategies, systems, and curriculum across all three campuses. She has invigorated the teaching staff through meaningful professional development, and has helped students plan for the future with a robust guidance program. We are now poised to embark upon our next adventure in South Africa, a five year multimillion dollar



campaign to build a state of the art STEAM Centre, utilizing a partially vacant building on the GAP campus. This space will incorporate a science lab, art room, music room, tech lab, makerspace, school hall, and will be a multi-faceted resource centre that will serve as a beacon of hope for GAP students and the entire community of Queenstown. We look forward to sharing these details with you in the coming months and I think you will be inspired by what we hope to achieve.

To each of you, who have supported us along the way, I thank you very much. It is an amazing feeling to be able to look back at a job well done, but even better at this stage in life, to be inspired by what is to come.

Peter Oliver



HIGHLIGHTS OF 2016

TORONTO



> Take the LEAD – A Social Justice doubles in size and impact

The Leacock Foundation receives a grow grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation of \$115,200 for two years to expand and enhance this year long leadership program. Over 60 youth in Grade 7 and 8 across four underserved communities benefit, meeting twice weekly to come up with solutions to challenges they see in their community. These changemakers are proposing greater attention to pedestrian safety, family rates for the TTC and gender neutral bathrooms in schools — to name a few!



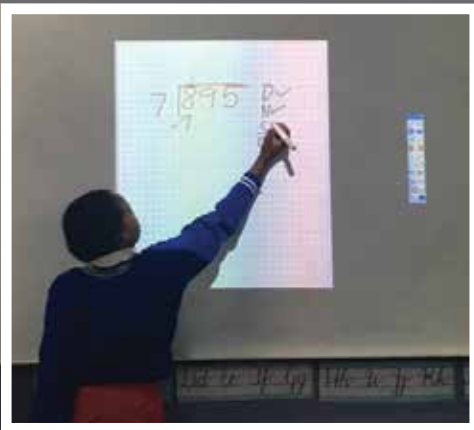
> March Break Literacy Day Camp extends its reach to Grade 1 students

With a high immigrant student population along with a growing need for early literacy intervention in our school communities, this day camp creates a comfortable, encouraging space for children to practice their emerging English language skills.

SOUTH AFRICA

> The Get Ahead Project launches a three year strategic plan

Get Ahead Project launches a three year strategic plan to support the students in becoming 21st century innovators! By incorporating STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Entrepreneurialism, Arts and Math) into the school curriculum across all three campuses, students have the opportunity to engage with tools and resources designed to develop vital critical thinking skills. A robust guidance program now provides sustained student support, preparing GAP students for life after high school.



> The Get Ahead Project increases access to technology to enhance student learning

With support from the Leacock Foundation, the school introduces 84 tablets, literacy and math software, interactive eduboard and equips 20 classrooms with interactive devices which allow teachers and students to share electronic feedback in realtime.

UNLOCKING POTENTIAL

RANIYA AND MADHAN

In providing support to students from Grade 1 through to high school, the Leacock Foundation’s Toronto programs reach over 1,300 underserved youth each year. Here are two stories from children in the St. James Town school community.



RANIYA

Grade 4 student Raniya is involved in Leacock Foundation programs year-round. Beginning in Grade 2, she has participated in literacy-based programming including Saturday Morning Club, LEAP into Literacy Summer Day Camp and Reading Buddies.

While her involvement has had a positive impact for Raniya academically, particularly with reading, math and social studies, it has also given her access to new experiences which broadens her perspective and builds her self-confidence.

Her favourite memories involve trying new things like soccer and swimming, going on field trips and meeting new friends at her school, Rose Avenue Junior Public School, and from the First Nations School of Toronto. “There’s some students in my class this year at Rose Avenue



MADHAN

School that I didn’t talk to, but now I talk to them a lot. Going to Saturday Morning Club makes me have a different life.”

For Madhan, Leacock programs have helped to shape his experience as a new Canadian. When Madhan first moved to Canada from India, he did not know any English when he began attending school in St. James Town.

Two years later, Madhan is in Grade 6. He now speaks the language fluently and is an active student in his school community.

