

When I returned as a widow, from living overseas for 28 years, my local RWTO Branch helped me find my old colleagues. I was able to begin a new social life. Again after Covid restrictions, the meetings got me out of my house and back into society. I have an opportunity to support good causes and to assist in the Branch workings.

Caroline Schmah, Cambridge

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Joining RWTO/OERO has had a very positive impact on my life. My membership keeps me connected to individuals who shared the same profession as me so we have a lot in common. We have very interesting speakers and wonderful luncheons where we get to connect socially. There are opportunities to engage in important social issues e.g. advocacy for pension rights, seniors' issues, contribute to worthy charities, volunteer work, etc. It is a joy to feel that I am still a valuable contributor to the community and education sector.

Stephanie Nielsen, Niagara Falls

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When I retired, I moved from the district where I taught 3 hours away to the Trenton district. RWTO helped me make many friends and acquaintances that gave me activities and interest groups to smooth the transition to retirement. Thank you to a great group of people in the Trenton branch.

Sonja Holmes, Trenton

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As a member of RWTO/OERO, I've had the opportunity to make new friends, attend many enjoyable social functions, and contribute to the organization and to my community. Being a member has enriched my retirement.

Diane Ewen, Niagara Falls

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The St. Catharines Branch has been a great part of my transition to retirement! I have enjoyed taking on leadership opportunities as well as participating in enriching activities such as cards and fundraising!

Jessica Thomson, St. Catharines

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RWTO has "*enriched my retirement with friends, fellowship and fun.*"

Joanne Atkinson, St. Catharines

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As a newcomer to the area, Guelph Wellington Retired Women Teachers has provided me with the opportunity to meet new friends, and participate in a variety of fun and interesting activities. I feel privileged to belong to such a wonderful dynamic group!

Catherine Harris-Thuerig, Guelph Wellington

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RWTO has provided me with the opportunity to stretch my leadership skills and to have satisfying social interaction with a diverse group of women.

Kathy Avey, Peel North

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Participation in RWTO put me in touch with like-minded former teachers. It has encouraged friendship through participation in the many interest groups available in our Branch. It has provided opportunities for personal growth through charitable endeavours and guest speakers.

Monique Hoffner, St. Catharines

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Several years ago my sister Nancy Patterson Wickson a member of the Trenton and District Branch attended a luncheon held by the Belleville Branch. Also attending that luncheon was Marion Shamess Kinch from North York. During a chance conversation it was discovered that Marion's first year of teaching was at Parliament Oak School in Niagara on the Lake in 1955. It turns out I was in that Grade Four class and still had my report cards to prove it. Since that time Marion and I have become good friends and continue to be in contact on a regular basis. Thanks to RWTO/OERO I have become the teacher's pet!

Linda Dueck, Niagara Falls

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Initially I welcomed the opportunity to organize groups to share my interests in Art Gallery Tours, Golf, Lunches and a TIFF affiliated Movie Club. Now I hold dear all RWTO/OERO social interactions as a major component of healthy aging.

Sylvia J. Meyer, Hamilton Wentworth

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Since joining the RWTO/OERO, I have had the pleasure of reacquainting myself with a number of my colleagues who have retired before me. The opportunity to socialize and plan with these women as well as a myriad of other older retirees has been simply wonderful. The opportunity to share ideas and to stay connected to education is meaningful.

Laurie Aitken, Palmerston

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As a president during Covid, keeping up with Branch business in zoom meetings gave me a sense of purpose and accomplishment when I couldn't go out or be with family. I also look forward monthly to meeting friends made through euchre and dining divas offered by our Branch.

Susan Lewis, St. Catharines

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I bravely volunteered to be on the executive for Lydia Snow North Halton Branch because I was assured by my branch there was lots of support for me. I started as Second Vice, then First Vice, then two years as President. I had amazing assistance and I feel that I gained many skills in these roles. I am very happy that I did this! Our motto "Sharing and caring" truly applies!

Margaret Beaudette, Lydia Snow North Halton

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When my son died suddenly the year that I was President of our local branch, an executive member was at my door with a beautiful garden statue of a boy watering a plant. This lovely gift, a constant reminder of the support I received, is truly indicative of the sharing and caring of RWTO, and I shall be eternally grateful to this wonderful organization.

