

RWTO BurlOak Newsletter

January 2025



2025
HAPPY NEW YEAR



Message from the President

Can you believe we are welcoming 2025? It seems the millennium just happened. The world has changed a lot since then. Something you can always count on is change. Embrace it and make it our own!

We have new members to welcome this year, Anne McAra, Primal Dhillon, Maria Parnaby, Wendy Brick, Nancy Stavert, Nancy Rogers, Jane McCarter, Janice Fairweather, and Mona Nahmias. We have returning members, Lois Dickson, Susan Robinson, Ruth Ferguson, Pam Thorpe, and Cathy Lanc.

Welcome back!

We have 9 life members and 2 associate members for a total of 153 members.

We have Super Seniors to celebrate amidst our group!

The city of Burlington is holding a Seniors Active Living Fair on February 1 from 10-2. Volunteers are needed to man the table and talk to folks about RWTO-OERO BurlOak. Please let me know if you can help. The more volunteers we get, the shorter the hours!

We volunteered to serve at the **March 22** breakfast at the **Seniors Centre** on New Street from 7:30-11.

We need **5-6 volunteers** to help serve the breakfast! You will be able to enjoy breakfast as well. BurlOak has done this many times in the past and it was a lot of fun !

Also an opportunity to meet some old friends !

To volunteer for either event, please contact Claudia Stewart:

stewartcj@me.com or 905-320-6639

**Happy New Year, everyone,
Claudia**

SHARE THE WEALTH !

Before every luncheon, we sell raffle tickets. One half of the money taken in is raffled off to members at the luncheon, the other half goes to a charity chosen each year.

This past year we chose the “Angel Project” suggested by Norma Brown.(see note below)

This year we have chosen “ The Camisole Project ”.

The Camisole Project is a non-profit organization helping women going through breast cancer surgery. It was founded over 10+ years ago and provides services in **Burlington** Ontario, Oakville and Halton Region. Since several of our good friends at RWTO BurlOak have had breast cancer recently, we thought it was a timely project to support.

The letter below was received recently by Carolynn about last year’s donation !

Hi Carolyn, just a quick note to thank you and the lovely folks of the RWTO BurlOak Branch for your generous donation to the Angel Project earlier this year. Wishing you all including all your loved ones a very Happy Holiday Season from our Angel Project family to yours.

The Angel Project Canada is a 100% volunteer run registered non profit organization, which means 100% of your donations go directly to our Patients in need.

We are passionately dedicated to giving a Voice to those who are voiceless, gravitating towards those who are forgotten, giving hope to those who are hopeless, showing compassion to those in need of compassion, showing love to those in need of love, and bridging the financial gaps for these souls to be able to live their lives with as much care, comfort, and dignity as possible.

Thank you so much for your donation, with much gratitude from the
Angel Project Volunteer Directors

Becky Eva Lisette Lindsay
Christine Brandon Henry

Founder and Chairwoman of The Angel Project, Lisette Kingo lives in our area. She recently was awarded the prestigious King Charles III Coronation Medal. Eligible candidates must have made a significant contribution to Canada or a particular province, territory or Community. The presentation was made by Karina Gould in November 2024.

First Luncheon - September 16, 2024

We were greeted at the door by Laura Hay and Bev Balch. Claudia Stewart called the meeting to order at 11:20. She began by explaining how she proposed to manage the Native Land Acknowledgement. Claudia thanked our many volunteers and made a plea for workers/volunteers to support our branch, particularly on the Executive but in other ways as well.

Diane Sinden talked about the new professional groups that were added to our potential membership.

Members Kathleen Hunter and Gail Cargo turn 100 this year.

The Program Committee has the year 2024-2025 planned and welcomes suggestions for future events. Details about upcoming luncheons were highlighted.

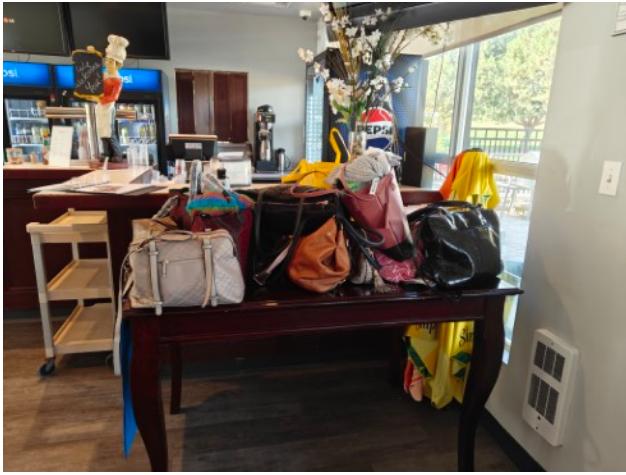
Maureen Downey gave details about The Purse Project.