Madhan was first recommended to the Saturday Morning Club program by his classroom teacher to practice reading, writing and speaking in English. Like Raniya, his involvement in Leacock programs is continuous throughout the school year, participating in LEAP into Literacy Summer Day Camp as well as March Break Literacy Camp.

As one program volunteer shared, “Madhan’s leadership skills have greatly improved and he has become a role model to many of his fellow classmates.”

Madhan’s program teacher, Caitlin, adds “he has shown tremendous initiative through his ability to assist the younger students and guide them with thoughtful suggestions. He is more confident and it is showing in his academics.”

A FAMILY TRADITION OF GIVING BACK

THE SHEEHAN FAMILY

After being introduced to the Leacock Foundation in the early 2000s, Joe, Mary Frances, Jake and Jessica have dedicated their time and resources to wholeheartedly supporting a cause they believe in.

Inspired by Peter Oliver’s passion and leadership, Joe joined the Board of Directors in 2005 and remains an active board member to this day. Mary Frances first became involved as a volunteer in the Reading Buddies after school program.

Their children, Jake and Jessica, found a natural fit in the opportunity to help build a young professionals network. Sitting on the Young Professionals of Leacock (YPL) Board of Directors, they continue to play an important role in engaging the YPL.

When reflecting on the Sheehan family’s contribution, Peter Oliver shares, “success can be measured in all sorts of ways, but in my mind, there can be few families as successful as the Sheehans in terms of their altruistic values, their selfless contribution to helping others and the sense of straightforward goodness which they radiate.” He adds, “their combined efforts and their passion for making a positive difference is contagious and inspiring.”

The family’s commitment and enthusiasm for supporting the community has not only had a



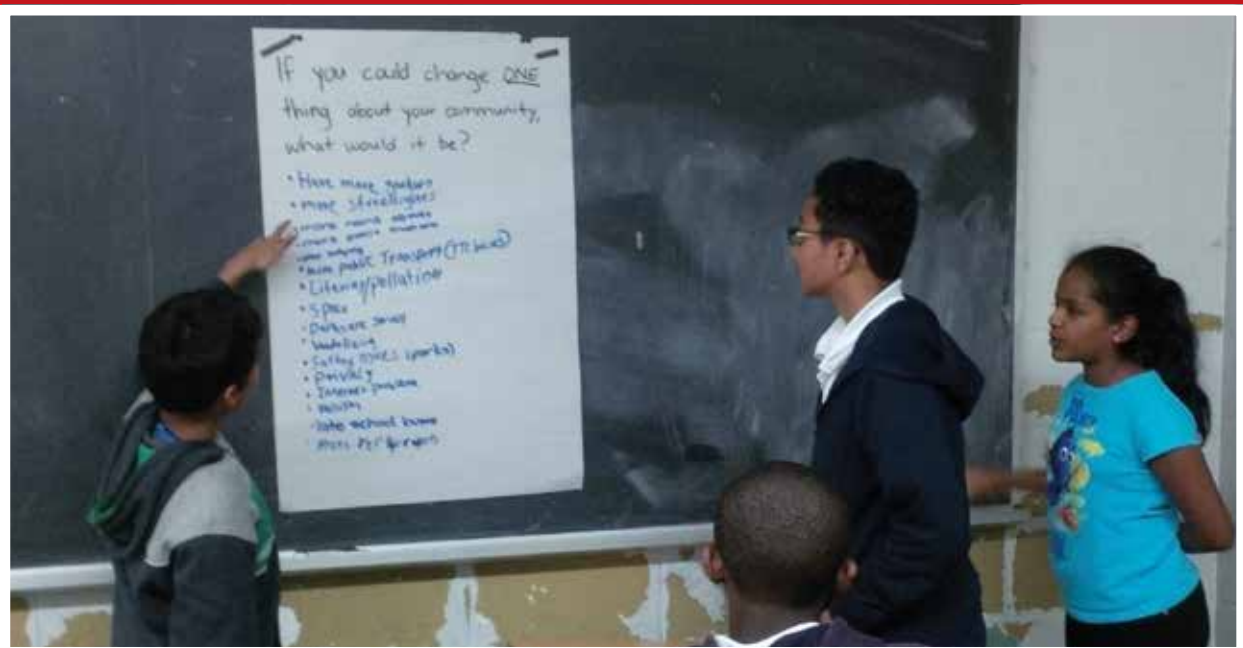
profound impact on the at-risk youth the Leacock Foundation serves, but has also enriched their lives in more ways than one.

