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Providing adults who live in or near Ottawa County with an opportunity to improve and transform their lives by strengthening their reading and language fluency.

December 2023 Newsletter

Change a Life, Give Today



A Letter from Executive Director, Stormie Drake

Dear READ Ottawa Tutors & Volunteers,

It is with mixed emotions that I reach out to each of you to share the news that I will be stepping down from my role at READ Ottawa, and my last day with the organization will be Friday, December 8th. The decision was not made lightly, as READ Ottawa and its wonderful community hold a special place in my heart.

To ensure a seamless transition, the READ Ottawa Board of Directors has selected Hannah Everett as the Interim Executive Director to maintain smooth operations during my absence while searching for the next leader. For those of you that do not know Hannah Everett, she served as READ Ottawa's Executive Director for three years and was my predecessor. I have full confidence in Hannah's abilities to serve in this role!

Throughout my tenure, I've witnessed tremendous growth within READ Ottawa, and I am confident that new leadership will propel the organization to even greater heights, benefiting more adult learners in our community.

I want to express my deepest gratitude to each of you. READ Ottawa exists because of your dedication, and I cannot thank you enough for the invaluable gifts of literacy, friendship, and life skills that you have generously given to our neighbors. Leading such a beautiful organization has been a profound privilege, and the growth I've witnessed is a testament to the collective impact we've made.

If any of you wish to stay connected personally, please feel free to reach out to me directly, and I will gladly share my contact information.

Moreover, should you have any questions or concerns about this transition, do not hesitate to reach out. Our staff will remain connected with you, providing support as usual.

Thank you again for your unwavering kindness and commitment!

Sincerely,
Stormie Drake
Executive Director



Farewell, Stormie~Welcome Back, Hannah

READ Ottawa welcomes Hannah Everett back in the role of Interim Executive Director. Hannah was the Executive Director from 2018-2021 where she navigated the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic and secured the grant that propelled READ Ottawa into the Holland/Zeeland area. Hannah stepped away from READ Ottawa and is currently caring for her 2 children at home. While her children keep her quite busy, she is happy to "keep the lights on" at READ Ottawa during the transition. "READ Ottawa is near and dear to my heart," says Everett. We are thrilled to have Hannah back!

Stormie Drake has left READ Ottawa in excellent shape. Stormie's giftedness in marketing and organization have elevated the program in so many ways. The board and staff are so thankful for her exceptional ability to create efficient systems and communications as well as her ability to network in the area, bringing in donations and grants that have exceeded expectations. We will miss her passion for the people we serve and the excellence with which she led.

Hannah begins right away and is thankful for Stormie bringing her up to speed. We all at READ Ottawa are so grateful she agreed to fill the role and we are excited to see what this change will bring!



READ Ottawa Tutor Becomes Executive Director of Coast Guard Festival

Congratulations to our very own Tracy Riley on her new role as Executive Director of the Grand Haven Coast Guard Festival! Tracy is a former board member, board Vice President, and current tutor at READ Ottawa. She was also Group Commander in Grand Haven from 2004-2006 before retiring from the Coast Guard in 2010. Since then, Tracy has actively participated on the festival board and is excited to lead the 2024 Coast Guard Festival as Executive Director.

Tracy has been such an asset to our team, and we know she will be a perfect fit in her new role. Congratulations again, Tracy! We cannot wait to watch the festival continue to grow under your leadership.

Virtual Tutoring? Join us December 11!

Tutoring is best done in person, one-on-one. However, as it is with all things, sometimes it just does not work out. It may be illness, travel issues, or a short season of escaping the cold that keeps tutors from connecting with their learners. Virtual tutoring can bridge the gap of not being able to meet in person.



READ
OTTAWA

Virtual Tutoring and

End of the Year Stats Tutor/Learner Pairs Increase

Grand Haven: 28-33



Holland-Zeeland: 16-39

with cases

Interested in becoming a tutor? RSVP through one of the following:

Filling out the form at <https://readottawa.org/volunteer>

Email Lynn Groothuis at lynn@readottawa.org

Call Lynn at 616-414-0295

"To improve is to change; to be perfect is to change often." Winston Churchill



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