Bonnie Taylor Gillings, St. Catharines

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I have enjoyed being a part of RWTO because the organization has allowed me to see and keep in touch with the many that I have shared a career. It creates an opportunity to connect with like minded individuals.

Wanda Lacey, Windsor-Essex

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We discussed our feelings about RWTO at our last meeting. Here is what RWTO means to us at Daisy Wilson Coldwater Branch.

RWTO is an opportunity to connect with old and new friends, for sharing fun and fellowship and generosity to children and women in the community.

Esther Lauzon, Daisy Coldwater

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RWTO enabled me to reconnect with many wonderful teachers that I worked with over the years, bringing back great memories. Being a past President and a Team Program Co-Ordinator allowed me to meet some very interesting people with many divergent topics.

Thank you RWTO.

Clare Ganson Bell, Peel North

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When I retired, I joined RWTO because I wanted to be sure the voices of women teachers were being heard. I feel now maybe more than ever we need to keep reminding leaders in all fields who we are and what we stand for.

Lois Plowright

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Being part of RWTO has enriched my life with many friends, opportunities and experiences. Being Provincial President in 2013-14 afforded me the pleasure of travelling throughout the province to visit many branches and exceptional women.

Anne Graham

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RWTO connects me with former colleagues and allows me to make new friends. It is also a constant reminder that women in the past fought hard to give us the privileges that we enjoy today.

My young granddaughter, upon hearing me say that I had made a new friend, said, "Oh, Grannie! Isn't it wonderful that you can still make friends at your age."

Ruth Atkinson, Kitchener-Waterloo

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RWTO/OERO which I've belonged to since my retirement in 2005 has provided me with opportunities to make new friends and use my creative and organizational talents in a multitude of ways.

Hope Leon, Hamilton-Wentworth

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Being an RWTO member has enriched my life in many ways. It has given me a stronger sense of purpose, reinforced a sense of pride in my teaching career, helped me to maintain/ increase my circle of teacher friendships, and challenged me to grow professionally through leadership roles.

Karen Todd-Bustamante, Kitchener-Waterloo

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I enjoy socializing with friends and meeting new friends. It has been very beneficial for me to have signed up for the medical insurance.

Mary Kilgour, Lanark

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I've enjoyed attending RWTO meetings over the years. The meetings always the opportunity to share interests, hobbies, good food, and special speakers.

Mary Jane Willson, Lanark

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I am following my Mom's footprints. As a member in RWTO she took me to a few luncheons when I started teaching.

Judy Drummond, Lanark

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RWTO is a special time for renewing friendship and enjoying the fellowship if the group.

Audrey O'Donnell, Lanark

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RWTO has impacted my life by continuing to enjoy the company of the people I taught with.

Being in their company also brings back memories of times in the classroom.

Carol Stinson, Cambridge

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As Good Will Coordinator I met with many of our members who were 90 and even up to 108 years old. This experience helped me really understand the differences and the challenges of life in the 1930's and 1940's as these women completed their education and began teaching in Ontario. Their resilience and courage were an inspiration to me.

Ellen Yessis, Kitchener-Waterloo

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I enjoy meeting new members and appreciate the variety of topics at our Branch meetings. Lorraine Ballard, Palmerston & District Branch

It gives me an opportunity to contribute to various charities, many which I might not have been aware of with RWTO.

Mary Jean Hartwig, Palmerston & District Branch

I travel a distance to attend the meetings which keeps up with my former colleagues.

Lynne Bullock, Palmerston & District Branch

We have various forms of entertainment, information and activities at our Branch meetings. Palmerston & District Branch

There are also a variety of choices to stay involved such as the Book Club and the Walking Club. We are kept up to date on education policies through our Liaison.

Our Branch is a good support network of retired people who are willing to lend a hand.

Joan Woods & Jan Fisher, Palmerston & District Branch

When family members die, we get a lot of support (cards, calls, emails, condolences, quick chats, etc).

Palmerston & District Branch

We have enjoyed and still partake in many bus trips together. We are Community. Janice Benson, Marg Dally, Debra Kalb, Faye Pletsch, Jane Langeraap, Marya Pinder, Melva Bowman Palmerston & District Branch

We have great guest speakers on diverse topics to educate and inform us. Bev Porterfield, Palmerston & District Branch

RWTO Provincial Conventions provide opportunities to interact with others around the province. Susan Galbraith, Palmerston & District Branch

My life since retirement has been both challenged and enriched by RWTO involvement. I have grown through the process."