“Joe and I used to volunteer in our children’s schools and I think we lived in a bubble. I heard about Leacock and it opened my eyes to the school system in Toronto and abroad in South Africa where there are a lot of discrepancies”, explains Mary Frances.

“A lot of us as are fortunate in our upbringings”, Jake adds. “To have educational programs like Leacock’s in place in Toronto where we can create opportunities for these children is really invaluable. This, and the realization of the immense work being done in South Africa is what really ties me to Leacock.”

Working with other passionate volunteers and being able to introduce friends and colleagues to the Leacock Foundation has been incredibly rewarding too.

The opportunity to give back as a family is truly special to the Sheehans. “To do this as a family has been really amazing”, Joe adds. “I’m pretty proud of my kids”, Mary Frances says with a smile.



SOCIAL JUSTICE LEADERS ARE IMPACTING THE WOBURN COMMUNITY

KARNIYA, PRINCE-AARON AND JOSHUA

For Grade 7 and 8 students like Karniya, Prince-Aaron and Joshua from Scarborough, involvement in the Leacock Foundation’s Take the LEAD—A Social Justice Club program is an incredible learning experience. They are not only learning about issues in their community first-hand; they also feel empowered to be leaders and change makers.

Take the LEAD — A Social Justice Club

- > Yearlong leadership program for students in Grade 7 and 8
- > Participants meet twice weekly and develop, plan, and execute community action plans based on issues in their communities
- > Students travel to Ottawa over March Break to present their ideas to staff on Parliament Hill and at the Assembly of First Nations



> **PRINCE-AARON** participated in Take the LEAD in 2015/2016. He enjoyed it so much he decided to join the club again. In his second year, Prince-Aaron is focusing his project on supporting the local food bank by collecting food donations and raising awareness about its services.

“My group decided we would bring food donations to the Salvation Army. Sometimes there are not enough volunteer workers there and the process to get food out of the trucks and into the food bank is slow. My group will assist them by volunteering and making the food process go faster.”

“I want to be in the political field so this leadership program has really helped me. I learned that public speaking is important. You have to have connections with people. To be a good leader, you have to understand others, not just yourself.”



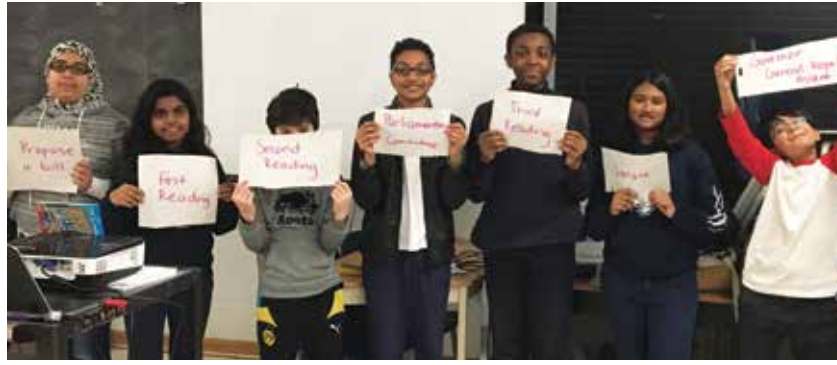
> **KARNIYA** decided to focus her community action project on making public transit more youth accessible by creating Student IDs to show to the bus drivers.

“The senators are a big deal. I can’t believe I actually went (to Ottawa) and talked with them.”

“This program helps me be more bold and brave. Now after presenting in Ottawa and being in this program, I am more comfortable talking to people. I think I’m spending my time the right way.”

> **JOSHUA** is passionate about equal rights for the LGBTQ community. His group chose to raise awareness about the effects of hurtful language and treatment directed towards people who identify as LGBTQ.

“Our group will spread the word in our school, in youth centres, and to people who are new to the country. I’m proud of taking part in Take the LEAD. I joined the summer camp and I made so many friends. I want to continue with Leacock programs. I’ve grown into a great leader and have taken responsibility.”





