



2016 - 2017 PRESIDENT REPORT:

ANDREW CHITTKA

2016-17 has been a productive year for the Bluewater Occasional Teachers' Local. I have been fortunate to be able to work with such a collegial group of Executive Colleagues who have worked tirelessly to provide a great experience for our Membership. From Lenora's Professional Learning workshops to Heather's leadership on the Member Engagement Committee, there have been numerous opportunities for members to engage with, and learn from, each other. Rebecca's diligence tracking our financial situation and the Executive's commitment to spending members' dues wisely has put us in a position to be able to propose a reduction to our Local levy. Ronni has kept her finger on the pulse of Health and Safety situations in the Board and provincially, while Heather and Amanda's own Provincial involvement (highlighted by Heather's attendance at Union School and Amanda's presence on the OT Standing Committee) has cast a bright, shining light on the Leadership that we have emanating from our Local. Jaclyn, Jessie, and Kelsey have brought a renewed energy to our meetings and authentic voices to our Local Executive discussions, including a perspective from new members on our job as OTs. While I have had input on the Local's initiatives, I have also made a point of keeping arm's length from much of the decision making process. We have such diverse perspective and each perspective deserves equal time and input. I feel that the more opportunities each member of the Local Executive has to take on activities and responsibilities, to hone their Leadership abilities, the better served the Membership will be now and in the future -- both within the Local and in the Federation. As much as we are Local activists, we are also teachers. Much of this year's Executive is on the LTO List, while that is not a goal for some of us. We have an OT who is part-time permanent, as we all as an OT who is retired, and OTs who work in other Boards or panels. We have members in full-year LTOs, in return-to-work LTOs, and who work exclusively as Daily OTs. I truly have been blessed to work with this group, and feel that the Membership has been very well served.

Personally, I've have had the opportunity not only to interact with our Membership through email and at events, I'm also blessed to be able to spend time in the classroom. The greatest benefit of being a half-time released President is that I am a half-time classroom teacher. I've had an LTO of varying lengths each of the past 6 years, and am able to connect with members in those schools as well as in other buildings, since I also continue to teach in the capacity of a Daily OT. This helps ensure that I maintain perspective on the job we each

do when we are in the classroom, the stressors and joys of our positions, and where we can seek improvements in our working conditions. I feel this gives me extremely authentic perspective on the issues when I speak with our Board Management. We have seen great improvements over the year in terms of job details from many of our schools and ensuring equal access to work, by identifying schools that were not using the call out system appropriately. It is my job to continue monitoring these issues among others, to ensure our rights are protected. Labour Management Committee (LMC) meetings are a great opportunity to address systemic issues with the Board, though much of the work at these meetings is following up on issues raised throughout the year. I have a very open line of communication with the Board and we address issues as they arise. The Board also brings issues from their perspective to my attention, and we are usually able to work through them amicably, while ensuring the rights of our occasional teachers are not affected. In addition to LMC meetings, I am pleased to be able to address the needs of our members and all people by sitting as the Union Representative on the Board's Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) Committee, continuing to highlight the importance of equity, as set by our previous President.

In addition to putting forth my best effort at being a strong advocate locally for our Membership, I am in a position to be able to take our concerns to the Provincial Level as a voting Member of the Representative Council, an elected body that makes recommendations to the Provincial Executive between Annual Meetings. I have introduced successful motions and spoken on numerous issues at these meetings, as well as at special meetings of Local Presidents and Chief Negotiators, ensuring that both the Bluewater OT Local voice and broader OT voice from across the province is articulated. I have worked hard to gain the respect of my Provincial colleagues, and believe that I have become a valued voice, particularly within the OT Leadership. Attending meetings of Presidents of OT Locals and Presidents of Golden Horseshoe OT Locals is another avenue where I am able to network and plan with OT President colleagues about ways to address our various Local issues as well as plan for larger, Provincial initiatives. As I look to increase Provincial involvement, I am committed not to lose sight that my top priority is and will remain my Local responsibilities. It is the Bluewater Occasional Teachers who have elected me to this position to advocate for you, to inform you, and when necessary, to fight for you, Locally and Provincially, to ensure we maintain and improve our working conditions.

Thank you for the opportunity to do so for another term.

Andrew Chittka



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