Lynn Johnson reminded us that there is an enrolment window for members to sign up with and there are no medical restrictions. There will be a breakfast meeting on September 30 to provide details.

Our guest speaker was our own member Nancy Parkhill. Her topic was "Memories of Ghana". Nancy showed many interesting photographs and several items that she brought home with her. She wore a wonderful blue and white print dress that was custom made for her in Ghana. It was a lovely souvenir of her experiences in Ghana.

Mary McCully





RWTO BurOak Luncheon - Minutes of Meeting - October 28, 2024 - Mary McCully



Mary McCully and Dia Pos greeted us to the luncheon. Several of our members arrived in costume – some in seasonal orange and black and some fully costumed as witches and other fun characters.

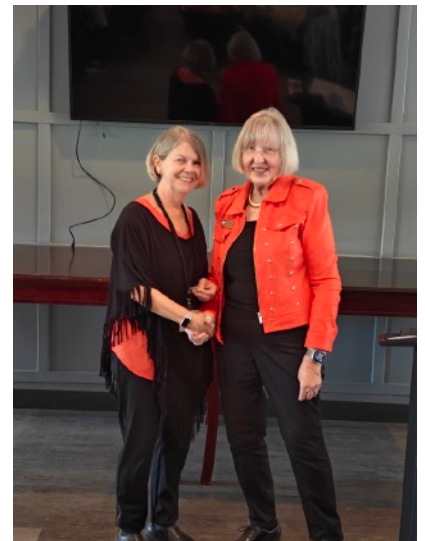
Claudia welcomed everyone and Diane Sinden, our new Area director brought us news from the province. We enjoyed Octoberfest sausage, perogies with sour cream, coleslaw, fried onions and gravy, with buns and butter on the side. All of this was followed by yummy apple pie.



Moira Plexman introduced 2 new members.

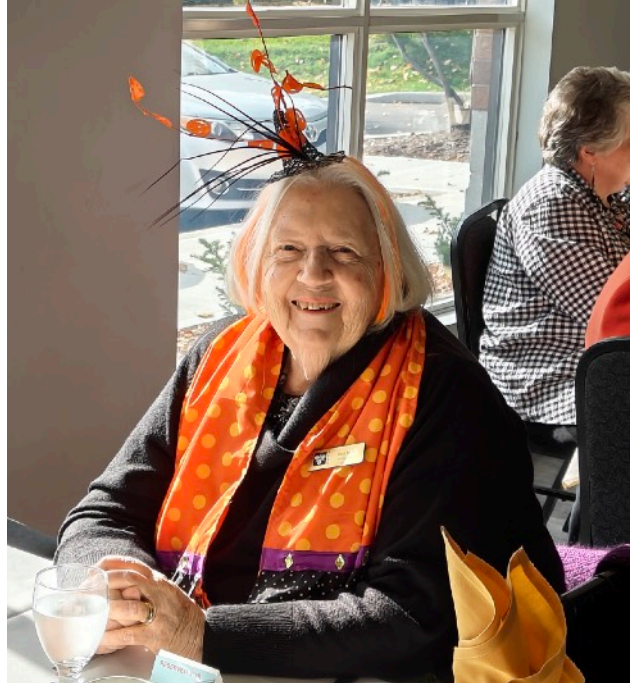
Nancy Stavert

Wendy Brick



We were treated to entertainment by Lianne Harris Racioppo. Lianne dressed in an appropriate costume to compliment her presentation on the topic “Superstitions”. We’ve all heard of witches and their black cats, unlucky number 13 and saying ‘bless you’ after a sneeze. It still lingers in movies, urban legends and novels - immediately embraced by those curious to understand the supernatural.

Lianne regaled us with the fascinating history of witch lore and superstitions, their origins, their importance and why these ideas persist today. Her presentation on many of our common superstitions was both witty and informative.



AFTERNOON TEA ADVENTURES

BurlOak RWTO is becoming to be known as “regulars” in some of our favourite Tea rooms! We have been to *Tea on the Grand* in Paris, *Tea at the White House* in Waterdown, and *The Escarpment Tea Room* in Milton. Each location offers Afternoon Tea a bit differently and we enjoy all of them. The Escarpment Tea Room now offers a discount to groups on Wednesdays so we were pleased to take advantage of that offer.

