



Ontario Library Association 2024 Annual Report





President's Report

It has been a year of excitement, change, and advocacy for the OLA. This year saw our new Executive Director, Michelle Arbuckle, hit her stride. It was also the first year with our new governance structure. I encourage all our members to consider putting their name forward to join either the Board or one of our Councils.

We had a big advocacy win with the increase in funding announced for First Nation's Public Libraries. We also unfortunately needed to launch the Save Our School Libraries campaign. The advocacy work around school libraries is still ongoing and everyone regardless of what type of library they work in should get involved.

I am proud of the work that we were able to accomplish this past year and am looking forward what OLA will accomplish in 2025. The launch of the new Strategic Plan and the continuation of our work towards inclusive librarianship will be exciting to see.

Caroline Goulding, OLA President 2024

Executive Director's Report

2024 has been a year of connection, creativity, and impact at OLA. One of the most valuable lessons I've learned in my first year as Executive Director is that fostering trust and empowerment within a team not only strengthens our work but also inspires new ideas and solutions. The OLA team is motivated, stable, and brimming with creativity. Together, we navigated challenges, refined processes, and launched important initiatives like our strategic planning process and our anti-racism strategy.

Beyond internal successes, we made significant strides in engaging and growing our library community. The funding that we helped secure for First Nation Public Libraries and the work behind the Save Our School Libraries campaign, have had a meaningful impact. The reach of events like the OLA Super Conference and Freedom to Read Week highlighted our ability to amplify critical issues within the library community.

As we look ahead, the momentum we've built this year positions us to expand OLA's influence further. Together, we're shaping the future of libraries in Ontario, ensuring they remain vital spaces for learning, connection, and innovation. I'm incredibly proud of what we accomplished this year and I'm excited for what's next.

Michelle Arbuckle, Executive Director



Super Conference 2024

Get Loud!



Photo: Melanie Mills at the 2024 OLA Super Conference.

Connecting people to people and people to ideas is one of the Association's values, as stated with the phrase, Responsiveness and Awareness. As the 2024 conference theme and tagline, Get Loud, facilitated this through opportunities to reflect, share, and amplify the enduring value and contributions of libraries.

Get Loud became a call to action. Popular sessions at the conference focused on emotional labour and public library work. Intellectual freedom, resisting censorship, data-storytelling, and building staff capacity to understand generative AI were championed.



Photo: The 2024 OLA Super Conference Planners.

“ I left feeling inspired and reconnected with librarianship. What a great group of people we are! The social event - drag music bingo, table top gaming and crafts was so on the nose and perfect. - 2024 Super Conference Attendee

4648 attendees
68% in-person attendees

Forest of Reading

Canada's Largest Recreational Reading Program

The pursuit of professional and personal learning is one that the OLA actively champions while supporting a broad range of literacies. This year, OLA's Forest of Reading program played a critical role in engaging young readers across the country, having released the Digital Award Ceremonies for each program. As of June 10, 2024, these ceremonies were viewed by 1,500+ classes.

At the Forest of Reading® Festival, the OLA welcomed 5,000+ attendees to Harbourfront Centre on May 14-15, as well as volunteers, featured authors, publishing partners, and guests. Sharing recognition in person for the Silver Birch Express, Silver Birch Fiction, Red Maple, and White Pine with hosts Ainara Alleyne and comedian Ali Hassan developed meaningful connections with schools, school libraries, and future library people.



Photo: Mayor Olivia Chow at the 2024 Forest of Reading Festival.



Photo: Students attending an award ceremony at the 2024 Forest of Reading Festival.



Photo: Students participating in activities at the 2024 Forest of Reading Festival.





2024 Forest of Reading Winners



Silver Birch Express Award® Winner

***Rock? Plant? Animal? How
Nature Keeps Us Guessing***

Etta Kaner
(Owlkids)

Silver Birch Fiction Award® Winner

Apartment 713

Kevin Sylvester
(HarperCollins Publishers Ltd.)

Blue Spruce Award™ Winner

***Benny the
Bananasaurus Rex***

Sarabeth Holden
(Inhabit Media Inc.)

Red Maple Award™ Winner

The Fort

Gordon Korman
(Scholastic Canada Ltd.)

