

THE LEACOCK FOUNDATION

Cultivating Community

2019 *Annual Report*



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WHO WE ARE

A world forever changed

At the time of writing this report, Canada and other parts of the world are slowly beginning to emerge from the lockdown, while other countries are still grappling with the threat of COVID-19. The Leacock Foundation, with its unique emphasis on supporting local and global communities, witnessed first-hand how income disparity plays into a family’s ability to cope during quarantine, and subsequently how marginalized communities will have a harder time regaining equilibrium in our new normal.

We are proud to offer academic support and enrichment to children living in challenging circumstances. More than ever, we are proud to support families by creating a caring community of educators who create a meaningful and lasting impact on the children in our care. Unlocking potential is about more than a student’s grades or future job prospects; it is about creating resilient, empathetic thoughtful young leaders who can help shape their community in positive ways. Our work matters more today than ever before.

WHERE WE WORK

Toronto

In Toronto, programs are offered in collaboration with partner schools in several high-needs communities including St. James Town, Humber-Black Creek, and Woburn. We have many mutually beneficial partnerships with the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, Future Design School, Rotman School of Management, OISE, Branksome Hall, Greenwood College, Kingsway College School and First Book Canada.

South Africa

In South Africa, we work with the Get Ahead Schools’ trio of low-fee independent schools in Queenstown — a rural community in the Eastern Cape near Nelson Mandela’s birthplace. Our donors support these schools through infrastructure, technology updates, teacher development, student support and leadership programs.



A MESSAGE FROM PETER OLIVER

President & Founder

Hello, Leacock Supporters!

Nothing like COVID-19 happened to me when I was at school, but whenever a calamity or serious challenge occurred, we were told that “these things are sent to test us.”

Thanks to the gritty character of our small staff, the Leacock Foundation has truly risen to the occasion, motivated by the conviction that our support programs are needed more than ever. We are meeting the test.

This Covid crisis and its cruel financial aftermath, starkly confirms the dreadful inequality in this world.

The situation has brought unforeseen challenges to my life, but they are tiny compared to the challenges of an immigrant family living in a Scarborough apartment below the poverty line. And that family’s problems are not nearly as awful as those of a family living in a crowded township in South Africa, under the strictest of lockdowns.

Each one of us has had to come to terms mentally with this shock to our lives... initially and naturally, to protect ourselves and our families, and then many have turned their thoughts to what we ought to do to help others less fortunate or less able to cope.

Both here in Toronto, and in South Africa, we bravely and expeditiously pivoted to practical online programs, thanks to our committed, daring and street-smart staff and teachers. Everyday, they are responding to the challenge, taking on new initiatives, such as providing much-needed food parcels for our school families in South Africa.

It is this courageous spirit which inspires me, and makes me so proud and grateful to all of you for your continued support. I encourage you to also rise to the occasion — to hell with this coronavirus!

We would make a wonderful statement of the human spirit if we raised more funds this year than we have before! Thank you to those who have instinctively jumped in and led the way. I know we can do it.

Warm best wishes and thanks to you all. Onward!

Peter Oliver



& KRISTINE GASTON

Executive Director

Dear friends,

We chose the theme of community for our annual report long before the reality of COVID-19 impacted our lives so dramatically. The events of the past few months have certainly illuminated how interconnected our local and global communities are, and how we rely on the health and wellbeing of everyone in order to secure our own safety. Community matters to us at the Leacock Foundation, because we know that we rely on our parents, our teachers, our school leaders, our volunteers, our mentors, and our individual and corporate funders in order to make a difference in the lives of the children we serve. As we look back on 2019 there are so many highlights to share and celebrate and we are so grateful to all of you for making our work possible. There is no doubt that the world we once knew is forever altered, but our community will continue to have a positive impact on the lives of so many young people.

Kristine Gaston



“Where there’s hope, there’s life. It fills us with fresh courage and makes us strong again.”

— ANNE FRANK

POWER OF PARTNERSHIPS

Leacock Programs are enhanced by our partnerships with organizations like First Book Canada



First Book Canada (FBC) provides new, high-quality books that make their way into the hands and homes of children who would otherwise not have books of their own. Tom Best, Executive Director of FBC, shared, “Through our partnership with the Leacock Foundation, FBC has been able to create valuable opportunities for underserved students to share the love of literacy!

