



Canadian Friends of Oaxaca Inc. (CANFRO)  
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[www.canfro.ca](http://www.canfro.ca)

## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

### **2019-20 Fiscal Year**

A year like no other. Who might have imagined that I would be writing my last report as CANFRO's president in a world so fraught? The news around us reveals tragedy and loss, and these are already affecting and will continue to affect Mexico generally, and Oaxaca ... one of its poorest states ... specifically. The pandemic has rattled social structures and underscored the enormous effects of poverty. However, I can offer some positive news about CANFRO and its partners and projects.

CANFRO itself is entering its ninth year of life. It began as an idea in 2011, became an incorporated Ontario not-for profit organization in 2012 and was registered by the Canada Revenue Agency to issue tax deductible receipts to Canadians in 2014. Since that time, it has grown and matured and today its projects represent significant income streams to its partner agencies in Oaxaca. Those partner agencies, the Centre of Hope for Children (CEI), the Oaxaca Learning Centre (TOLC), Libros para Pueblos (LpP), the Oaxaca Centre for the Rehabilitation of Hearing and Speech (CORAL) and the Fondo Guadalupe Musalem (Fondo) have proven to be enthusiastic, forward-thinking and innovative, as well as reliable.

These very characteristics in our partner agencies have allowed them not only to rise to meet the demands placed upon them by the CoVid pandemic, but also to imagine and plan for a future that might look quite different in the shorter and longer terms. Of course, those who receive support through our partner agencies and our projects are among the neediest in Oaxaca, and thus the most affected by the uncertainties that the disease has unleashed. Despite this, through their own inventive spirit, and through fundraising efforts including CANFRO's, our partner agencies are managing to provide much-needed services to their communities. They have harnessed opportunities offered by technology and they are identifying and preparing for new service initiatives. It is truly inspiring to watch and work with them. For more information, you can check the "Pandemic Response" link on the website: [www.canfro.ca](http://www.canfro.ca).

CANFRO's board members are keenly aware that the pandemic has affected everyone and may have had implications for regular donors. Acknowledging this, we nonetheless reached out and asked for continuing and even enhanced support during this time of crisis. Donors have been very generous in response. Our donations have not only stayed steady, they have been enhanced through individual gifts and focused fundraising efforts. It is heartening to observe this altruism and compassion in action.

In other news, as they say, this past year has seen some operational changes for CANFRO. After a very fruitful strategic planning session in February, for the first time board members devolved significant work to standing committees. This marks a new stage in CANFRO's development and allows streamlined planning for existing operations and for new undertakings. The committees are focused on communications, gifts and succession planning. They have all been active, as the reports appended to the minutes of the 2020 annual meeting will reveal.

As you will know from previous correspondence, this past year CANFRO received its first legacy gift. The estate of Judi Schwartz provided generously to CANFRO and we are working happily to effect her intentions for the application of funds. Her gift will provide assistance for years to come. As other donors have indicated their intentions to make legacy gifts to CANFRO, the gift committee determined that 2020 should be designated "the year of legacy giving" and has been working on outreach to donors in that regard. You can read about Ms. Schwartz and see what CANFRO is saying respecting legacy gifts by logging on to the website, [www.canfro.ca](http://www.canfro.ca), and checking the home page.

On the subject of the CANFRO website, we have made a number of changes to enhance it and make it more user-friendly. Our thanks go to our wonderful website guru, Kim Cable, and to Jeff Richardson the chair of our communications committee. We welcome comments and suggestions about the website as we go forward.

The Canadian Breakfast held in Oaxaca was once again extremely successful. It was on January 26, 2020 in the Salon los Frailes, located in the upstairs area of Terranova on the zócalo. About 80 people attended, including representatives from some of our partner agencies and some American friends. The food was plentiful and delicious, the speeches short and to the point and the entertainment, provided by Sally Glover, Stuart Nemtin and Mary Rankin was lively enough to get some feet moving and some hands clapping. Thanks go once again to them, as well as to our 2020 corporate sponsors, Alvin Starkman and [www.mezcaleducational.com](http://www.mezcaleducational.com) and Kay and Dean Michaels of [www.oaxacafoodtours.com](http://www.oaxacafoodtours.com). We look forward to a similar event as soon as the world supports us in travel and community gatherings.

CANFRO's project managers, Penny Hopkins, Sandra Thomson and Lynda Wilde, continued their wonderful work with our partner agencies during this past year. As I leave the office of president to take up other roles at CANFRO, I thank them for all of their efforts and I offer special thanks to Lynda, one of CANFRO's founding members and longest-serving project managers, who is stepping aside from her previous duties for Jeff Richardson, who will now take over as project manager for the Tutor Project (through TOLC) and the Book Project (through LpP). I thank our treasurer, Barb Royce-Payne, who offers us 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. I thank Jeff Richardson for his willingness to take on his new roles and I thank Duane Webster, another long-serving board member, for his years of engagement and support.

Finally, I would like to express my (and our) ongoing appreciation for the work of our wonderful volunteers, Kim Cable for website maintenance, and Jo-Anne Vandierendonck for Facebook activities. Kim's work has been important to our Internet presence, and Jo-Anne's to our social media one. Our newest volunteer, Wendy Robbins, promises to enhance our presence too, especially in our publications.

So, with this all said, I stand down after four years as president and warmly welcome our new president, Sandra Thomson. She will bring grace and skill to the role and I look forward to watching CANFRO's development under her leadership.

Respectfully submitted,

Virginia Bartley  
September, 2020