

January 15, 2015

First of all, I wish to thank the Ottawa Citizen for publishing on December 20, for the third consecutive year, an article that I wrote about the Host Program. The excerpts from the recipients' letters inspired readers: to date, we have received over 30 donations.

I would like to give you a brief view on how recipients receive their award. Of the 22 recipients, all but one was new to the Host Program. The selection process varied from school to school; however, all of the schools took great care to ensure that their candidate was their most suitable student. In every school, the selection was carefully researched and confirmed by discussions with teachers and staff. There was never a shortage of candidates; we are without doubt helping to fill an important need. Once a candidate is selected, a meeting is arranged for me to meet the student and inform him/her that he/she has been selected to be part of the Host Program. I leave a letter explaining what I just told the student (they really don't hear much after I say, "We are going to give you money each month.") and instructions on how to open a Student Banking account at any RBC branch. This year, a Board member also joined me at several meetings.

For many reasons – busy school schedule, proximity of bank branches, lack of proper official documents – it takes some students quite a while to open their account. In one case, I had to escort a student to my own branch to facilitate his getting an account. Once they receive their account and their bank card, they must send me an email with the appropriate banking information. I then add the student as a payee and transfer \$100 for each month of the school year that has elapsed and I set up a monthly transfer into their accounts on the first day of each subsequent month.

Generally, the transfers stop at the end of November until I receive their Christmas letter telling us how the monthly award helped them. This year, as a result of the later bank enrolment dates, I extended the deadline to the end of December. Once I receive the letter, the bank transfers restart and continue until the end of May. The June transfer only takes place once I have received their end-of-year letter. It's a simple but efficient process. The recipients can use their bank card at any branch or ATM to access their funds as they need them.

Although I am still awaiting one letter, I am sending out this President's Report so that you will see how much your donation has helped hard-working students who live in difficult financial circumstances. Although our recipients typically use their award to help their family and to pay for school supplies and activities, they sometimes use the money to treat themselves. It is important to remember that these young men and women have been living in very challenging circumstances and, for possibly the first time in their life, are able to behave in ways that we often take for granted. Buying a poster for your wall or eating out with friends may not seem like an urgent necessity but it allows them to be a more "normal" teenager.

Excerpts from the letters are posted on our web site, www.host-program.org. Since 2010, we have helped 52 students in need!

I have also attached a financial statement.

With my warmest regards and best wishes for a happy and healthy new year,

Richard Lussier
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