

A Time for Reflection

This past week the Training and Learning Centre of Renfrew County (TLC) held its Annual General Meeting. A small but appreciative crowd of learners, Board Members, teachers and community supporters came out to take a look back at last year's accomplishments. Cheryl Gallant sent her greetings and best wishes, and our Ontario Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities (MTCU) representative took time out of her very busy schedule to share her thoughts with us.

Annual General Meetings can sometimes be very dry and stuffed-shirt affairs, but that's never been the case with TLC. From the cosy atmosphere with friends and colleagues gathered in small groups to catch up on news, to the amazing potluck meal prepared by students, staff, Board members and volunteers, it was all about community connections.

Even more importantly than that, though, the Annual General Meeting is a chance to honour our learners. TLC puts our learners first, every day and always. This year, the crowd got to hear, first hand, from two of them. Imagine getting up in front of a group of people and speaking about your learning experience. Public speaking is a challenge for most of us at the best of times. That these two presenters delivered their messages so powerfully and effectively, one from written notes and one using a computer-generated presentation, is a testament to their hard work and the support of TLC's teachers and staff.

What did we in the audience learn? A lot! First and foremost, that learning as an adult is a very different experience from learning in school. Our presenters reflected on how scary it was to take the first step to improve their skills. They spoke about conquering their fears of working with computers, of the pleasure of setting learning goals that spoke directly to their needs, and the joy that comes from getting very good at essential skills like reading, writing and working with numbers that they never thought they'd do, and do well. They emphasized the deep importance of being able to work one-on-one with teachers, in small groups. We learned that their experiences at TLC have changed their lives in ways they didn't even imagine...that they are more confident in their work, as volunteers and with their families.

We here at TLC look forward to many more opportunities to appreciate the journeys and the achievements of our learners as we look to the future.