MY LEACOCK STORY

SAESAN AMIRTHALINGAM

Throughout my seven years with the Leacock Foundation, I have seen many different children, volunteers, and staff, come and go. However there has been one constant and that is the impact that this organization is having on the children and the community.

My name is Saesan Amirthalingam and my Leacock Story started at the Saturday Morning Program at Rose Avenue Public School. Over seven years, ‘I have seen countless children enter the program and watch them grow academically and socially. In turn, I have also seen myself grow as an individual and as an educator.

“Seeing every student smile and enter the school so eager to start the day is a great feeling.”

I started as a volunteer in 2010, running the recreational block at the Saturday Morning program in St. James Town. I knew I wanted to be an educator but I wasn’t sure if I could ever be a good one. By working with the wonderful children in the program and communicating with the amazing and talented staff members, I

became confident that I could make an impact through teaching.

In 2015, I started teachers college at Queen’s University and I know for certain that I would not have been accepted if it wasn’t for the experiences that I gained from the Saturday Morning Club and LEAP into Literacy Summer Camp. Now that I am a qualified teacher, I am able to teach in the Saturday Morning Program! The role of being a teacher for the program has been incredibly rewarding. Seeing every student smile and enter the school so eager to start the day is a great feeling.

I have seen many kids go through the program, move on to middle school and high school. There are times where I bump into them in the community or even on the TTC and they are always so appreciative of their time in Leacock programs. This always puts a smile on my face.

GIVING BACK, AND RECEIVING MORE

LIBBY WILDMAN

I have always found that when I feel down or “sorry for myself” that to be of service reminds me how fortunate I really am.

In 2009, I approached Peter Oliver, whose commitment to giving back and motivation to lead had always impressed me. I was hoping to support the Leacock Foundation in some capacity, and Peter suggested I might want to get involved with the Get Ahead Project and help to bring athletics and a running track to the school. Sports and teamwork really are a must to round out not only an education, but a community, a spirit and self confidence to any student and their school.

Peter also suggested that I join them on their first board and trustee meeting in South Africa. I was totally excited; except the Leacock trip was smack in the middle of March Break during our already booked and paid for family trip to Mexico. Nonetheless my 12-year-old son Jack and I left after two days in Mexico and an all you can enjoy self-serve soft ice cream counter! It was well worth it!

Jack arrived with a football to show the boys an American game while I attended meetings across the street with the trustees and school leaders. When Peter and Claire Newton stood up to announce their gift of \$100,000 to Leacock to build a much needed wing on the school, Jack turned to me and pledged, that when he is a QB for the NFL and rich, he too wanted to give lots of money



away. The trip was immediately “worth it” for me. Some things can’t be taught but they are “caught”.

But truly the best part of our trip was the beginning of a very special new friendship with Thembani, a young student and one of the “runners” who represented GAP at running events, and raised funds for GAP with a charitable run.

Thembani has since visited and stayed with us here in Toronto for 3 weeks, attended Kilcoo camp for a week and then went on to finish his degree in Sports Psychology at the same university that Nelson Mandela attended, Fort Hare. He has gone on to create a personal training business with a focus on weight loss and health in his home community. Truly a special young man and one whom I am so happy to have as part of my extended family. All emails from my Tera (his nickname) start off with “Hi Mahatma”. So special.

Leacock has changed the lives not only of the boys and girls of GAP, and their extended families, but also provided a way for all of us who are beyond blessed to live in Canada with an opportunity to give back. Thank you Peter and Leacock!

A LETTER OF GRATITUDE

LUKHO QITSI

What you have done for us is truly special.
It's beyond expectations.

My name is Lukho Qitsi, one of the sponsored learners at QGAP. I am writing this to show how your special and prestigious gift has changed my life including my brother's too. It has impacted our lives in an amazing way. What you have done for us will always be prominent in my mind. It has changed the situation at home, in terms of financial problems we had/were facing.

Being two kids living with our mom (single parent) who doesn't earn that much and granny who lives on a pension, money is tight. My family had to sacrifice and give up most of their things to make it possible for us to go to school. They said no matter what, we have to go to school for as Nelson Mandela said "education is the best weapon a kid can have to change the world".