White Pine Award™ Winner

Pieces of Me

Kate McLaughlin
(St. Martin's Press/Macmillan)

Yellow Cedar Award Winner

***Animal Eyes: How Creatures
See and How Their Eyes Have
Adapted to Their World***

Françoise Vulpé
(Firefly Books)

Le prix Peuplier

***L'oiseau
rouge***

Élodie Duhamneau
(Les 400 coups)

Le prix Mélèze

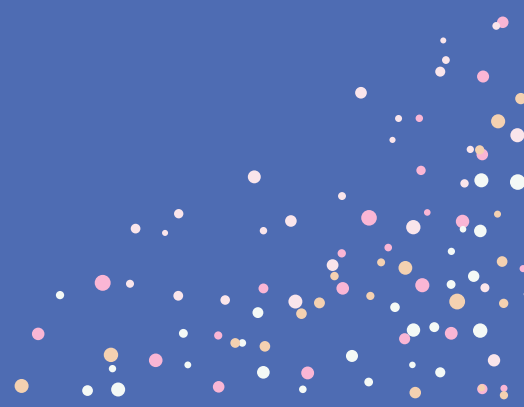
***La chambre
numéro 7***

Martine Latulippe
(La courte échelle)

Le prix Tamarac

As-tu peur du loup?

Véronique Drouin
(Bayard)



Save Our School Libraries

In May 2024, as a response to the Core Funding model change announced by Ontario's Ministry of Education, OLA launched the Save Our School Libraries campaign.

The goal of the campaign is to raise awareness of the important role that our school libraries and their staff play in our sector.

OLA and OSLA worked tirelessly to amplify the voices of educators, parents, students, authors & illustrators and library people in calling for sustainable funding and policy commitments for school libraries.

To learn more and lend your support visit the [Save Our School Libraries webpage](#).



Inclusive Librarianship Statement

“ —

The OLA is committed to dismantling harmful practices within our organization and sector that perpetuate racism, white supremacy and colonial attitudes. - OLA's Commitment Towards Inclusive Librarianship

With Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) as a strategic priority, the OLA began working closely with EDI Consultant Lisa MacVicar and established the Anti-Racism Committee. In working towards an anti-racism strategy for the association, we developed the Inclusive Librarianship statement to establish our intentions and commitments. This past year, Lisa also provided anti-racism training for OLA leadership, consulted on programming/events and arising EDI issues, and worked closely with the Indigenous Advisory Council and the Cultural Diversity and Inclusion Committee. We are now in the working stages of planning a survey on the state of EDI/anti-racism in Ontario's library sector.

Membership Report

Division	2022 (August)	2023 (August)	2024 (August)
ABO-Franco	146	170	123
OCULA	474	594	589
OLITA	751	829	850
OLBA	760	859	906
OPLA	887	1242	1285
OSLA	682	720	717
OHLIA	120	130	125
TOTAL:	2933	3429	3497

Since 2023, OLA membership numbers have remained steady, reaching our pre-pandemic numbers. Our focus is now shifting from recovery efforts to membership retention strategies. Moving forward in the next membership year, OLA Membership will be focused on:

- The roll out of our email welcome/expiry series to new and renewing members. This includes divisional welcome/expiry messages.
- Ensuring all members are associated with a division and receiving divisional communication.
- Continuing student outreach and promotion of student memberships.
- Promoting auto-renewal option for membership.

Freedom to Read Week

February 18-24, 2024

The Freedom to Read Week (FTRW) 2024 campaign was not only the 40th anniversary of the long-standing campaign first celebrated in 1984 to challenge the covert nature of censorship and create a broader awareness of the ongoing challenges to Canadian writing, but also the first under a new partnership between CULC, Library & Archives Canada and the OLA.

The partners shared a common goal of strengthening the promotion of knowledge and intellectual freedom, and the dissemination of the written word, with the support of libraries and library professionals.

Based on OLA statistics, the poster was downloaded 615 times and there were 144 print orders for posters. Graphics were also made available through social media and were extremely popular.



