

FORWARD WE Embrace 2012

Our Annual General Meetings in Barrie are always filled with anticipation on arrival and memories on departure. We plan to represent our Branches, Districts and Areas as diligently as we are able to. We delight in seeing our Institute friends from all corners of Ontario and are gladly relieved by everyone's safe arrival in snowy conditions.

We watch the arrival of our flags, recite our Ode and the Mary Stewart Collect. We begin our meeting and vote on pertinent issues.

Our 2012 meeting has left us with all these memories to share with our numerous friends and our families back home. We are grateful that our Erland Lee Home will benefit from the 2 year designated project. We are going forward.

There was great spirit and dedication shown by the candidates running for President-Elect. Each candidate had unique experiences and talents that she might contribute if elected to office.

At our Branch meeting, all Members commented that elections must be carried out in the spirit of the Mary Stewart Collect. One of our Members asked that these sentiments be remembered as we interact with one another: "Every Member contributes to the organization as their talents permit. We must appreciate the individual gifts that each person gives us."

Let us go forth with caring and appreciation.

By Hania White, Brampton West WI
January 2012

BRANCH PROFILE:

River Valley WI

River Valley is nestled between the Trent River and the Oak Hills, in a picturesque area formed by glaciers. The Branch is located in Hastings District (Trent Valley Area) and its 14 Members come from Stirling and Frankford.



The River Valley WI Community Centre was originally S.S. 19 Sidney, a one-room school house built in 1881. In 1958, River Valley WI built a room on the back of the school. This allowed them an alternative to hold their meetings there, instead of at Members' homes. It also provided kitchen facilities and a basement. In 1969, when the school closed, River Valley WI took over, leasing the building from the School Board.

River Valley WI has many special Members. At 103 years of age, Alice Heasman is the Branch's oldest Member. Alice went to the River Valley School and is a wonderful historian. She participates in the Branch's programs whenever she can. Joan Bush, Grace Bush, Rosella Clancy and Beatrice Harry each have over fifty years of membership and they have all held various positions within WI. Many River Valley ladies are also descendants of founding Members.

In October 2010, River Valley WI celebrated its 100th Anniversary. Members marked this tremendous milestone with an open house and Tea. The Branch also organized an "Items for Haiti Project" and gathered and shipped a donation of over four tons of clothing, building and medical supplies, toiletries, baby items, tents, tarps and dried food to an orphanage in Haiti following the 2010 earthquake. As an offshoot of this project, the Branch donated over 1800 pounds of clothing, bedding, bicycles and wheelchairs to Northern Ontario and Labrador as well as 1000 pounds of medical gowns to Missions in Africa and Mexico.

All of the Members like and appreciate one another. They follow the tenets of the Mary Stewart Collect, especially the last line, "let us not forget to be kind". Their meetings are full of laughter and fellowship. River Valley WI is very active in the community and provides leadership and direction in maintaining the Community Centre to ensure that it will remain a gathering place where neighbours and friends can meet. Members rally together to raise money, have fun, and strengthen the community spirit. They feel that their Branch is the glue that holds the River Valley community together.

Pictured in the back row (L-R): Vicki Bateman, Geraldine Logan, Rosella Clancy, Gayle Grills, Grace Scea, Lois Hoard, Sandra Morris, Linda Farrell and Ena Petty. Front row: President Marilyn Sager (inset), Grace Bush, Joan Bush, Beatrice Harry, Alice Heasman, and Barb Mayhew (inset).