Through their work in some of the highest priority neighbourhoods in the Greater Toronto Area, the Leacock Foundation joins with us, united in our mission to provide books to kids by spreading the word and spreading the love and joy of literature and learning. Their dedicated staff and innovative

programs for both their Saturday Morning Literacy Club and their summer literacy camps is impressive. Their commitment to building stronger communities is both unwavering and remarkable.”

Over the course of our 2019 LEAP into Literacy Summer Camps and our 2019-2020 Saturday Morning Literacy Clubs we have distributed close to 1500 books and workbooks to children enrolled in our programs. We have also hosted many reading celebrations featuring local authors such as Kevin Sylvester, Lana Button and Helaine Becker. The children loved meeting the authors and taking home copies of their books.

Access to books makes a huge difference for children in disadvantaged circumstances. Children who read four or more books over the summer perform better on reading-comprehension tests in the fall, yet many kids from low-income households do not have books of their own or cannot afford to buy high-quality, engaging books that will foster their reading ability.



“Through our partnership with the Leacock Foundation, FBC has been able to create valuable opportunities for underserved students to share the love of literacy!”

— TOM BEST, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF FBC



OUR PARENTS

The most important piece of our learning community

Leacock programs are offered in three high-needs communities in Toronto — Woburn, St. James Town and Humber/Black Creek. Our continuum of care provides programs for children from Kindergarten to Grade 8 and is focused on literacy development in the first stages, and leadership in the final stages. The key to our success over the years has been in our desire to engage with the parent community. Our parents live in humble circumstances and face many challenges in caring for their families, but they are united and steadfast in their hope that education will help their children realize a brighter future.

A true advocate for her children, Nita Goswami, a parent volunteer at the LEAP into Literacy Summer Camp, wanted to give back to the Leacock Foundation. Initially she committed for 2 weeks but decided to commit the entire duration of LEAP. Through her volunteer commitment, she acquired additional skills to help her children at home. With a smile, she said, “By volunteering I was able to connect with my kids on the way home when they would talk to me about how they spent the day at the camp. We would discuss reading and writing so it helped me have literacy in my home too.” She added, “My kids learned reading and writing everyday, which encouraged them to write at home. As a volunteer I could observe

ideas from the teachers. I used them at home (like giving my kids free topics to write about) and it worked! When I was working with the kids, I noticed that at the beginning they had difficulty with spelling and grammar and now I can see their improvements. I think everyone is more prepared for school now — not just my kids.”



“The teachers are really remarkable... There was not a single day the kids did not want to come to camp.”

— NITA GOSWAMI, PARENT VOLUNTEER, LEAP INTO LITERACY SUMMER CAMP

She shared, “The teachers are really remarkable — most camps don’t have teachers but more camp counsellors. Shirley was also amazing; she takes care of everything. There was not a single day that the kids did not want to come to camp.” She added, “The teacher I worked with was really great, always prepared and had such interesting ideas. The kids were always playing games and didn’t even know they were learning!”

Nita has also been instrumental in helping us throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, connecting us with families in need and helping to distribute books and resources safely.



KEY FINANCIAL PARTNERS

Thank you to Nicola Wealth



Building on our proven success in providing quality literacy programming in 2019 we launched a March Break Math Literacy Intensive in our targeted communities. The fully funded five-day program focused on math literacy, including numeracy, providing children in underserved communities the opportunity to explore mathematics in a safe, supportive environment. We were thrilled that Nicola Wealth Management agreed to fund our pilot of the program. Nicola Wealth has been a long-time partner of the Leacock Foundation, sponsoring events and providing critical funds that have helped to enhance and develop programming across our continuum of care.

“We are pleased to support the Leacock Foundation and have done so for several years through funding the Spring Break Program.

Nicola Wealth’s philanthropic strategy is built around the goal to foster the culture of giving, inside and outside of our firm. The Leacock Foundation has helped do exactly that; Leacock was first introduced to our charity committee by one of our financial advisors and is now a highlight within our Toronto team’s volunteer calendar. We are delighted to support the incredible work The Leacock Foundation does to support the community and develop the leaders of tomorrow.”