Library and Archives Canada
Bibliothèque et Archives Canada

Canadian Urban Libraries Council
Conseil des Bibliothèques Urbaines du Canada

ola
ontario library association

Book and
Periodical
Council



2024 OLA Board of Directors



OLA President
Caroline Goulding
Dryden Public Library



OLA Vice-President
Matthew Rohweder
Wilfrid Laurier University



OLA Past President
Melanie Mills
Western University



OLA Treasurer
Sabrina Saunders



Gohar Ashoughian
Wilfrid Laurier University



Sarah Gauthier
Hamilton Public Library



Johanna Gibson-Lawler
Greater Essex District
School Board



Kanta Kapoor
Milton Public Library



Graham Lavender
Université de
Montréal



Max Lupo
Innisfil IdeaLAB &
Library



Feather Maracle
Six Nations Public
Library



Ryan Moniz
Oakville Public
Library



Marj Poirier
Kenora Public
Library Board



Joël Rivard
Carleton University
Library

2024 Divisional Presidents



**L'Association des bibliothèques
de l'Ontario-Franco**

ABO-Franco Président

Victoria Tsonos

Université Saint-Paul / Saint
Paul University



**Ontario Library
Boards' Association**

OLBA President

Marj Poirier

Kenora Public Library Board



**Ontario Public
Library Association**

OPLA President

Megan Garza

Markham Public Library



**Ontario Health Library and
Information Association**

OHLIA President

Orien Duda

Windsor Regional Hospital



**Ontario College and
University Library Association**

OCULA President

Matthew Rohweder

Wilfrid Laurier University



**Ontario Library and Information
Technology Association**

OLITA President

Amir Feridooni

Markham Public Library



**Ontario School
Library Association**

OSLA President

Wendy Burch-Jones

Toronto District School Board





Committees

Cultural Diversity and Inclusion (CDI) Committee

The CDI Committee had a major year of outreach and engagement, hosting multiple gatherings, both in-person and virtual, for IBPOC library workers to connect and hold space for each other.

OPLA Research & Evaluation Committee (OREC)

OREC successfully conducted their Public Library Psychological Health and Safety Survey this year, receiving over 1,100 responses from public library workers across Ontario.

Indigenous Advisory Council (IAC)

The IAC serves as a valuable voice in the OLA by providing an Indigenous perspective. They were fundamental in developing the Inclusive Librarianship statement this year by providing continuous feedback and insights.

Anti-Racism Committee (ARC)

Thank you to OLA's newest committee for working on the Inclusive Librarianship statement. Each member's perspective and lived experience was key in shaping the final document.



Photo: Valentina Ly, CDI Committee Member, and Charmaine De Castro, Chair of CDI Committee 2023 & 2024.

First Nations Public Library Advocacy

Ontario Invests \$1.25M Annually in First Nations Public Libraries

Since 2021, OLA and FOPL have prioritized advocacy for increased provincial funding to support public libraries on reserve. This spring, OLA and FOPL welcomed a substantial investment from the Ontario Government, through the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Gaming, which will help ensure the ongoing stability of Ontario's 37 First Nations public libraries. This investment of an additional \$1.25 million annually in First Nations Public Libraries to ensure their sustainability. Moving forward, OLA and FOPL will work with our strategic partner, Counsel Public Affairs (CPA), to refine our government relations strategy, ensuring continued progress toward our other sector priorities.



Photo: Michelle Arbuckle, Executive Director, OLA, at the Funding Announcement with Hon. Stan Cho, Minister of Tourism, Culture and Gaming, Hon. Jill Dunlop, Minister of Education, Danielle Big Canoe Snake, Chippewas of Rama First Nation Public Library and other representatives.

[Read the news release.](#)

Library Day at Queen's Park

On November 14 and 15, 2023, delegates from OLA and FOPL took part in over 20 meetings at Queen's Park, building awareness about the importance of Ontario's libraries and the sector's priority needs. These advocacy days provided a unique opportunity to strengthen our collective advocacy and advance our shared provincial government relations efforts. We met with a broad, multi-partisan spectrum of elected and Ministry officials, educating them on the impact of libraries, the challenges our sector faces, and the ways we can work with the provincial government to better our communities and schools.

[Learn more.](#)



Photo: Feather Maracle, Chair OLA Indigenous Advisory Council, and Sol Mamakwa, NDP MPP.

Photo: Nathan Etherington, Michelle Arbuckle, Feather Maracle, and Stephanie Clare, Georgian Bay PL CEO at the Legislative Library during Library Day at Queen's Park.



Photo: OLA & FOPL representatives with Hon. Neil Lumsden, Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport and MPP for Hamilton East-Stoney Creek (Nov 2023).

Education Events

Child & Youth Services Expo

November 7, 2023

Theme: Open Doors, Open Minds – Rise Up with Intentional Allyship

Marketing Libraries Think Tank

November 21, 2023

Theme: Level Up Your Library Game

Copyright Symposium

December 7-8, 2023

Theme: Tackling Today's Copyright Issues

RA in a Day

April 30, 2024

Theme: Shaken, Not Stirred: Mixing Up Your Readers' Advisory Practice

OCULA Spring Conference

May 8, 2024

Theme: What Is Actionable Allyship in Academic Libraries?

