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Providing adults who live in or near Ottawa County with an opportunity to improve and transform their lives by strengthening their reading and language fluency.

## June 2024 Newsletter

Change a Life! Give Today!



### *A Humble Beginning*

15 years ago a not yet connected group of Tri-Cities residents were looking for a literacy organization for which they wished to volunteer. To their surprise, a group of this kind did not exist along the lakeshore. The librarians at both Loutit and Spring Lake connected Sherry Mitchell, Russ and Carole Raymoure, and Nancy Carlyle and their efforts got READ Ottawa off to a humble beginning. "The bottom line is we really didn't know what we were doing," says Mitchell. It was simply a shared passion that propelled them forward.

### *The Nuts and Bolts*

The Grand Haven Area Community Foundation, the Loutit Foundation and Dollar General provided funds to get the ball rolling. Nancy's husband, John, handled the non-profit legal work and a board was assembled with Paul McNergney, Beth Mitchell and Marilyn Reichardt agreeing to join the work. Curriculum was chosen and a training was developed. READ was ready to roll.

### *And So It Goes*

The first training had 12 trainees; among the group were current tutors Paul Martin and Bruce Baker. Since it's official non-profit status on July 15, 2009, READ has had 5 different board presidents: Sherry Mitchell, Paul McNergney, Paul Martin, Michelle Moore and Jeff Parriott. Serving as Executive Director, 5 women have held this position: Sherry Mitchell, Susan Lowe, Hannah Everett, Stormie Drake and Ally Velderman.

### *Proud to Say...*

In the 15 years of READ there surely have been budget struggles and highs and lows and yet we are proud to say that this organization has served over 700 adults seeking increased literacy. Budgets are now stable and lives are being changed. Beginning with 3 tutor-learner pairs in 2009, READ reports 102 learners today with over 22 languages and 32 countries represented. Happy Birthday, READ!



Former leaders Lowe, Mitchell and Everett (left to right)



#### Tutor-Church Connection

Christ Memorial Church in Holland had a long time successful program called READ that only recently they decided to end. They served ABE or English-speaking adults.

When **David Sanderson** trained for READ Ottawa, he spoke of his work at Christ Memorial and the materials housed there. Did READ Ottawa have any need for them?

This connection with Christ Memorial produced 4 bulging boxes of curriculum and many easy to read biographies. We were thrilled! What a windfall of generosity!

Sherry Waltice of Christ Memorial was excited to see the materials be of help to READ Ottawa. In addition to cleaning out the space, she very much wanted to bless us with this inventory as she knows this difference it will make in the lives of those in our community.

Thank you, Sherry and David!

## What's your story?

*Tutors: We are collecting **anecdotal data** (learner stories) and we'd love to hear from you. Email your pair coordinator or share on the quarterly report. Thank you!*

Interested in becoming a tutor? RSVP through one of the following:

Filling out the form at <https://readottawa.org/volunteer>

Email Lynn Groothuis at [lynn@readottawa.org](mailto:lynn@readottawa.org)

Call Lynn at 616-414-0295

*"Today a reader, tomorrow a leader." Margaret Fuller*



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