In our first year, 140 children participated in the program. Vanessa Fernando, Site Director at the Woburn Jr. P.S. site, said, “The impact of the curriculum goals on student’s skill-building, confidence and application of knowledge in the classroom was positively demonstrated throughout the course of the week. Each day, students were introduced to the specific strand of math that they were going to be working through. The fact that there was a hands-on component related to each strand helped students build confidence in the specific topic as well as their application of knowledge. Students were able to apply the knowledge they learned to “real life” problems.”



“We are delighted to support the incredible work The Leacock Foundation does to support the community and develop the leaders of tomorrow.”

— JESSICA ARAKGI, NICOLA WEALTH MANAGEMENT



KEY FINANCIAL PARTNERS

Thank you to the Ontario Trillium Foundation



The Leacock Foundation was a grateful recipient of a \$213,000 Grow Grant made by the Ontario Trillium Foundation to support the expansion of our signature literacy programs in Toronto. The funds will be used over the 2019-2021 school years to expand the reach of our LEAP into Literacy Summer Camp (LEAP) in our St. James Town and Woburn communities and enhance the execution of a Saturday Morning Literacy program in our Humber/Black Creek community.

We were thrilled to celebrate our grant with Local MPP Mitzie Hunter and Maggie Broda, an OTF volunteer, who stopped in to hear how the program being offered in Scarborough and two other communities is progressing. The funds will allow for an enhancement of LEAP to accommodate younger students and students who have designated Individual Education Plans (IEPs).



“Initiatives like LEAP into Literacy Summer Camp allow our children to develop a strong sense of well-being and belonging, and expands their understanding of the world.”

— MITZIE HUNTER, MPP,
SCARBOROUGH-GUILDWOOD

“This initiative will empower our children by providing them with the opportunity to develop their skills, competencies, and confidence. This Ontario Trillium Foundation grant is an investment in Scarborough’s future as well as neighbouring communities. Initiatives like LEAP into Literacy Summer Camp allow our children to develop a strong sense of well-being and belonging, and expands their understanding of the world. I am excited to embark on this lifelong literacy journey with the Scarborough community,” said Mitzie Hunter, MPP for Scarborough-Guildwood.

In our first year we saw a tremendous response from the community with an attendance average of 92% across both sites. Collectively 41 volunteers dedicated 4,080 community service hours through our partnerships with Woburn Collegiate Institute, Jarvis Collegiate Institute, Branksome Hall, Crescent School, Greenwood College School, and Cedarbrae Collegiate Institute.

Here is what the students had to say about LEAP:

Third time LEAP participant Abeer Sarfraz, Grade 5 LEAP student said, “Teachers, volunteers and students are super nice and easy to approach. If you need help, they will help you and make you feel comfortable as if you’re at home.”

April Curate, Grade 5 student at Woburn Jr. P.S., is a seasoned Leacock participant. With much enthusiasm she shared, “It’s different here because most camps don’t teach literacy and math. You will get to learn a lot in a fun way than just going to a different camp where all you do is play. If there’s something you can’t do, they will teach you how to do it. They teach us knowledge.”



CREATING A COMMUNITY OF ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE



In 2019, Get Ahead saw the first cohort of Merit Based Scholarship recipients attend the school. In 2018, students were invited to take an entrance exam which was designed to identify those students with academic potential. Based on their scores, students were offered scholarships to attend Get Ahead College. The objective of the program is to retain our top performing students and to attract academically distinguished students entering Grade 8.

By increasing the academic potential in our student body, we hope to raise the quality of learning and the standard of teaching, resulting in all students performing at a higher level. The ultimate goal is a 100% Matric pass rate in 2021. In 2019, 37 students received Merit Based Scholarships and have since performed 15-20% better than their peers across all subject areas. The Scholarship Program is funded in part by a number of anonymous donations for which we are very grateful.