Digital Odyssey

June 10, 2024

Theme: Tackling Misinformation and Disinformation: Innovations & Challenges

Annual Institute on the Library as Place

June 17-18, 2024

Theme: Tools of Engagement



Photo: OCULA Lighting Strikes at Super Conference 2024



Photo: Attendees at the Annual Institute on the Library as Place.



Member Engagement

Member engagement opportunities allow OLA members to connect through virtual chats and library tours.

Advocating for awareness of special libraries and their unique challenges is a key part of the Special Libraries Committee. In 2024, the committee coordinated 6 special library and research tours. Connecting attendees with each other as they explored unique library and archive spaces provided a special opportunity for a behind-the-scenes peak at these spaces and collections often hidden from the public eye.

Most popular tour of the year was the National Ballet of Canada Archives



We found out about something I had never heard about before! It was fascinating to hear about what they do at the TSO Library. I also loved the variety of librarians that attended. - TSO Tour Attendee





ONLibChats

The importance of libraries having the ability to engage with and learn from one another cannot be overstated. In 2024, OLA hosted 9 ONLibChats providing space for library people to connect, ask questions, and share knowledge directly.

With sessions ranging from professional development to cybersecurity, ONLibChats were a clear representation of OLA's support of continual advancements in library services while facilitating opportunities for both members and non-members to stay up to date with current trends and technologies.



Note: While non-members can register for a fee, both tours and ONLibChats are complimentary to OLA members. To become a member, visit our [membership webpage](#).

243 People participated in OLA's chat series in 2024



2024 OLA Award Winners

OLA Presidents Award For Exceptional Achievement

Shelagh Paterson

OLA Archival and Preservation Achievement Award

Archives and Special Collections (ARCS) on behalf of the Women's Archives Initiative

OLA Technical Services Award

Louanne Penny

Larry Moore Distinguished Service Award

Dr. Sabrina Saunders

OLITA Technology Advancing Libraries Award

Short Story Dispenser

OSLA Teacher-Librarian Of the Year Award

Aimee Barber

OSLA School Library Professional Of The Year Award

Victoria Riddle

OSLA Administrator Of The Year Award

Peter Rewega

OPLA Lifetime Achievement Award

Elaine Bird

OCULA Award for Special Achievement

The Indian Residential School Survivors' Storybase Team

OCULA Lifetime Achievement Award

Cynthia McKeich

Ken Haycock Award For Promoting Librarianship

Rebecca Jones

OLA Les Fowlie Intellectual Freedom Award

Richard Charles Lee Canada-Hong Kong Library

OLA Les Fowlie Intellectual Freedom and The Joyce Cunningham Award

Durham Region Public Libraries and Durham Region Children's Aid Society For Their Collaboration On Drag Queen Storytime

ABO-Franco Le Prix Micheline-Persaud

Linda Savoie

OLBA W.J. Robertson Medallion

Christine Row

OPLA James Bain Medallion

Paul Ainslie

Congratulations to all award winners!



Photo: Dr. Sabrina Saunders, winner of the Larry Moore Distinguished Service Award.



2024 OPLA Spring & Library Building Award Winners

2024 OPLA Advocacy in Action: Excellence in Children's or Teen Services Award

Programming Team, Waterloo Public Library

2024 OPLA Leadership in Adult Readers' Advisory Award

Melanie Kindrachuk, Stratford Public Library

2024 OPLA Children's or Youth Services Librarian of the Year Award

Susan Hoffman, Newmarket Public Library



Photo: Megan Garza, OPLA president and Susan Hoffman, Newmarket Public Library, winner of the OPLA Children's or Youth Services Librarian of the Year Award.

Building Award Honorary Mention

Toronto Public Library - Wychwood Branch
Shoalts and Zaback Architects Ltd.