We celebrated Marilyn Branch’s 90th birthday at The White House. You should ask those who attended to tell you about chocolate cheese! It was wonderful.

We hear there is a tea room that we haven’t been to so we’ll try that one in September. Come and join us.

Mary McCully (905) 632-7589 mmccully888@gmail.com

“Tea On The Grand”



Tea At the White House



The Escarpment Tea Room



Christmas Luncheon- December 2, 2024



We entered the dining room to red and green table linens, lighted centrepieces and shiny silver pull crackers. Quite lovely! Eighty-one members and guests attended. Maureen Downey convened the meeting. Greeters were Betty Doyle, Linda Painchaud, Marilyn Park and Sharon Jenkins. Norma Brown sold tickets for the Penny Sale.

Business:

- There were a number of announcements about Christmas-related events in the community.
 - Returning members, Ruth Ferguson, Susan Robinson and Pam Thorpe were welcomed.
- Diane Sinden, Area Director, spoke about provincial concerns particularly with branches that are having difficulty fielding an executive. Both Mississauga and BurlOak are in this position. New models of management are being considered.
 - The next Convention is in Brantford in early June. Diane encouraged our over 90's to attend the Over 90 luncheon at the convention.
 - The Program Committee has next year's program well under way. However, everything hinges on fielding a new executive for the coming year.

Penny Sale – Nine tables of interesting items were available for “shopping” from 10:30 – 11:30. Fifty percent of the proceeds go to our designated charity.



Maureen Downey introduced our entertainer, Jay Franco and his one man band. He played a variety of seasonal songs and told several funny stories. Some of our members enjoyed the high energy music so much they were up and dancing.

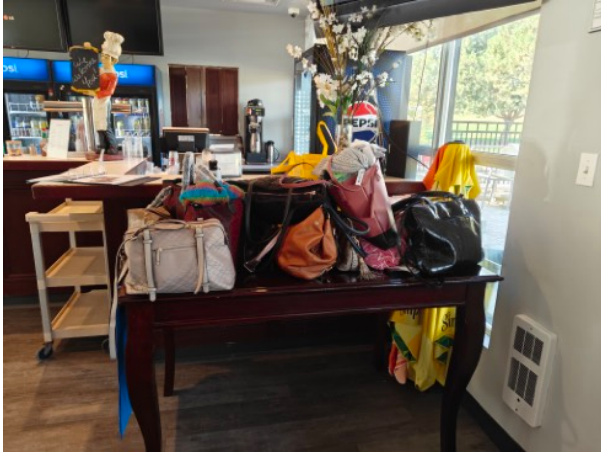
Tony, Darlene, Mary and Wendy served us a tasty turkey dinner. A wonderful way to start the Christmas season!

Mary McCully



RWTO BURLOAK CARES AND SHARES.....

THE PURSE PROJECT



A heartfelt “Thank You” goes out to all members who contributed purses and bags of personal products to this very worthy cause. A total of 30 bags were donated to the cause! Our efforts are part of a larger organization that has contributed purses to :

- Home Suite Hope
- Women’s Centre of Halton
- Vanier Women’s Prison
- The Compassion Society
- Native Women’s Centre

...and many more.



For more information on The Purse Project, please have a look at their website - atthepurseprojectnetwork.com

Maureen Downey - mgdowney@live.com

Food Bank Donation

BurlOak Branch donated a total of \$3515.00 to food banks this Christmas:

Burlington Food Bank	\$700
Kerr Street Mission	\$690
Foodshare Oakville	\$280
Compassion Society	\$645
Food 4 Kids	\$550
Food for Life	\$650

TOTAL \$3515



Hats, Mitts, Gloves and Socks for Schools -

Generous members of our BurlOak branch brought a number of hats, mitts, gloves and socks to our December luncheon. **Moira Plexman** delivered a Christmas shopping bag full of hats and mitts to Oakville schools. **Peggy Blair** delivered to Holy Rosary School, King's Road school and Rolling Meadows school in Burlington.



Oakwood School Principal, Randy Morassut, accepted our donation. He and his admin assistant were grateful for our thoughtfulness.



W.H. Morden Admin Assistant, Kathryn Conboy, also appreciated receiving a Christmas shopping bag full of hats and mittens for students who attend that school.



Holy Rosary Delivery



Rolling Meadows Delivery



King's Road Delivery

Coming Events- Save the dates!!!