The Scholarship Program is further enhanced by the PATHS Program sponsored by The Unifor Social Justice Fund. In 2018 Unifor made a 5-year pledge to support the program which seeks to be a model for mentorship and guidance throughout a student’s academic journey in South Africa. It is aimed at harnessing the power of high-achieving students while promoting an overall culture of paying it forward within the school and surrounding community. Grade 9 and Grade 11 students who enroll in the program will enrich the Get Ahead

environment and be responsible for growing a culture of peer and staff mentorship. Key to the success of the program is the commitment to giving back to the community. Thando Hintsa, Get Ahead’s Guidance Counselor, is working directly with the students and has created an exciting and worthwhile program.

REALIZING POTENTIAL THROUGH THE SUPPORT OF COMMITTED DONORS

For many years school fees of children attending Get Ahead have been sponsored by Leacock Donors. These students would otherwise not be able to attend the school due to their financial circumstances. Students who qualify for the sponsorship program, do not have the academic requirement of a Merit Based Scholarship, but must work hard and try their best. Sometimes, the best of both worlds come together as is the case with the Head Boy and the Deputy Head Girl at Get Ahead College. Khanya and Phumelela are both sponsored students who have risen above their circumstances and are looking ahead to a bright future. We are so very proud of them and grateful to their sponsors that made their journey possible.



Left: Khanya, Head Boy at Get Ahead College
Right: Phumelela, Deputy Head Girl at Get Ahead College



Khanya, along with 4 of his 5 siblings, live with their Grandmother after their mother died in 2013. He started attending Get Ahead College in Grade 8 and was granted a

sponsorship the same year. Khanya is involved in Public Speaking, is the Student Christian Organisation Deputy Chairperson and regularly donates blood in the school's blood drive. His subjects for his final year at the College are:

- » English, Geography, isiXhosa, Life Orientation, Life Sciences, Mathematics and Physical Sciences, with Physics being his favourite subject.

His teachers describe Khanya as a well-behaved young man, who is very respectful and well mannered. After he finishes high school, he plans to study mechatronic engineering at university. The aspect Khanya loves most about Get Ahead College is how the teachers care for the students.



Phumelela has been a part of the Get Ahead family since starting Grade 1 at our WGAP campus. She came to Get Ahead College as a Grade 8 student and has been top

of her grade every year. Her sponsorship started in Grade 9 in 2017. She has faced tragedy with the death of her mom last year. Phumelela's days are long: she resides in Whittlesea with her aunt and must catch the taxi to Queenstown at 06:30 in the morning. Most days she only gets back home at 17:30. Her teachers commend Phumelela on her hard-work ethic, how she always strives for the best, and how well behaved and respectful she is. Phumelela is involved in the school's magazine club, THETHA, and was also a Branksome Sister last year. Her favourite subject is Physics and she also takes the following subjects:

- » English, Afrikaans, Geography, Life Orientation, Life Sciences, Mathematics and Physical Sciences.

Her desire is to study either medicine or medical biochemistry at university next year.

BUILDING A 21ST CENTURY LEARNING COMMUNITY

Sakhikamva Foundation is a non-profit organisation, focused on the 4th industrial revolution skills development of youth and children. To date the organisation has interacted with more than 130,000 learners across South Africa through STEM education. Sakhikamva has formed a partnership with Bravio Solutions to develop a 21st-century classroom for the benefit of enriching the students' experience with the 4th industrial revolution. In 2015, Sakhikamva launched the world's first Science, Technology, Robotics, Engineering, Aerospace and Mathematics (STREAM) Laboratory at the Cape Academy for Mathematics Science and Technology, in Cape Town. The STREAM laboratory is an interactive 21st-century science centre, where learners have a space to tinker, exercise their creative ideas and learn new skills.

Through the tireless efforts of Get Ahead Trust Board member Fatima Jakoet, and the Get Ahead Executive team, in 2019, funding was approved to construct a 4iR Classroom on the Get Ahead Campus. This project represents a R500,000 investment in the school (\$50,000 CAD).

The 4iR Classroom is a smaller version of the STREAM laboratory. It provides a stimulating environment for learning STEM skills. The classroom is furnished with technologically advanced equipment such as robotics, 3-D printers and AI kits.



