

# REPORT OF ANITA BROOKS KIRKLAND

## 2014 PRESIDENT, ONTARIO LIBRARY ASSOCIATION



### Think It, Do It!

That simple phrase was the theme of Super Conference 2015, and to me it sums up the work of the Ontario Library Association (OLA) during 2014. Over the past few years, the OLA has done some remarkable work

in articulating the values at the core of its mission and in developing a strategic plan that translates thinking into doing.

The *Think It, Do It!* mindset is really an expression of one of the OLA's core strategic priorities, *Transforming Ideas Into Solutions*. Nowhere was this mindset more evident than in the progress we've made in advocacy. The **VIP (Value, Influence, Positioning) Summit** of February brought together stakeholders concerned about the future of Ontario's libraries in all sectors. We realized our common values could ground a powerful, collaborative approach to extending libraries' strategic voice.

The VIP Summit inspired our first ever **Library Day at Queen's Park**, and it is my hope that this becomes an annual event. Small teams composed of members of the OLA Board and representatives from the Federation of Ontario Public Libraries (FOPL) and the Special Libraries Association (SLA) met with politicians from all parties, cabinet ministers and senior bureaucrats. We hoped to help Ontarians understand libraries as essential contributors to the economy, education, lifestyle and culture; while also positioning libraries' positive impact on Ontario's prosperity. Impact Public Affairs,

a government relations consulting firm, helped us develop our strategy and made all of the practical arrangements for the day. Feedback from the meetings was generally very positive, and there have been several opportunities for follow up on specific topics. This was just the beginning of a very powerful collaboration to extend libraries' strategic voice.

The **2015 Super Conference** was another demonstration of OLA transforming ideas into solutions. We took the bold but informed step of restructuring the conference. Feedback about the new timelines and the varying lengths for sessions has been very positive. Many thanks go out to the conference planners and especially to OLA staff for their outstanding efforts in making this transition work so well. The *Think It, Do It!* mindset seemed to capture attendees' collective imagination while creating a buzz around positioning libraries to lead innovation.

I took inspiration from the many award recipients at this year's conference, but particularly from the "two Kens", Ken Haycock and Ken Roberts, joint recipients of the **Larry Moore Distinguished Service Award**. Their words of acceptance poignantly reminded us all of the value of service. I was very pleased to present the **President's Award for Exceptional Achievement** to the Leading Learning Project, a collaboration of stakeholders from every province and territory to create new national standards for school library programs. *Leading Learning: Standards of Practice for School Library Learning Commons in Canada*, published by the Canadian Library Association, is a remarkable document which frames the potential of the learning commons model and guides program growth. To see all of OLA's 2014 award winners,

turn to page 14.

The Ontario Library Association is strong because it continually strives to balance accountability with being responsive to the evolving needs of its members. Behind the scenes, OLA continues to examine its governance structure and explore new opportunities for revenue generation to support growth in programs and services. The board and divisional councils used this strong foundation to ground a bold and creative approach during 2014, and that makes me especially proud to have had the opportunity to serve as president. I am also proud to have represented the OLA at many events over the course of the year. Libraries make a difference, and the OLA makes a difference to libraries and all who work in them and care about them. I encourage you all to become involved in this great organization.

Anita BK



2014 OLA President Anita Brooks Kirkland with incoming 2015 OLA President Jane Hilton at Queen's Park.