

KALS ANNUAL REPORT 2019-2020

There is an old saying “may you live in interesting times”....and the year of 2019-2020 has been that for all of us as individuals and for all of our community structures including the Kamloops Adult Learners Society.

KALS began this fiscal year with a strong financial position and a varied program of 40 different classes and we had the 2nd largest registration in our 15 years of operation. The membership grew to 302 people who registered to learn in 80 different classes run by 80 different volunteer instructors and supported by over 30 different admin volunteers. Then in mid March we faced the reality of living in a pandemic and all of our lives changed. Classes were cancelled and over the next months a new way of operating in the world evolved.

We quickly learned to participate in Zoom meetings and discovered this new way of meeting and learning worked for many but not for everyone. The Board began to consider future operating options and in May we decided to ask the members about their preferences for resuming learning this fall. The June survey had 160 responses with 90% indicating a preference for in-person classes and 60% for online if topics interested them. The written responses included many comments about how important the personal social connection was provided social distancing rules were followed. As a result, the board endorsed planning for both types classes and KALS program committee developed a class mix with volunteer instructors ready to teach in both environments.

We want to thank the Program Committee members for their many volunteer hours to ensure a variety of courses were created for all members to enjoy. These talented, committed volunteers take multi-tasking to a whole new level and under chairperson, Janet McChesney’s leadership have provided another interesting semester. Janet is retiring from the Board after 7 years of leadership but is remaining a member of the Program Committee and we want to thank her for her years of service.

We also want to recognize the work of the Publicity Committee members and the talents of Jan Petrar, KALS Vice President, Publicity Chairperson and Instructor who stepped down from her positions due to health reasons. We are pleased to report that Jan is now recovering at home after major heart surgery.

KALS financial position is solid in spite of cancelling all classes in March. We appreciate the generosity of the 139 members who left their refunds with us in trust to be used by them for future classes. The current Treasurer will review the Financial Statements with you. We also want to acknowledge the work of the former Treasurer Jack Braaksma who left the position in December after 3 years in the job.

As you know the job of President has been shared by Ellen Faraday & Lois Hollstedt for the past 2 years. For those of you who were not at last year’s AGM we did mention that we did not want these positions to be a lifetime commitment. However, with COVID-19 upon us we both agreed to serve another term.

It has been a pleasure working with all KALS Board members, especially during these uncertain times. The thoughtful discussion and policy choices show a strong commitment to ensure KALS

will continue to thrive and meet the needs of members for social connection, individual involvement and mental stimulation. We are both grateful that 5 other members have agreed to continue on the Board this coming year and we welcome 3 new members who will join us in these leadership roles.

The critical role of volunteers continues to be the foundation of KALS way of work and we want to acknowledge in addition to the board the people who serve on committees, teach or host classes, plan the publicity and distribute flyers, organize the annual social event and get the prizes, food and decorations, and pitch in when we ask for support. We thank all of you.

This year, KALS proudly celebrates 15 years as a society. Margaret Cleaveley, KALS founder would be proud of KALS continued growth and commitment from volunteers, instructors, and members to ensure that there is ongoing opportunity for the community to look forward to continual lifelong learning.

Our community partners are critical to KALS success and we sincerely thank them all:

- The staff at Kamloops Sports Council, Duncan, Alex & Elsa for their administrative support.
- The North Shore Community Centre staff and volunteers who ensure the set up of classrooms, help with technology, make the coffee and always provide smiling assistance.
- The media, including Kamloops This Week newspaper, The Connector, CFJCTV, CBC radio, CHNL for both free and paid advertising.
- The Library system, Churches and Community Bulletin Boards, Seniors Centres that provide space for KALS program information.
- Thompson Rivers University, the City of Kamloops and local businesses who encourage their staff to provide volunteer class leadership so we can learn from them.
- And last, but not least, to all KALS members for your continual support over the years.

We know this coming year will continue to be a challenge but we are life long learners and we will find ways to continue to thrive and grow.

Respectfully submitted:
Ellen Faraday & Lois Hollstedt
KALS Co-Presidents