Mardie Panabaker, Hamilton-Wentworth

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We received some financial aid from RWTO insurance plan after my husband's eye surgery.

Gerri Korec Kitchener-Waterloo

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Look forward to the dinners/gatherings and the lovely teachers who are mostly from the other board whom I hadn't met yet. E. Walker, Brockville

RWTO is responsible for allowing me to dream for more than I thought was ever possible. Brockville

I appreciate the lunches, the fellowship and meeting teachers I never knew when I was teaching. Brockville

A way of keeping in touch with fellow teachers. Keeping up with topics for retired teachers. Brockville

Lots of fun! Great to see old pals and have a few laughs. Love their support. Laura MacAfee, Brockville

Contributes to well-being by providing a chance to gather with friends/acquaintances. Brockville

It provides a social time and opportunity to reconnect with people we've worked with. Brockville

The opportunity to interact on a regular basis with former colleagues. The opportunity to access programs and new insurance coverage and other support. Brockville

It is a chance to socialize with fellow Retired Women Teachers who I probably wouldn't see without this organization. Brockville

RWTO/OERO helped to keep me connected with women with whom I worked. Brockville

A source of information about education in Ontario, newsletter. The basis of many friends that I have been in contact with for many years. Brockville

Met good people and experienced more places. Learn things. Brockville

Made me more social. Increases optimism. Brockville

This organization provides an opportunity to socialize with other former teachers and provides support from like-minded individuals. Brockville

I like the gatherings we have and the socializing. Brockville

I joined RWTO to meet fellow teachers and have friendship as we age. Brockville

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RWTO is great for fellowship, meeting new people, and having new experiences. It's a great way to contribute to humanitarian causes within our community.

Patricia Taylor, Cambridge

I have been given the opportunity to respond to social issues in our community. We can do so much more as an organization, rather than just as an individual. We are strong in numbers.

Judy Schneider, Cambridge

I really enjoy reconnecting with colleagues. I participate in the Book Club and the Walking Group - such fun!

Glenna Heggie, Cambridge

RWTO gives me a chance to re-connect with teachers I met over the course of my career. It gives me an awareness of issues impacting seniors such as aging, finances etc.

Mary Jane Novak, Cambridge

Our RWTO book club has created a camaraderie of friends for more than 23 years - a reason to catch up, discuss books, and more, every month.

Marnier McQuire-Smith, Cambridge

Through the years in this group, I have made many wonderful friendships and have enjoyed so many inspiring speakers.

Wendy Stemmler, Cambridge

I volunteered to be the Goodwill Ambassador for my local branch, my first year of retirement. Sending cards, posting weekly on Facebook, designing invites for our luncheons, all bring me great pleasure. In 2025, I received the Cora Bailey Provincial Award recognizing my contributions to RWTO.

Margaret McPherson, Cambridge

I have been able to make new friendships. I moved from Ottawa so meeting other women is very important for many reasons.

Michelle Spurgeon, Cambridge

I have met new friends and found another leadership opportunity. I enjoy the connections with other retirees.

Heather Whittington, Cambridge

RWTO has allowed me to connect with former colleagues.

Cheryl Clark, Cambridge

Getting together with teacher friends for the last 28 years.

Bonnie Fach, Cambridge

My mother (Hazel Smith) was a longtime member of this group, as far back as when it was called the Ontario Association of Superannuated Women of Ontario. Today, I am still able to connect with some of her teaching colleagues through the RWTO, and even some teachers who taught me as a child. Reminiscing about the past helps to bring memories to the present.

Janice Little, Cambridge

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R.W.T.O. has impacted my life by helping me keep in touch with former friends I met when I was able to attend our monthly dinners and meetings. Keep up the good work.

Marlene Lehman, Kitchener-Waterloo

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Being a member of RWTO has allowed me to reconnect with former colleagues and friends. Our meetings are a lovely time to visit, learn new things, laugh, and always include delicious food.