OLA Library Architectural and Design Transformation Award

Toronto Public Library - Albert Campbell Branch
LGA Architectural Partners

OLA Library Architectural and Design Transformation Award

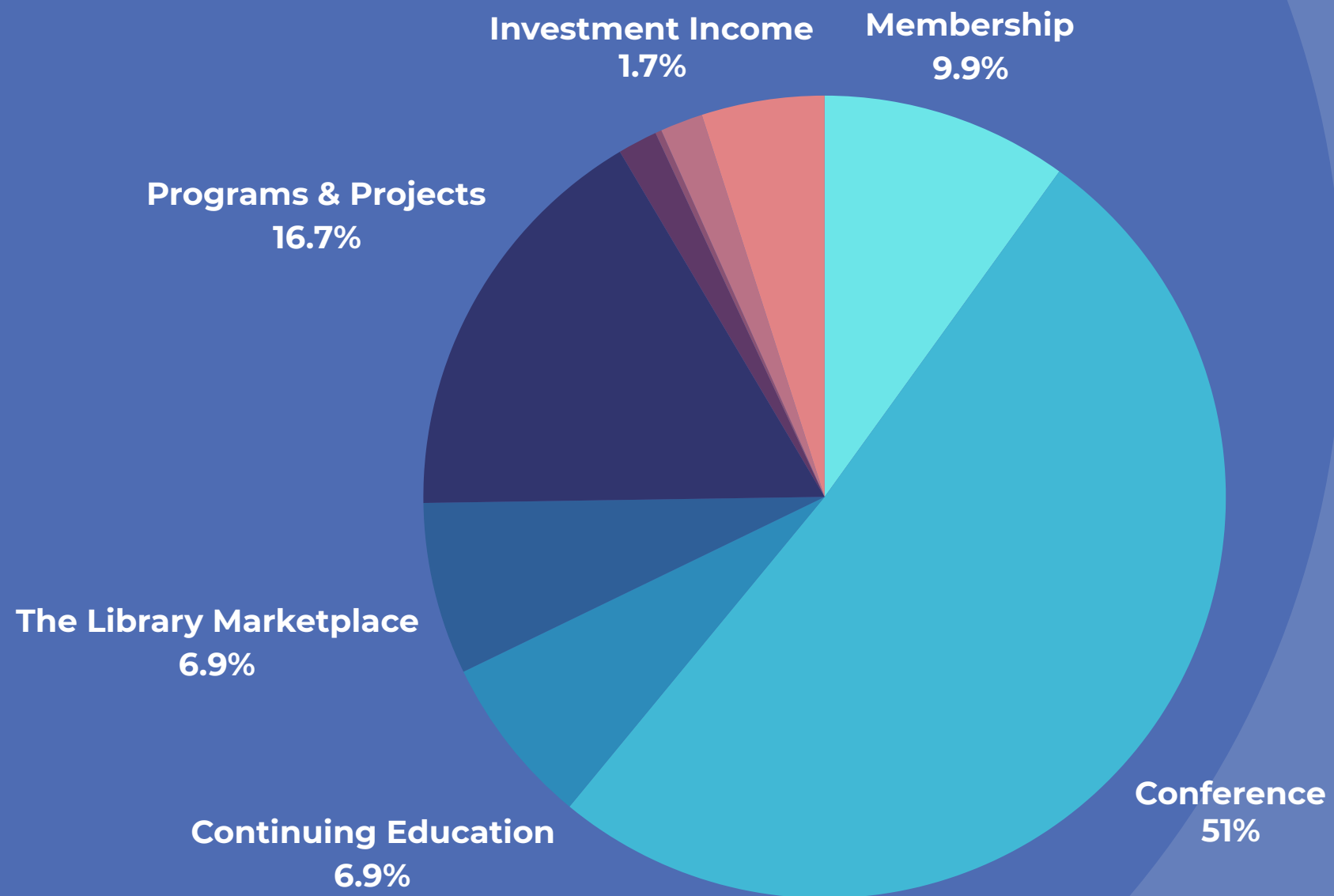
Western University - D.B Weldon Library - Eastside Branch
Perkins & Will with Cornerstone Architecture