Your gift has impacted us very much. It has given us the access to higher education without worrying about financial problems. It has allowed us to go beyond our best by allowing us to put in more time to focus on our studies and work. It has decreased the strain my family would've experienced in order for us to complete our higher education.



"Your gift has impacted us very much. It has given us the access to higher education without worrying about financial problems."

FROM TINY SEEDS GROW MIGHTY TREES

MARIETTE VISSER

In 2016, I was brought on to drive excellence at the GAP Schools around five key priorities. These included teacher professional development, extended curriculum opportunities, student guidance, school and board governance and STEAM integration across all three schools. A three year strategic plan was created and we worked together to lay the foundation for GAP's success in 2016 and beyond.

As I am writing this, 2017 is almost half way through, and from the strong foundation created, we are now focusing our efforts on implementation and impact. Our strategic plan has been distilled down to a clear, vibrant one-page document which is displayed in every office and in every classroom. In order to reach our goals with the greatest efficiency possible, we have made organizational changes and hired key employees. Vicki Du Preez has taken on the role of Academic Head of all three schools, replacing the now retired Deputy Principals. Johan Bester, our IT Manager, was hired on in January of 2017 to drive the strategic implementation of technology across the three school sites. Thandokazi Hintsu was appointed School Councillor in January and is working with students on career and study strategies, while at the same time building specific learning plans for struggling students. Esle Steyn, a master science teacher who joined the GAP College this year, has inspired the students in this critical subject area.

STEAM integration has been a key part of our strategic plan and already, we have witnessed



MARIETTE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
OF THE GET AHEAD PROJECT

many exciting developments. The installation of eduboard in the classrooms, thanks to Leacock's support, created so many exciting learning opportunities for the students. Teachers engaged in a variety of professional development courses, learning how to integrate technology into their lesson plans, with more planned for this year. GAP teachers have been enthusiastic and our classrooms are vibrant, busy spaces where children are engaged and challenged.

Our theme for 2017 is "from tiny seeds grow mighty trees." Students who attend GAP have the same potential as students anywhere in the world, but they do lack access to the tools and experiences that will help them become the leaders, entrepreneurs of the future. As we work towards our shared dream of building a STEAM Centre — a space dedicated to science, technology, engineering, arts and math, please know that the entire GAP community believe that each of our tiny seeds deserves the chance to blossom, and we will ensure we do all that is possible to cultivate an inspiring learning community from where they can grow.

STEAM IN MY CLASSROOM

GWEN VAN DEVENTER

STEAM was a very daunting idea when it was first introduced, as it is a change in mindset and pedagogy.



Teachers at GAP have been encouraged through professional development and given support by our leaders with the incorporation of STEAM. We have had various workshops and speakers demonstrating how to integrate STEAM subjects. My excitement grew when various things were implemented in QGAP, namely the Edu-boards (interactive whiteboards), android tablets and the hiring of an art teacher. These additions made the adoption of STEAM more obtainable.

When my Eduboard was installed, I was very excited. In addition to a basic workshop, I also had individual “lessons” with our Integration Specialist, Sarah-Lee Frewen. Together we would work on the Eduboard to become more familiar with it as well as planning integrated lessons. This encouraged me to explore and create my own lessons.

The students LOVE the interactive board — from the games right through to the lessons. The students remember the work a lot easier and can recall back to ‘that cool’ lesson’.

We have approached the introduction of tablets cautiously, but soon came to realize that the students were more than capable and we could learn a lot from them!



At first, I used the tablets as a form of reward for good behaviour. The students looked forward to this lesson weekly and would be sure to remind me of it! This was a great first step to STEAMing in my classroom.

Mid-year we were then given the opportunity to attend the ICT4Red course (Information Communication Technology for Rural Education Development). This motivated me to integrate tech into my lessons with the use of various teaching strategies. This broadened my mind and gave me more opportunities to incorporate STEAM.

The course was a lot of hard work at first, but once I was more confident with the tech, natural integration began to happen. As the course developed so did my confidence and ability to become stronger in my planning and lesson delivery.

Once I started to incorporate what I had learnt as well as what I was doing in the ICT4Red course, I realised how much easier it was to get the students excited, motivated and involved which was evident in their participation and the fact that they could remember the work.

