

libraries, I had never actually thought of actively participating in the Council. In a time when so many school boards across the province were undermining the value and sanctity of school libraries and teacher-librarians, the importance of supporting the OSLA seemed particularly critical. It also seemed to me like an exciting opportunity to become actively involved in an organization that had student success, literacy and information studies at the heart of its infrastructure. In this past year, what I have learned and gained from accepting this invitation has surpassed even my initial expectations.

### DYNAMIC PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITY

What I soon learned after joining the OSLA Council is that this is a truly dynamic professional learning community. It is comprised of a relatively small group of dedicated and innovative members of the school library community who are committed to excellence for our students and support of our teaching library programs.

In fact, the Council itself embodies the very principles of service or ‘contribution to the wellness of others.’ (*The New Britannica-Webster Dictionary & Reference Guide.*) The world of Council means sharing your time and talents for the benefit of all OSLA members and in turn, it means receiving support from a team of extraordinary library professionals to further programs and initiatives aimed at enhancing the quality of learning in all Ontario school libraries.

### PERSONAL & PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

My first year as member of OSLA Council has been filled with incredible opportunities for personal and professional growth under the guiding hand of caring mentors committed to the development of quality collaborative teaching programs in our school libraries. In accepting the opportunity to take on a leadership role and to serve the members of OSLA as secretary-treasurer of the Council, much like our own secondary students I have learned a valuable lesson: in providing service we grow both personally and professionally and there is great sense of pride in knowing that we have given something back to those who have helped and taught us something along life’s journey.

I personally invite you, the members of OSLA, to take on a more active leadership role within this association, be it through a Council position, presentation at the OLA Super Conference, writing for our professional journal or participating in the wide variety of OSLA sponsored programs and initiatives. In taking the time to nurture and cultivate the community that works to promote the needs of students and teachers in our school libraries, you too will certainly find the merits of leadership that stem from giving back to the community are truly extraordinary. ■