



A collaborative approach to learning

ANNUAL REPORT 2010

Looking back/looking ahead: a message from the Chair

This past year the LHLC has experienced dramatic developments that have enlarged the activities and enhanced the profile of our organization. Because you have been so supportive of increased opportunities for education in Huron and Bruce counties, the LHLC now has the ability to move forward with greater confidence than at any other time in its six year history.

Last summer Larry Kraemer initiated talks with OPG regarding the funding of a learning centre in Kincardine, and his efforts were rewarded with a phenomenal grant of \$500 000.00, the largest amount awarded to a not-for-profit organization in OPG's history. This funding, \$125 000 per year over the next four years, allows the LHLC to move forward with greater confidence and purpose than ever before and is a remarkable achievement given the recent economic challenges and competition for funding among not-for-profit organizations. As I write this, the LHLC is placing ads for an additional staff person who will work in Kincardine, and in conjunction with Anna, in the development of teaching facilities in the Kincardine Learning Centre.

Our hard work in obtaining further funding for non-credit learning was rewarded with a grant of over \$9 500.00 from the federal government's New Horizon's program. As a result, the Enhanced Aging series, now in its second year, has received strong support in Huron County and plans are underway to develop the series in Bruce County.

Continuing with financial news, the LHLC gratefully received a most generous bequest from the estate of the late Jean Marlatt of Goderich. Jean was a keen supporter of the arts and an avid reader who recognized the need for further educational opportunities in Huron and Bruce. As a result, we are very pleased to be awarding the first two scholarships this year. Two candidates, one from each county, will be selected each year, the awards being funded by the principal from the investment from Jean's bequest.

The LHLC Board spent a very productive day in Bruce County this spring working on a new Strategic Plan, the presentation being hosted by OMAFRA. During the process, the Vision and Mission statements were modified to reflect the optimistic financial state of the Collaborative, and plans were made to widen the emphasis of our activities to reflect major interests in energy production and business activities in Bruce and Huron.

Following the Strategic Plan exercise and with earlier conversations with OPG in mind, the Program Committee and Anna began discussions with Georgian College. Beginning in September instructors from Georgian College will be teaching courses in conjunction with the Ontario Management Development Program, (Small Business Stream) the first modules of which will deal with Customer Service Excellence. Since small businesses play major roles in the economies of both counties, this course will present real opportunities for both established business people and those about to begin new initiatives locally.

This year marks the fifth year of our association with the University of Western Ontario. We plan on offering courses in Criminology and Writing in the Goderich location and have requested that the Writing course also be considered for the Kincardine site in the second semester. One of our students, Lisa Walker, will graduate this year with her degree in Sociology. Her hard work, her promotion of the LHLC, and her encouragement of others taking courses have benefited everyone and proven, not only the success of her efforts, but also the worth of what we are doing as an organization. Another one of our students has approached the Ivey School of Business regarding a possible research project, and meetings will be held with Ivey officials this summer in an effort to promote studies involving graduating students who will develop strategic plans for local communities. Board members are also actively developing partnerships with other universities and colleges in the area in an effort to broaden the types of courses we offer.

Overall, a general shift is taking place within the LHLC. We are paying more attention to the financial welfare of our communities, and this seems only natural given the challenges we face regarding manufacturing, competition from larger centers, and the recent recession. We are fortunate to have added to our membership, and to our Board, members of Chambers of Commerce and politicians who are intensely aware of the need for economic development. Because we are a

collaborative with an emphasis on flexibility we can, and do, adapt to the needs of our communities as they arise. This does not mean that we neglect the previous academic interests of our students, but that with the increased funding we have obtained, we can begin new courses and presentations in business, environmental awareness, personal growth, and technical training as needs arise. In short, we have the potential to anticipate and serve our communities in the best way we can, by offering excellent education opportunities at every level.

Anna has continued to excel in her work and is currently writing funding proposals to the Farm Credit Corporation as she seeks support for outfitting the Learning Centre in Kincardine. She routinely promotes our work and enhances our presence in numerous meetings and workshops on a weekly basis, and she develops the partnerships that are necessary to us if we are to continue our work. We appreciate her work and look forward to working with a new staff person. I would personally like to thank our Board members who in their various ways have made my experience with the LHLC an extraordinarily fulfilling experience. Our Board members come from all sectors of local society, from municipal governments, from the professions, from labor unions, from business, from education, and all have participated in the Collaborative as volunteers to produce a unique and tremendously valuable initiative that continues to serve the populations of Huron and Bruce. Thank you for your hard work and the time that you spend with the LHLC in serving your communities.

I look forward to working with you in the coming months and years.

John Smallwood Lake Huron Learning Collaborative Chairman

June 2010