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Thank you to the Branches that sent videos,  
making this workshop possible.

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**RWTO/OERO**

**Convention 2022  
London**

**Helping Our Branches Thrive  
Workshop**

This booklet matches the first  
"Helping Our Branches Thrive" video,  
created in 2022. Please watch the 45 minute video,  
available on the website, for more information.

## 1. Belleville Branch

### Hygiene Products for High Schoolers – RWTO Event collectables

- ◆ Many youth programs and high schools collect personal hygiene products and school supplies for teens in need of support (some youth may also need bus passes or student tickets)

### Engaging Our Senior Members

- ◆ Visits to shut-ins, holiday, birthday, “thinking of you” cards, flowers to celebrate birthdays

## 2. Durham North Branch

Branch “Poet Laureate” Patricia Bayley has granted permission for her poem to be shared with other RWTO/OERO members by their Branches. Please acknowledge Patricia’s copyright when sharing.

### Retired Women Teachers

Patricia Bayley ~ Durham North Branch

Self actualization, personification, wise teachers grow these  
and pass on their merits as gardeners tend trees.  
Their roots firmly planted with so much to give  
relating to others they thrive; fully live.  
They’ve sacrificed, risen, feared, faced derision  
become as the phoenix with light in their eyes.

Community leaders, choir directors, tour guides,  
writers, pianists and bakers of pies;  
they knit, are fundraisers for causes, all good,  
making life better as all people could.

Conditioned to nurture these grandmas and friends  
caring and sharing they serve to the end.  
The future has promise for this is their aim.  
Let honour and glory attach to their name.

- toothpaste
- roll of toilet paper
- Tylenol travel pack
- chicken soup packages
- granola bars
- band-aids
- a personal welcome note is always a special touch.

<https://www.workerswelcomeniagara.com/>

## 12. Windsor Essex Branch

### Special Events for those 80+

- ◆ Because the 80+ Teas were not possible to do in-person, goodies, plants and gift bags with hand-made cards were personally delivered by 10 members
- ◆ The recipients were thrilled with their gifts and visits
- ◆ A special draw for a gift basket was video recorded to share with members

## 13. RWTO/OERO Genealogy Group – A Provincial Group

- ◆ This group meets the last Thursday of the month at 10:00 a.m. on Zoom
- ◆ The focus of the group changes each month, depending on perceived needs
- ◆ We are currently developing a blog of the surviving members of the 63rd Regiment 1854-1862 - over 1000 men at the beginning of the Crimean War were reduced to 7, one a relation of a member in the Guelph Branch
- ◆ All meetings are taped, confidential and available to registered members only to view on an alternative date.
- ◆ If interested contact [janmurdoch8@gmail.com](mailto:janmurdoch8@gmail.com)

## Basic Soft Icing

**2 lb icing sugar**

**½ tsp salt**

**½ lb shortening or white margarine**

**2 tsp. clear vanilla**

**½ tsp. almond flavour**

**½ cup milk powder or ¼ cup coffee mate**

**Water (2/3 to 1 cup)**

Mix the milk powder with some of the water to totally dissolve. Cream shortening well, add salt, a little icing sugar, vanilla and almond flavouring.

Mix well.

Alternate adding liquid and icing sugar until well blended.

## 11. St. Catharines Branch

### Migrant Workers Outreach Project

- **Niagara Workers Welcome** is a grass roots initiative in which Welcome Kits containing helpful items are assembled and distributed to farm workers when they arrive
- Every year Niagara Region welcomes about 700 farm workers from other countries
- people can pick up empty bags to be filled at locations such as the library and return them filled. The group then works with the farmers to arrange delivery times according to when workers arrive throughout the season.
- Welcome Kits suggestions:
  - **heavy duty work gloves**
  - **thermal work socks**
  - masks
  - pocket size hand sanitizer
  - new washcloth, & hand towel
  - toothbrush

## 3. Guelph-Wellington Branch

### Sleeping Children Around the World

- ◆ Registered charity – 100 % of donations go to the kids
- ◆ Helped 1.7 million children in 36 countries over 50 years
- ◆ \$35 purchases a bedkit including a mat or mattress, bedding, mosquito net, schoolbag & supplies, clothing & footwear
- ◆ <https://www.scaw.org>

### Keeping Members Active

- ◆ Plan a live event using a professional videographer such as a fashion show, or variety show - members can attend in person or by Zoom; keep presentations to 1 hour in length
- ◆ Send out invitations to your members using EventBrite which is free to use if you are not charging for tickets  
<https://www.eventbrite.ca>
- ◆ Create a Youtube channel for your videos
- ◆ Phone calls are key in reaching your members
- ◆ Be enthusiastic, fun, and creative!