Monday February 10, 2025

Chocolate Bar Bingo

Monday March 24, 2025

Luncheon

Monday, May 5, 2025

AGM



LUNCH BUNCH CLUB

This year, several members have enjoyed lunch at *Baranga's on the Beach, MO's Family Restaurant* in Oakville, *Coconut Thai* in Burlington, and *Turtlejacks*. We look forward to trying Middle Eastern cuisine at *Narenj* in January.

Maureen Downey - mgdowney@live.com



We would love to have you.....

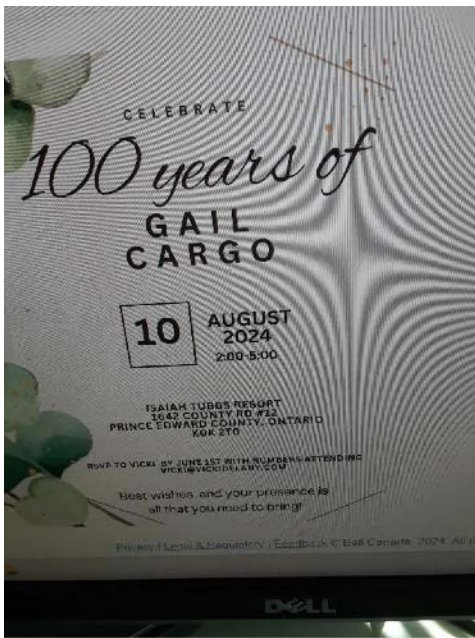
This is the time to step up and help our group continue to be the Caring and Sharing and Fun group that it is. We are open to suggestions and are very willing to answer any questions you might have about any of the positions.

- Maybe you would like to tackle one of these elected or appointed positions or maybe job-share a position with someone.
- Maybe you could just be on one of the committees. We are looking for Committee members to help in several areas - Communications, -Programme, -Goodwill & Visiting.)
- Maybe you would like to be the contact person to start a new Interest Group that we do not currently have.

Contact Claudia Stewart stewartcj@me.com or 905-320-6639 for any info you may need or how you could help out.

Remember many hands make light work. Team Work Makes the Dream Work! (And we also have lots of fun.)





Gail Cargo's 100th Birthday

Gail's family celebrated her 100th birthday earlier this year. It was August 10th, 2024 at the ISAIAH Tubbs Resort in Prince Edward County.

Her son and daughter decided to celebrate it in the summer as Gail turns 100 on Jan. 26th, 2025. Gail is a life member of RWTO BurIOak.



Gail's son and daughter



Gail and her family

Diane Sinden attended the party for Gail.

RWTO BurIOak gave Gail an afghan made by Cecile Leach.

Flowers will arrive on her actual birthday from RWTO Provincial.



Kathleen Hunter's 100th Birthday



On Sunday, September 15, 2024, Kathleen celebrated her 100th birthday with family and friends. Family had arranged it as a drop-in from 2 until 4 pm at 349 Isaac Brock Drive in Stoney Creek ON. RWTO Burloak gave her an afghan made by Cecile Leach and a lovely card. RWTO Provincial sent her flowers on her actual birthday on September 17th, 2024.

Kathleen and her family



Diane Sinden, Bev Thomas, Virginia McKee and Peggy Blair attended the celebration representing RWTO Burloak.



*Our Newest Over 90's
Let's celebrate them !*





Mary Em Kenner **May 17, 1931**

Mary Em was born in the United States of America on May 17, 1931. She was one of seven children, attending boarding school in Massachusetts, and Colby Sawyer Junior College in London, New Hampshire. After attending the University of Southern California in Los Angeles, she studied Russian history and Education.

Mary Em obtained a California teaching certificate, and started teaching in San Francisco in 1953. She trained to teach up to grade eight, but taught only Kindergarten at school boards in California and Boston for about ten years.

After marrying a Canadian, Mary Em gave up her American citizenship and moved to Canada, living in Oakville for many years before moving to a retirement residence in Don Mills in 2023, to be closer to where her daughter lives. She also has a son in Alaska and a son in Ottawa.

Mary Em joined RWTO in 1999, and enjoyed attending many of our luncheon meetings. She also joined the Junior League in 1958, and has been a member of the Boston, Long Island, New York, Montreal, and Toronto chapters. (The Junior League is a private, nonprofit educational women's volunteer organization aimed at improving communities and the social, cultural, and political fabric of civil society.)

