

JANUARY 2019

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Best wishes for a happy and healthy 2019.

A quick update on this year's activities ...

This school year, we will provide \$1,000 awards to 89 students in 59 Ottawa high schools. In November, we welcomed two new schools to our Program: Norman Johnston Alternate School and Richard Pfaff Alternate School. Alternate schools exemplify what we are trying to achieve. Students who are unable to attend high school on a full-time basis for a variety of reasons – medical, financial, transport to name a few – are still working hard to get their remaining credits in order to graduate. Our award gives them the helping hand that they desperately need to stay to the end. By the end of this school year, the HOST Program will have given out over \$403,000 to hard-working students living in difficult financial circumstances. This is a testimony to the generous and caring citizens and organizations in our community.

While I am confident that we will have sufficient resources to meet our commitments for this year, I am always nervous about next year's levels. Our Board of Directors meets in May to decide on the number of awards that will be given out in the upcoming school year. Our goal is to help at least one boy and one girl in every high school, a current requirement of at least \$118,000.

While current donors have traditionally renewed their donations at a renewal rate of about 70%, simple math tells us that we must constantly add new donors just to sustain current levels. While many individuals and organizations have given us multi-year commitments, most donations are of a one-time nature. This makes it more difficult for us to forecast future donation levels.

That's why we encourage donors to consider monthly donations. For example, a \$10 monthly donation not only provides us \$120 per year but it gives us greater confidence on it being sustained over a longer period.

We have two primary sources of new donors: current donors telling their family, friends and colleagues, and the annual Christmas article in the Ottawa Citizen. Since we never use donations to pay for administrative or marketing expenses, one or more of our Directors pays for the publishing of the article (a \$3,000+ cost.) You can read this year's article at www.helpourstudentsprogram.com/2018Citizenarticle.pdf.

Over the years, we have tried other avenues – television appearance, radio interviews and local newspapers – but none of these resulted in donations. That makes you, our donor, such an important ambassador for the HOST Program. People generally react very favourably when they are told about our mission, that 100% of their donation will go directly to help a student and that they will receive a report in July that includes a financial statement and extracts from the students' letters, describing how the award has impacted their lives.

I hope that you have found this update informative and useful. If you have any questions or comments, please send me a note at info@helpourstudentsprogram.com.

Please visit our web site at www.HelpOurStudentsProgram.com.

Richard Lussier

President

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