## 4. Haldimand Branch

### Remembrance Day Wreaths

- ◆ Wreaths were created and placed by members at cenotaphs across Haldimand County on November 11<sup>th</sup>, at services in Caledonia, Cayuga, Dunnville, Hagersville and Selkirk ... we will add Port Dover and Jarvis this fall

### Upcoming Events - Cards

- ◆ Small double-sided cards (6 or 8 to a sheet of cardstock) are given out at each luncheon with the dates and locations listed for upcoming luncheons ... on the back is a list of "Benefits of Being a Member of Haldimand RWTO/OERO"

### “Be Our Guest Cards”

- ◆ These are used for a draw at luncheons - one member who wears their RWTO/OERO pin receives a free luncheon coupon for the next event

### “Touch” Lap Quilts

- ◆ The quilts created by a group of members have segments and attachments with various textures
- ◆ They are given to members (or someone in their family) having memory difficulties or recovering from cancer and other surgeries
- ◆ They are delivered in person for a special social visit

## 5. Hamilton-Wentworth Branch

### Project Baby Snuggle

- ◆ A crocheted baby blanket created by a Branch member, a board book and a booklet about the importance of reading to babies and preschoolers are given to young mothers who are also trying to finish their high school diplomas (through a local charity and Board of Education project)
- ◆ The booklet about the importance of reading to young children can be personalized for your Branch by contacting Linda Sargeant [rwto.linda@gmail.com](mailto:rwto.linda@gmail.com)

### Drive By Charity

- ◆ Pick a public spot, like a grocery store parking lot with their permission, and advertise, advertise, advertise using local newspapers, TV, radio, social media, church messages etc.
- ◆ Define the list of items you are collecting, so you don't get everything including the kitchen sink
- ◆ Use a different car trunk for each charity
- ◆ Have extra cars available – some make several trips
- ◆ Lots of helpers make sorting easier
- ◆ Don't forget the sunscreen and some music

### Cupcake Creation Event

- ◆ Prepare enough cupcakes for each of your participants to have at least a couple – perhaps one to eat, and one to share (and a few for later?)
- ◆ Prepare icing in advance for decorating, in a variety of colours
- ◆ Be prepared with icing tubes & tips, bowls, spatulas, and other implements for icing the cupcakes – perhaps you need some plastic table covers, and clean-up items
- ◆ Here are 2 icing recipes we used:

### Boiled Flour Icing

This is a not too sweet icing that can be used for anything. It takes time to make, so plan ahead, perhaps doubling or tripling the recipe to store in the fridge until needed. You can colour or flavour it (add baking cocoa to make chocolate). It is great for squares, as they are sweet enough already. Good in jelly rolls and whoopie pies also.

**3 tbsp. flour**

**½ tsp. salt**

**1 cup milk**

Cook in a small saucepan until thickened, stirring constantly.

Cool to room temperature.

**1 cup butter or shortening, softened**

**1 cup white or brown sugar**

**2 tsp. vanilla, white or regular**

In a large mixing bowl, cream butter/shortening and sugar until very light and fluffy.

Add flour mixture and beat for 10-15 minutes – really!

This icing can be kept in the fridge for several weeks, then bring it to room temperature for easier spreading.

Separate portions for adding colour or flavour if desired (either before or after being refrigerated).

