

## **PRESIDENT'S REMARKS AT ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**JUNE 15, 2017**

My report addresses the activity of the Friends from  
January 1 to December 31<sup>st</sup> 2016.

In 2016 we were shocked and saddened when our Past President Tina Forrester and her husband Tom were killed in a car accident in February. We miss them both and still are striving to fill the void that Tina left in our organization and our hearts. The Friends contributed \$500 along with the Town of East Gwillimbury, The East Gwillimbury Gardeners and the Public Library Board to install a memorial bench and plaque at the Millennium Garden in Mount Albert across from the Forrester's home.

In 2016 we contributed \$7,077.00 to support enhancements from the Library's Wish List. This was more than double the amount donated in 2015 and reflected a most successful year for the Friends. Some of the items we funded were:

- Write On! Contest for students
- The Summer Reading Club
- A redesign of the Books for Babies initiative
- Ozobots – machines which support learning in coding and simple robotics
- Arduino Start Kits which adds to STEAM programming and enhances the library's MakeyMakey equipment
  
- Donated \$3500 for an AWE station which is an early literacy computer station meant for children ages 3-7 (although that range expands in every direction). It is a touch screen enabled computer with a suite of pre-loaded programs to encourage language, math, and problem solving skills. Previously, we only had one station at each of our branches. This new station will allow us to relieve some of that pressure, and take on the brunt of the use as some of our devices reach end of life.
  
- Miscellaneous small donations from donation boxes and the Library Quilts.

Our fourth annual Shabby Chic sale took place in June in the Temperance Hall and netted \$1,856.00. This has become a tradition in the community and we could not do it without the tireless dedication and organizational skills of Linda Tanaka.

As part of our community literacy outreach we donated \$900 as sponsors of the annual Weaving Words festival held at the Sharon Temple in August. Friends board members helped with introducing and thanking various performers on site.

Our renowned Author Reading series so capably organized by Marie Coulter expanded to four well-known authors in 2016 including our first author from the US and one from BC. We also surpassed 40 author events since we began in 2004.

In March we drew a capacity crowd to hear local gardening expert Frank Ferragine and in May Anthony DeSa spoke of the Portuguese immigrant experience in Toronto. Gail Anderson-

Dargatz from BC enthralled the audience in October and in November we hosted US author Paula McLain.

Our home homemade treats are still a draw at such occasions. We are especially grateful to Karen Faris for providing us with a floral arrangement each time to use as a raffle prize.

Thanks to the Town for allowing us to use the Council Chambers and for their co-operation and assistance. Marlene Johnston continued to assist us as our council liaison.

As always, thank you also to Michelle Alleyne and her staff for selling our tickets, promoting our events wherever possible and co-coordinating the purchases of books for us to sell at the author events.

As a membership-based organization our members are our key supporters and are the backbone of the organization. In 2016 we had 86 members (eight more than the previous year). We clarified our ticket policy to stipulate that members may only buy one ticket at the reduced rate as all members are individuals. The increased ticket price has not been a deterrent and has encouraged people to become members.

In August the Ontario Horticultural Association (OHA) presented us with its Community Improvement Award recognizing the Literacy Garden as a horticultural project that has enhanced the beauty of the landscape and added to the quality of life of in a community. Consideration was given to projects that involved working with other organizations. The Literacy Garden was a successful collaboration of the East Gwillimbury Gardeners, the Friends of the East Gwillimbury Library, The East Gwillimbury Public Library Board and the Town of East Gwillimbury.

In October we received a grant of \$2,250.00 from Southlake Cinemania to be used towards author event costs and extended publicity.

My personal thanks go to each Board member. You all have special talents to contribute and give so willingly of your time. Loretta Whiteman and Rob Morris attended our board meetings on behalf of the Library Board and also assisted us at many of our events. Our two new board members Susan Lahey Park and Christine Glenn quickly found their niches and been a wonderful addition to the group. We will lose Lauren Evans as a board member this year but she hopes to help at the Shabby Chic sale next year.

Thank you all for a successful 2016.

Respectfully submitted,  
Catherine Brydon  
President