The objectives are as follows:

- » To ensure the essential skills development of grade 8-12 learners in artificial intelligence, design thinking, robotics, coding, aviation and space science.
- » To create a space where the marginalised learners can interact with other their peers in their surrounding communities.
- » To ensure that each student has an enriching 21st century learning experience.

This project will focus on the development of 3-D printing, design thinking, machine learning, artificial intelligence, aviation and space science skills, of grade 8-12 learners at the Get Ahead College in Queenstown. Teachers will be trained on the STEAM philosophy, teaching methodology and programme implementation. Learners will be introduced to various topics during the technology period and after school activities.

Construction is scheduled to begin this spring and will start once it is safe to do so. We can't wait to see the students utilizing this space!



CULTIVATING A LOVE OF MATHS THROUGH INSPIRED TEACHING

Understanding of mathematics is the key to success for many jobs of the future. Nicolas Zata, the Mathematics instructor at Get Ahead has developed the maths' program.

Mr. Zata started working at Get Ahead College on February 1st 2009. He currently teaches Mathematics to Grade 9, 10, 11 and 12 and has a B Sc Ed honours qualification.

For Nicholas, the most enjoyable part of his job is making a difference in the lives of his students. He feels complete when a struggling learner starts participating in learning because of an increased confidence level. It is especially satisfying when he crosses paths with a former College student and they thank him for the input he had in their lives.



“Obstacles define learning — how you rise from them matters the most and makes the difference. Learning happens the moment you are outside your comfort zone.”

— MR. NICOLAS ZATA, MATHEMATICS INSTRUCTOR, GET AHEAD COLLEGE

The Wits Leadership Development Programme and University of Cape Town Graduate School of Business Principals Management Development Programme that Nicholas attended in 2017 and 2018 respectively, highlighted his leadership qualities. Both courses focused on developing leadership and management skills, and provided the knowledge and skills to empower and navigate the challenges faced in the running of schools.

Nicholas' qualities were already visible to those around him; the course content helped Nicholas to see his potential as a leader and he has become an effective leader, bringing unity and positivity to the College. He is currently the Academic Head for the FET Phase/Acting Deputy Head of Get Ahead College.

Nicholas believes that patience is virtue and going the extra mile is non-negotiable.

“Obstacles define learning — how you rise from them matters the most and makes the difference. Learning happens the moment you are outside your comfort zone,” says Zata.



FINANCIAL REPORT

Revenue	\$
Memberships and donations	729,936.00
Fundraising activities, special events and other	325,721.00
Total revenue	1,055,657.00
Direct fundraising, special event and marketing expenses	-132,144.00
Net revenue	923,513.00

Expenses	\$
Program support funding: South Africa programs	311,441.00
Program support funding: Toronto programs	426,925.00
Marketing and indirect fundraising expenses	24,736.00
General administration	119,717.00
Total Expenses	882,819.00
Shortfall/Surplus	40,694.00
Fund balance at beginning of year	222,499.00
Fund balance at end of year	263,193.00

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chairman: Mark Damlin	Directors: Lee Chung Wendy Dobson William Jones Judy MacLellan	Dan McAlister Joanne Pickard Juanita Portela Timothy Price Chad Royer	Joe Sheehan Karrie Weinstock
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HOW TO GIVE

Ways to support the Leacock Foundation

Making an Annual Gift

A minimum gift of \$1000 supports programming in Toronto and South Africa ensuring programs are fully funded and families incur no costs. In Toronto, our literacy and leadership programs have an average cost of \$375-\$750 per participant and in South Africa, \$1200-\$1800 covers the cost of tuition for students who would otherwise not be able to afford to attend the Get Ahead Schools.

Making a Designated Pledge

Direct a larger gift (\$2,500-\$10,000) towards a specific project or program in the community of your choices. Many Leacock supporters chose to direct their gift to either Toronto or South Africa and can also specify the area of focus such as literacy, technology, scholarships or leadership programs.

Make a Multi-Year Pledge

Committing to a series of gifts (\$10,000+) over a number of years offers you the recognition of a larger pledge, managed over time. This approach allows donors to have a greater impact on Leacock programming by allowing us to make longer-term plans based on program sustainability.



THE LEACOCK FOUNDATION

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Our partners & sponsors

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