



Canadian Friends of Oaxaca Inc. (CANFRO)
PO Box 23043, Belleville, Ontario K8P 5J3
www.canfro.ca

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

2018-2019 Fiscal Year

CANFRO continues to function smoothly and well – soliciting donations from Canadians who wish to help low-income Oaxacans, receipting those donations and then disbursing funds efficiently according to our internal policies and our foundational, CRA-approved agency agreements.

During this past year, we processed approximately 51,000 CAD in donations, providing varying amounts of financial support to all 6 CANFRO projects in accordance with donors' wishes. While this amount fell slightly below the amount processed in the 2017-2018 fiscal year, the difference can be attributed to previous large, one-time donations and changes in our list of active donors.

Despite this slight decrease in donations during the last fiscal year, CANFRO is working to broaden its reach to potential new donors. It is also now actively soliciting legacy gifts and has received notice that the first such gift has been made from the estate of Judith Schwartz, a long-time supporter of CEI, our Oaxacan NGO partner for the school sponsorship project and the food project. This is a significant step in our fundraising efforts and Penny will report further upon this.

The February 2019 Canadian Breakfast in Oaxaca was a big success. Some 70 people attended and the feedback we received after the event was quite positive – positive enough that we are planning another event for 2020. The next event will be in a venue more suited to the numbers of people we expect to attend. We know from a survey circulated after the event that 17 attendees exchanged contact information, 21 visited the CANFRO website, 8 “liked” CANFRO on Facebook and 15 donated. We are grateful for the sponsorship provided by:

www.gowelltours.com and
www.mezcaleducationaltours.com.

The Mexican NGO community was rocked when the country's federal government – in an effort to combat real or perceived corruption – cut off significant funding to it across the board. Among CANFRO's partner agents, only the Oaxaca Learning Center (TOLC) received government funding and was thus directly affected, despite being fully compliant with the law as well as fully transparent in its financial management. Indirectly, of course, the whole NGO sector will be affected as directly-affected NGOs scramble to make up their missing funding, and as charitable donors are stretched to meet new needs. Significant fundraising was initiated to support TOLC, and Lynda will report upon the recent efforts of Canadians in this regard.

In what has been essentially a perennial report from me about the Ontario Not-for-Profit Corporations Act (ONCA), I can now provide some important new information. This piece of legislation, which has been lurking about since 2010 but never proclaimed “in force”, is finally moving ahead. Bill 154 has passed and ONCA is scheduled to be proclaimed in early 2020. Bill 154, the Cutting Unnecessary Red Tape Act of 2017, contains all the enabling legislation needed to support this. It also contains some important improvements to ONCA that the Ontario Non-Profit Network (ONN), charity law lawyers and NGOs have been asking for. ONCA will come with a new NGO registration process allowing open access to comprehensive data on the sector. The current Ontario Corporations Act has also been subject to minor amendments to make it easier for NGOs to operate. Organizations will have three years after proclamation to come into conformity with the new law. The regulations are still being developed so important details are not yet known to inform changes to bylaws and articles. This is why ONN is recommending that NGOs wait until regulations are complete. I will be monitoring this process and will bring forward any matters that need board attention if and as they arise.

Next, a little potted history and a little looking forward – CANFRO was initially incorporated as an Ontario-based charity in early 2012. It received its charitable registration number from the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) in late 2013. Initial agreements with our partner agencies ran for five years, and we are now operating under renewed five-year agreements. CANFRO has been fortunate to have stable membership on its board and has not only weathered a few, perhaps inevitable, start-up glitches, it has also grown and prospered. We have been fortunate to have Sandra Thomson on our board. She is an experienced not-for-profit development consultant. With her assistance, we had a planning and development session a few years ago, when CANFRO was entering its current state of maturity as an organization. We are now ready to look at the next steps in our development, and we are delighted that Sandra will offer a follow-up planning session to the board in February 2020. We look forward to that event and to the institutional growth that will flow from it.

CANFRO’s project managers, Penny Hopkins, Sandra Thomson and Lynda Wilde, continue to foster fruitful relationships with our partner agencies in Oaxaca, and to support our work through their careful management of its project funds. Penny, in particular has done this (as well as her V-P Finance work) under circumstances that would try any of us. She has done so with grace and calm. Our treasurer, Barb Royce-Payne, assists us with her professional expertise, tackles the time-consuming tasks of tracking and acknowledging donations and carefully reports our activities to meet government oversight requirements. Barb is generous to us in all ways. Our newest board member, Jeff Richardson, has brought fresh insight and energy to the board, and we are all grateful for all of his ideas and work as CANFRO’s communications coordinator. We are also grateful that Jeff’s partner, Robin Cardozo, has been generous with his expertise as we move into the next stages of our development. Last, and never least, our other board member, Duane Webster, has been with us for years, since CANFRO

began its activities. His has been a reliable, supportive and positive presence. I would like to acknowledge and express appreciation to each and every one of these colleagues.

Finally, I would like to express our ongoing appreciation for the work of Kim Cable, our website maintenance guru, and Jo-Anne Vandierendonck, our Facebook magician. Kim's work has helped us establish an informative and responsive web presence, and Jo-Anne's has refined and expanded our social media presence.

All of which is respectfully submitted,

Virginia Bartley
President of CANFRO