OSLA Vice President / President Elect

Beth Lyons

I have been an educator for the past 15 years and have taught in the Primary, Junior and Intermediate divisions. I am currently the Teacher-Librarian at Larkspur Public School in the Peel District School Board. I believe in being open about my own learning journey as an educator and a teacher-librarian and I reflect on my time in the Library Learning Commons on my blog The Librarian’s Journey and on Twitter (@MrsLyonsLibrary). I had the opportunity to expand on my philosophies of the Library Learning Commons and the impact of social media in this interview. I am passionate about helping others find what they love to read and embracing their inquiry mindset. I have been actively involved in the transition of the Library Learning Commons at Larkspur Public School and I see the role of the teacher-librarian as a curator, an advocate, a risk taker and an ally. The ability to see the big picture of curriculum and content integration is central to my role as a teacher-librarian as I engage with educators and students daily. Asking questions, making mistakes and learning together are a vital piece of my teacher-librarian’s position as I co-plan, co-teach and co-learn with the wider school community and stakeholders. I believe in encouraging students and educators to bring their voice and ideas into the LLC as the space continues to evolve. Whether through loose parts, photography, art, STEAM and other mediums, I love to connect and share ideas on social media and hope to continue my learning journey as the Vice President of the Ontario School Library Council.

James Steeves

My name is James Steeves and I am a teacher librarian at Dolphin Senior School in Mississauga. I have been a teacher with the Peel District School Board for 16 years, with experience in Special Education, Intermediate Core, and as a TL for the past 5 years. I have enjoyed working with other TLs on the Red Maple Steering Committee and the Peel Book Advisor Committee, and have enjoyed sharing my experiences at many past OLA Super Conferences (yes, I was the guy with the sandbox!) I have participated in several curriculum writing activities with a focus on student inquiry through the Ministry of Education, the Ontario Teachers’
Federation, the City of Toronto Museums, the Ontario Elementary Social Studies Teachers’ Association, and as an advisor for Nelson Canada’s History 7 and History 8 textbooks. I have also led summer institutes and workshops for OTF and with the ETFO Presenters on the Road program, and have served on the OTF Curriculum Forum Steering Committee, the Social Studies Educators Network of Canada, and the Ministry’s Joint Implementation Working Group for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. My passion for using primary sources can be seen at my blog https://geckosteeves.wordpress.com/ and was showcased in TingL’s September 2016 volume (24.1) “Solving Puzzles with Primary Sources.” I can frequently be found playing with my augmented reality sandbox, paddling the Grand River, or tracking down the location of a War of 1812 battle. I live in Hamilton with my wife, three boys, a gecko, and two canoes.

OSLA Central East Region Councillor

Shelley Merton

Shelley is a 23 year educator who remains dedicated to creating a vibrant and dynamic Library Learning Commons program for the staff and students that she works with each day. Her work as an online instructor since 2000 with Queens University, in the area of Integration of Information and Computer Technology into Instruction, has kept her at the forefront of digital information innovations and Makerspace collaborations. For the past 12 years as Teacher-Librarian, Shelley’s passion for collaboration, Makerspaces, and digital education led to her participation in a number of provincial research projects, as well as being a focal point for her studies in the UOIT MEd program. Her current professional development explores the role of the LLC and Makerspaces in FNMI traditional knowledge and ways of making. It also opened her eyes to the importance of advocating for Ontario School Libraries Learning Commons on a provincial level. As a result, Shelley volunteered to fill the role of Central East Region Councillor and would love to be elected to that position formally to continue the critical advocacy work that OSLA does!
Diana Williams

I am a Secondary Teacher Librarian in the Trillium Lakelands DSB. This is my first year as full time librarian for the school and I want to hit the ground running and be as involved as possible. I might be new in the role but feel this is the best time to be advocating for strong libraries. I see the school library as one of the most important spaces for staff and students. It is a common ground for all that needs to be viewed as a safe, equitable and accessible location. In the current climate of cuts to education and libraries it essential we, as librarians, make ourselves heard. I actively work in my school to collaborate with teachers both in their classroom and in the library. I am also working to help not only reading initiatives but also writing initiatives in our school. Updating the physical library is an ongoing process to ensure the space is an effective learning environment for all. I want to be a part of the OSLA Council because I believe so strongly that a strong library is essential for our schools and the key learning our students need. I want to be a voice that can promote and protect school libraries and ensure school libraries can move in to the future and remain an integral part of education. We can be the glue that holds a school together and allows our students to develop the skills they need for their futures. The open letter the OSLA sent to Stephen Lecce sums it up perfectly, “OSLA continues its work to ensure Ontario students receive a world-class education.” I want to be on the front line in helping keep the OSLA moving forward with its mandate and making our collective voices heard.