Jo Ann Ruetz, South Bruce

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RWTO/OERO has had a HUGE impact on my life! Upon retirement in 1997, my husband and I decided to relocate to be near family, and 15 years later, did it again for the same reason. Each time we were in new areas, and each time I was immediately contacted by the local RWTO/OERO to join their Branch. Thanks to the Central Algoma and Ottawa-Carleton Branches, where "Caring and Sharing" was definitely a major feature, I got to meet many new people and make great friends, participate in a variety of activities and events, serve on both local executives in a number of roles, represent them on the Provincial Board in several positions including planning committees for two annual conventions, and attending many of the conventions over the years. What a great life it has been! Thank you, RWTO/OERO.

Martha Summer, Ottawa-Carleton Branch

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Without RWTO I wouldn't have enjoyed the last ten years of drumming with a combined Waterloo-Wellington branch of ladies. My passion, creativity, and improvisation have been explored in a forum of wellness and sharing.

Anne Lowe, Kitchener- Waterloo

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It has been a pleasure to be the Goodwill Convenor for Peel North. I sometimes get a thank you for a card I have sent.

Ruth Taylor, Peel North

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"As a retired teacher, it is fun to review past experiences at work plus review changes to the education system. It is also fun to meet new people, renew friendships, and meet regularly for meals and social events. The RWTO group is very inclusive." -S. MacDonald, M. Clark, South Bruce

"I appreciate the excellent speakers. RWTO has let me know/learn about local issues." - Lynda Snyder, South Bruce

"I enjoy my affiliation with the retired teachers. I look forward to every meeting." -Eleanor Thompson, South Bruce

"I like keeping in touch with colleagues (lunches, meetings, etc.) and meeting new retirees in our South Bruce area. I'm impressed with our local speakers, points of interest - right in our own back yard!"

D. Simpson, South Bruce

"RWTO allows me to stay connected with fellow educators and women who share similar backgrounds, interests and values. Although I did not teach in this area, the South Bruce ladies have been wonderfully welcoming." - Christine Roberts, South Bruce

"It is so interesting and fun to connect and visit with colleagues I knew from many years of teaching at our meetings." - Shirley Steele, South Bruce

"I have enjoyed the community of like-minded women. We share memories and have presentations of needy groups in our community. A great little group of us 'old gals' who worked together." - Cathy Ellis, South Bruce

(Participer aux activités du RWTO-OERO), "quelle belle façon de revoir des amies et de faire de nouvelles connaissances". What is in parentheses is what I added to add context to her statement.

Roughly translated: What a great way to meet friends, and make new acquaintances (by participating at RWTO-OERO activities).

Sudbury Branch

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Heard from Ottawa Carleton

- "I am grateful to belong to such a positive and inclusive group." *A book club member*
- "When I moved to Ottawa, I was able to transfer to the Ottawa-Carleton RWTO/OERO branch. It is daunting to start over in a new city. I was welcomed and I have made new friends."
- "With my membership in the Ottawa-Carleton branch of RWTO/OERO, I have met many women who I did not meet in my teaching career. Our shared backgrounds have led me to make new connections and friendships."
- "I have reconnected with old friends and colleagues. I am making new memories while enjoying the activities offered."
- "Even though I can no longer attend events, I enjoy receiving cards and reading the newsletters with photos of events. This keeps me part of the RWTO/OERO community." *During a phone call*
- "As we age, we hear how important it is not to be isolated and to keep socially active. Sitting down with friends to enjoy breakfast or lunch, sharing an interesting book, visiting a garden on a beautiful summer day, going for a fall walk, receiving a phone call to see how I am, or opening my mail to find a thoughtful card; all of are moments that I experience because of my connection to RWTO/OERO."

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I joined RWTO/OERO in 2012, the year I retired, because I received an invitation sent to my school. I have met many others from the Algoma District School Board and made many new friends.

Brenda Gallander, Sault Ste. Marie

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RWTO/OERO meetings and all the interest groups embody caring, sharing, and always having a laugh out loud.

Carol Neave, Central Algoma

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During COVID I decided to move from Toronto to Sault Ste. Marie. Unfortunately I knew no one in the Soo except my daughter and son-in-law. Before I actually left Toronto I received phone calls from Area Director, Joyce Ratz; my new team captain, Brenda Ostaf; and the President, Sandy Fulcher welcoming me to Sault Ste. Marie. Talk about being welcome!

Patricia Lambert, Sault Ste. Marie

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When I joined after retirement and in a new part of Ontario, this group of ladies formed a new social group. I felt at home in my new life.

Nancy Konzuk, Central Algoma