

# REPORT OF SHELAGH PATERSON

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ONTARIO LIBRARY ASSOCIATION



2017 was the year to launch the association into the next three years of strategic possibilities! Thank you to OLA members for identifying a number of new areas for the association to tackle, and that will ultimately strengthen our library sector.

Under the leadership of Leslie Weir, OLA president, the OLA board of directors, divisional councils and committees, we are off to a great start with implementing our strategic plan as evidenced by the following 2017 highlights:

- OLA connected with the provincial government to secure further support and funding for public libraries. OLA's and FOPL's idea to strengthen broadband and digital access for rural and First Nations libraries was selected by Ontarians as part of "Budget Talks" to receive **provincial funding** (ultimately an investment of \$3 million!), out of more than 400 submissions. Further, OLA participated in a series of Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport Round Tables on the culture strategy.
- Via **The Partnership**, Canada's network of provincial and territorial library associations, OLA members became part of an international conversation about libraries with the **#IFLAGlobalVision** conversations. OLA also became a member of IFLA this year!

- Establishing a Fund Development program including creation of an advisory committee and identifying our annual campaign targets for 2017/18: The **I Read Canadian Fund** to help kids have access to great Canadian books, and the **New Librarian Residency Award** which jumpstarts a career in academic libraries. Giving to an OLA fund is a direct investment in the library sector.
- OLA's Indigenous Task Force co-sponsored the **First Nations Gathering** in North Bay, May 2017 with Ontario Library Services-North and Southern Ontario Library Services. Ontario's First Nations Public Libraries are community leaders in cultural engagement and language revitalization.
- The launch of "Forest Fridays" (free to Forest registered sites!), which virtually brings an OLA Forest of Reading nominated author into classrooms and school libraries across Ontario. Approximately 1,000 students participate in each Forest Friday by using the chat feature to ask questions.

At our recent staff development retreat at the Ontario Science Centre we became astronauts and mission controllers and journeyed to Mars. Our commander remarked that he had never witnessed such a focused and calm team. With 16 annual events including the OLA Super Conference, Mars is a walk in the park. Thanks as always to a great staff team and our more than 400 volunteers annually who continue to make OLA a **fearless** organization!



**Ontario Library Association**  
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Thank you to The Hon. Eleanor McMahon, the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport for continued support of Public Libraries and launching #OPLW



**New Support for Hundreds of Libraries Across Ontario**  
Ontario is kicking off Public Library Week with improvements to digital services at 307 libraries and library organizations across the province.  
NEWS.ONTARIO.CA

Hon. Eleanor McMahon, Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport at the Burlington Public Library during Ontario Public Library Week to recognize the valuable role that libraries play in Ontario communities and announce the provincial funding for the local library system.