As a member of the Toronto Junior League, Mary Em won the Toronto Star Award which recognizes the work of members who go above and beyond in their endeavours. She is proud to have given over ten years of service, spending countless hours on the phone and driving in from Oakville to maintain and update the office records.

RWTO BurlOak Branch wishes Mary Em all the best in her new life in Don Mills!

(We only heard recently that Mary Em was over 90!)

JoAnne Oatridge

September 11, 1934



JoAnne was born on Sept 11, 1934.

She started her teaching training at summer school at a nun's residence. She then attended London Teachers' college in London Ontario, graduating when she was 18.

In 1952, JoAnne started her teaching career at a brand-new school, set up by St. Philips church in Petrolia. She was both principal and teacher at 18. She has taught for the London and Halton Catholic school boards at the elementary level.

JoAnne spent most of her teaching career with the grades 7 and 8 and all those hormones (as her husband described it). She also led the school choirs. She married her husband Richard, and they raised three very successful children, two girls and a boy.

JoAnne retired in 1995 and joined the RWTO the same year. She was a member of the Mississauga branch and then the Oakville RWTO/OERO. She served on the Oakville executive as 2nd VP, 1st VP and President. She worked on several committees, -Issue and Concerns, Corresponding Secretary, Insurance Convenor, and Program Committee.

She co-chaired Penta and has represented Oakville Branch as an experienced delegate on several occasions at the annual RWTO provincial conferences. JoAnne worked with other members to raise \$250 for the branch by preparing CONNECTIONS (a provincial newsletter) for mailing. She was actively involved in the OUTREACH Program at Oakville P.S. which raised \$500 for the branch. She received the Coral Bailey award in 2010.

JoAnne has participated in the "Helping Hands for Haiti" project which won her the "Feather in Your Hat" award. She participated in many of the activities and interest groups at the Oakville branch, bridge, theatre, speakers, short trips, musical programs, entertainment, skits, murder mysteries and many activity groups - Out to Lunch Bunch, Garden Club, Coffee Craft Club, which became Tuesday at Ten and then Thursday at Ten.

JoAnne developed some medical issues and now lives at Wellbrook Place in Mississauga.

The RWTO Oakville Branch was very fortunate to be the recipient of JoAnne's long-term service, of her willingness to share her time and talent and of her positive and encouraging outlook.

JoAnne is a Lifetime member of Burloak Branch.

Marilyn Branch

October 23, 1934



Marilyn Branch (nee Wilson) was born on October 23, 1934. She was born in Waterford Ontario into a family of teachers. Her parents were both teachers and later Marilyn would marry her husband Lawrence (Laurie), also a teacher.

The Hamilton Teachers Normal School had burned down the year before Marilyn was to begin her teacher training so classes were held in local churches. Marilyn boarded in Hamilton with dear friends Carol Martin and Marina Lloyd during her Teacher training and they developed lasting friendships.

Marilyn began her teaching in Hamilton as a grade 1 teacher for a year and then moved to Woodstock where she got to achieve her dream of teaching Kindergarten.

The Branches then moved to Waterloo and then to Sault Ste. Marie where Marilyn did occasional teaching. When they eventually moved to Burlington, Marilyn studied for Librarian qualifications and was able to work for the public library where she created innovative programming for children. She obtained grants to provide creative events for children and eventually all library members. She rose through several positions in the Burlington Library and later the Regional Library System based in Hamilton. Her next career move was to the Ontario Ministry of Culture and Recreation as an Area Consultant and later, a secondment to the Ontario Bicentennial Program. When the Ministry of Citizenship and Culture announced a new program called **“Ontario Volunteer Service Awards”**, Marilyn became Manager of that program and moved to the head office in Toronto. Her years of involvement with the official recognition of volunteers from communities across the province was immensely rewarding and something she treasures still. Marilyn said it was “like organizing 20 weddings a year.” Thousands of people all over Ontario continue to be recognized and applauded for their consistent contributions to organizations like Retired Women Teachers of Ontario. Marilyn continued in other roles within the Provincial government and subsequently took on a volunteer position with the Office of the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario.

Following her retirement from Public Service in 1997, Marilyn was encouraged by her lifelong friends, Carol Martin and Marina Lloyd to join RWTO/OERO Burlington branch. She joined the executive as Vice-president, served as Program chair and, as President in 2010-2011. On May 12, 2012, Marilyn Branch, UE was presented with the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal by David C. Onley, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario in recognition of her volunteer service to the Vice Regal office. Marilyn also received the Cora Bailey Award in 2014 for her service to our branch.