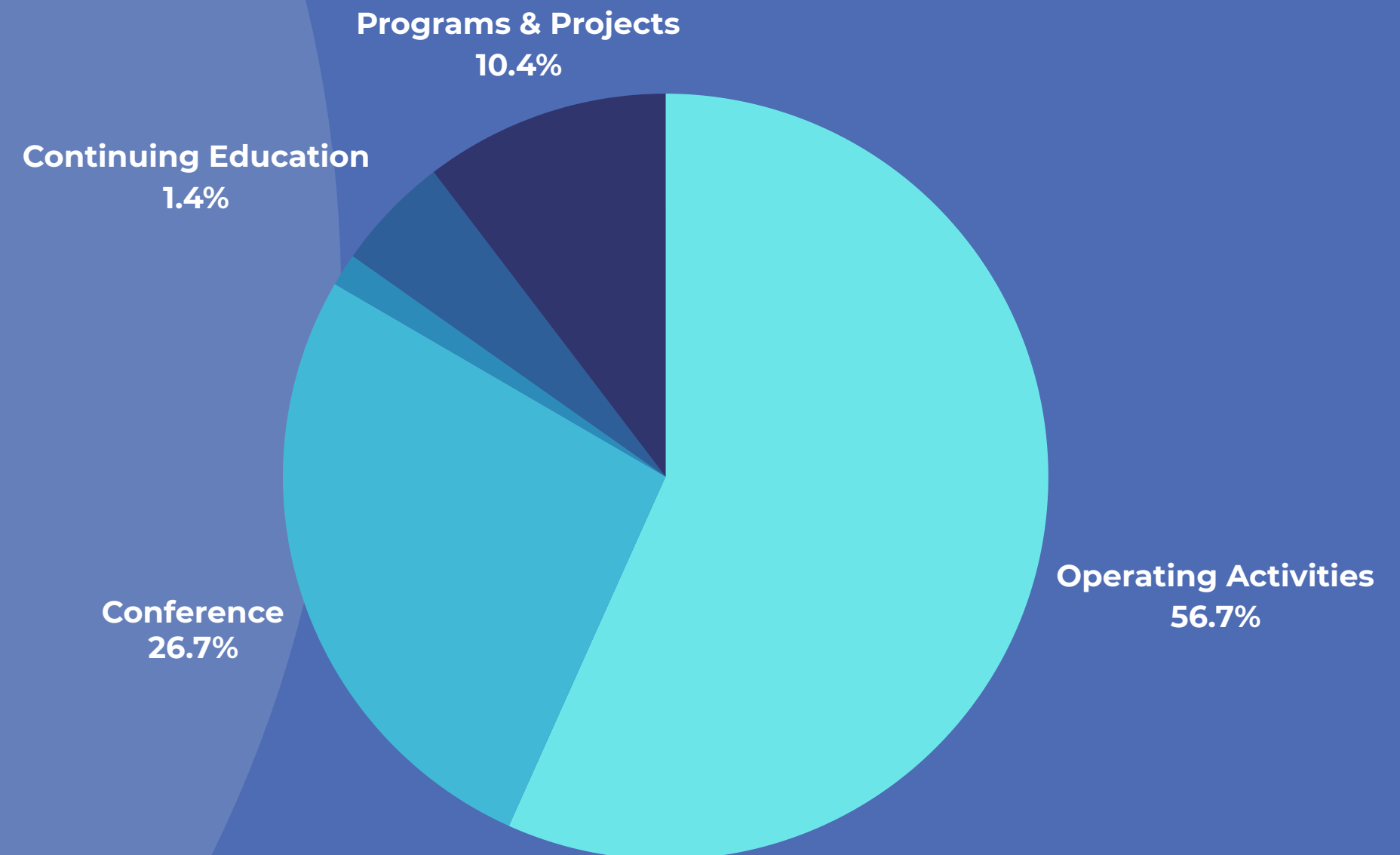
Photo: Michelle Arbuckle, OLA, Darcy Glidden, Awards Jury Chair and Jon Loewen, Perkins & Will, winner of the OLA Library Architectural and Design Transformation Award.

Overview of Financial Report

2024 OLA Revenues



2024 OLA Expenditures



Read our full financial report [here](#).

OLA Staff



**Executive
Director**
Michelle Arbuckle



**Director, Forest of
Reading®**
Meredith Tutching



**Director, Education &
Impact**
Emily Burns



**Director,
Operations**
Pam Saliba



**Director, Member
Engagement**
Melissa Macks



**Advocacy &
Research Officer**
Lily Kwok



**Training &
Event Producer**
Gina Freitag



**Operations
Coordinator**
Divya Annamreddy



**Database & Member
Relations Coordinator**
Esteban Dorado-Troughton



**Communications
Coordinator**
Helen Chevreau



**Social Media &
Communications Specialist**
Laurel McLeod



**Administrative
Coordinator**
Kaitlyn Knight



**Store Manager,
The Library Marketplace**
Callie DeWees



**Store Associate,
The Library Marketplace**
Gabriel Holt

Thank you for supporting the Ontario Library Association.

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