Get Ahead Project students and teachers are enjoying the use of technology and are steadily embracing STEAM. My classes have become fun, my students are learning and we are becoming 21st Century teachers and students!

BECOME INVOLVED

THERE ARE SO MANY WAYS TO GIVE BACK AND MAKE A DIFFERENCE FOR UNDERSERVED YOUTH



- > Volunteer in our Saturday Morning Literacy Club program
- > Become a guest speaker at our Toronto Leadership Retreat, or share your experience via video to GAP students
- > Sponsor a student's education at the Get Ahead Project
- > Ask for donations in lieu of gifts at your next birthday or holiday party
- > Lend your expertise on a volunteer committee
- > Become a member with an annual donation of \$1000

Engage your staff with unique opportunities to partner with the Leacock Foundation

- > Host Grade 7 and 8 students from leadership programs at your business
- > Collect donations on casual dress down days
- > Offer an employee giving/matching gift program
- > Create a corporate impact day by volunteering at our LEAP into Literacy Summer Day Camp
- > Become a sponsor of the Annual Leacock Debate or our Young Professionals' Leacock Lawn Night event
- > Donate your product, service, advertising space or printing



Do you have a new idea of how you would like to be involved?
Get in touch! info@leacockfoundation.org or 416-489-9309



FINANCIAL REPORT: 2016

REVENUE	\$
Memberships and donations	859,509
Fund raising activities, special events and other	291,636
Total revenue	1,151,145
Direct fund raising, special event and marketing expenses	(165,878)
Net revenue	985,267
EXPENSES	\$
Program support funding: South Africa programs	346,424
Program support funding: Toronto programs	600,748
Marketing and indirect fundraising expenses	25,517
General administration	103,860
Total Expenses	1,076,549
Shortfall	(91,282)
Fund balance at beginning of year	820,081
Fund balance at end of year	728,799

A MESSAGE FROM KRISTINE GASTON

Executive Director
of the Leacock Foundation



It is hard to believe that another year has gone by! 2016 was jammed packed with exciting program highlights, fun and successful events, and meaningful connections with donors. Heather, Pat, Lynn and I feel that the most important member of the team at the Leacock office is each of you — and we are very grateful for your ongoing support.

The best part of our work is witnessing the enthusiasm for learning shown by the children in our programs and we would love to share more of that excitement directly with you. In 2017, our goal is to make it easier to connect with each of you in person, at our programs and electronically. We want to hear your ideas and insights, and to keep you updated on how we are progressing. Please feel free to call anytime, or to send us a quick email. We are also active on social media and you can visit our Facebook, Twitter or Instagram pages for daily and weekly updates.



Peter Oliver	<i>President</i>
Mark Damelin	<i>Chairman</i>
Lee Chung	<i>Treasurer</i>
Karrie Weinstock	<i>Education Chair</i>
Dan McAlister	<i>Membership Co-Chair</i>
Joe Sheehan	<i>Membership Co-Chair</i>
Joanne Pickard	<i>Director</i>
Judy MacLellan	<i>Director</i>
Tim Price	<i>Director</i>
Tom Blackmore	<i>Director</i>
Vernon Achber	<i>Director</i>
Wendy Dobson	<i>Director</i>
Jake Sheehan	<i>Young Professionals of Leacock Chair</i>

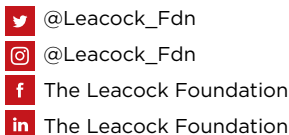
There are so many ways in which you can get involved — from sharing your skills and work experience with an engaged group of Grade 7 and 8 students, to reading on a Saturday morning with a child who needs a little extra support, to visiting the GAP Schools in Queenstown South Africa. You can get involved individually, as part of a group or with your company or business, we are happy to facilitate any or all options!

We would not be able to impact 3,000 children each year without you — and the difference we are making is evident in the pages of this year’s report. I hope you enjoyed the stories shared, and that you see your generosity reflected back in these pages. We all rise when we lift others.

THE LEACOCK FOUNDATION GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGES THE SUPPORT OF THE FOLLOWING ORGANIZATIONS



THE
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The Leacock Foundation

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