Marilyn has participated in a number of volunteer activities. She was a member of the executive of Grand River Branch for several years and in 2002, she chaired the Dominion Conference in Waterloo Ontario. She is also a Past President of the Burlington Women’s PROBUS Club.

Carol Martin

December 13, 1934



Carol Martin was born in Burford, Ontario and became a teacher in 1954. She married Gene in 1956. They had four daughters and 5 grandchildren. Burlington became her home in 1962. Her teaching career in Halton spanned from 1969 to 2000. From 1992 to 2000, she provided Home schooling for the Halton Board, for students who were unable to attend classes due to illness. She continued to do private tutoring for many years after her retirement.

Since 1992, Carol has been involved with RWTO Burlington. She has given strong leadership as our local president from 1995-1998 and has fostered interactions among retired teachers to help them establish new friendships and maintain those with

former colleagues. She was Goodwill Chair at the Provincial level and was very active in developing the Provincial Newsletter as well. She became Provincial President of RWTO in 2004-2005.

Carol was also the inspiration behind “Chalk, Challenge and Change ” a book that offers a collection of Stories from Women Teachers in Ontario 1920-1979, as told by members of RWTO (Retired Women Teachers of Ontario. This book was published in 2006.

Carol was named “Woman of the Year” in 2003 by the Probus Women’s Club of Burlington. Highlighted along with her significant community involvement at the time, were her achievements as co-author and director of a Dinner Theatre and Musical, Decorating Coordinator of the ladies’ invitational bonspiel for the Burlington Curling Club and Committee member of the Joseph Brant Hospital 3rd Annual Crystal Ball.

Carol has remained active in East Plains United Church. In former years, she has taught English as a Second language, helped send supplies to Ecuador and transported refugees to appointments and still supports the Annual Arts & crafts Show and Sale.

Carol has continued to offer advice to BurlOak RWTO executive as honorary President since 2005. She was also honoured with a 25 year Ontario Volunteer Award in 2017 for her work with RWTO/OERO Burlington branch.

Carol is a woman of commitment who can calm waters and move mountains. Her attention and passion for living and learning is contagious. Carol certainly has been an inspiration to all and is the perfect example of Caring, Sharing and Having Fun.

Marilyn McClure

December 30, 1934



Marilyn McClure is a long-time member of RWTO. She received her teacher training at Hamilton Normal School and took University courses in Education. She taught Grade 6 in the Hamilton School Board for 3 years before moving to Oakville. While in Oakville, she taught in various schools as an occasional teacher which allowed her more time at home with her children. She taught in the Oakville Board at Chisholm School, E.J. James, Eastview and many more schools. She also did occasional teaching with the Catholic School Board and at St. St. Mildred Lightbourn Private School. While teaching at Chisholm School, the principal from Eastview came and asked if she would like a permanent position at Eastview. She accepted and was given the position of Home Economics teacher for Grades 7 & 8.

Marilyn has been an enthusiastic member in RWTO Oakville Branch. She was President twice. She belonged to the Bridge Club, Garden Club, Book Club, Coffee Craft Club, Tuesday at 10 Club, Out to Lunch Bunch. She joined extra events such as Murder Mystery plays. She regularly offered to host for the various clubs. Now as a BurlOak member, she attends the luncheons, contributes to the Purse Project, donates hats and gloves for school children and enjoys participating in the book/puzzle exchange. Marilyn also worked on projects like Sleeping Mats for Haiti, From Pillowcases to Sundresses and Knitted Pneumonia Vests. Marilyn received the Cora Bailey Award for her leadership in RWTO and a Recognition Certificate from MP Terence Young on behalf of the Government of Canada for making clothing for children in Third World countries.

Over the years, Marilyn has done Volunteer work in many countries such as Haiti, Ukraine, Dominican Republic. She helped build and paint schools and taught people how to knit during her volunteering.

Marilyn has been a member of the same church for 72 years. She has been President of United Church Women, coached girls' baseball and worked at food banks. She regularly hosts a Card Game group from the Church and supplies them with lunch. She has done Volunteer work teaching reading in schools, as well as tutoring in her home. She has helped older people with their gardens through the Oakville Horticultural Society.

Marilyn was married to her husband Bob for 64 years. She has three children; 2 daughters and a son. She has three grandchildren; 2 girls and a boy. Her family is following in her footsteps by volunteering and helping others.

We are fortunate to have such a generous and enthusiastic lady in RWTO.