## 9. Ottawa Carleton Branch

### Stirring Up Memories Cookbook

- ◆ There were lots of stories about how food became a focus for people as they dealt with the pandemic
- ◆ To give members something to think about, the Branch created their own cookbook which was also a memoir of this unusual time
- ◆ Members submitted recipes that may have been a family favourite handed down through the ages, a special comfort food that had meaning for them, or a dish that became special in their lives at this time
- ◆ Many recipes were accompanied by a little story about how or why this recipe was sent in for the cookbook

### Connecting with Members

- ◆ 4 newsletters a year, 2 of which contained a special “Covid Tales” column, with members contributing stories and photos of their activities during the pandemic – about 20% of the membership participated
- ◆ Greeting cards for celebrations, some with packets of hot chocolate or tea

## 10. Palmerston Branch

### Chuckles the Clown – event entertainment

- ◆ Find your branch event entertainment locally – perhaps those possessing unusual talents, (such as a young teen who had mastered making balloon creations, such as reindeer and Santas, to the joy of our members ... who got to take one home)

### Photo Frame Idea for Events

- ◆ Decorate a large – but lightweight – artwork frame with decor of the season, and use it to highlight groups of your members at seasonal events – great fun

## Soles4Souls

- ◆ Did you know that in some countries, children cannot attend school unless they wear shoes
- ◆ Great for a drive by charity event or a luncheon
- ◆ Clean out your closet and donate gently used shoes
- ◆ An international charity that is available in most areas of the province for donations
- ◆ provide shoes for disaster relief and to those in need – in Canada and around the world
- ◆ Drop off your donations at some local shoe stores and orthopaedic centres, after contacting them (check the website for participants- e.g. Ardene, Bioped, DSW, Foot Locker)
- ◆ Donate shoes and boots of all kinds – keep them out of landfills; they even take single shoes
- ◆ Put an elastic band around each pair, or ties laces together
- ◆ <https://soles4soulsCanada.org>

### Special Outreach Project

- ◆ Using a set of criteria, once a year, a deserving local person, family, or cause, submitted by one of our members, receives a one-time donation of \$500 to help offset their financial needs
- ◆ The donation is presented privately and is announced at our luncheon and in a newsletter without using names
- ◆ Over the past eight years we are proud to have helped many people in need improve an aspect of their lives
- ◆ Please develop parameters that are best for your Branch. For Hamilton-Wentworth, they are:
  - be for a local recipient
  - be for an individual, family, or community project
  - be for those in immediate or ongoing financial need
  - not be a registered charity
  - be submitted by an RWTO Hamilton-Wentworth member by (date)

## 6. Napanee Branch

### Tales for Tots

- ◆ Since 2005 every newborn in Lennox and Addington County has received a kit of early learning materials containing two board books, a CD of music, a booklet of songs and finger plays, and various pamphlets promoting early literacy skills
- ◆ These kits have been packaged by our members after our meetings and delivered by public health nurses
- ◆ Each baby receives one of these gifts to help give them a good start in listening, talking and singing
- ◆ Our hope is that by providing these early learning kits to new mothers, children who might not otherwise be exposed to reading materials before they enter kindergarten will now have that opportunity.
- ◆ Over 2200 kits have been distributed to date

### Caring & Sharing

- ◆ A Christmas package was personally provided to each member, which included a mask, teabag, chocolate, a candy cane, homemade jam, and Christmas serviettes
- ◆ A letter wishing everyone a safe and joyous Christmas was included
- ◆ The organizers were very gratified by the way these gifts were received
- ◆ Also, members sponsored a fundraising walkathon for a local hospice

*Caring & Sharing*

## 7. Niagara Falls Branch

### Pencil Cases for Kids

- ◆ Members donated funds to the United Way to purchase school supplies, as they could get bulk pricing for items
- ◆ Members then helped pack the pencil cases for school children, that were given out discretely by school principals
- ◆ Pencil cases included gift cards, so children could purchase a backpack that suited their personality
- ◆ This project also provided an excellent media story, which promoted both the local Branch and the Provincial organization

### Reaching Our Members

- ◆ Monthly mystery prize draw
- ◆ Facebook
- ◆ Cards, calls, emails, newsletters

## 8. Niagara South Branch

### Doorstep Visits for Members

- ◆ To deliver chocolates, plants and snowflake mugs containing cookies, hot chocolate, and Indigo gift cards

### Bi-monthly newsletters

- ◆ Highlighted one or two members in each edition, so members could get to know one another

### Pajamas & Books for Kids & Youth

- ◆ An annual program, donated items are given to various community agencies for distribution