

ONTARIO FEDERATION OF HOME AND SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS, INC.



VOLUNTEER SKILLS PORTFOLIO
AND THE
**ADA COURTICE CERTIFICATE OF
LEADERSHIP AND LEARNING**

Established in 2001



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INTRODUCTION

Over 100 years ago, our founder, Mrs. Ada Courtice of Toronto, Ontario, had a vision for parent volunteers in Ontario. She saw that it was possible to improve the education, health and safety of all Ontario's children through the commitment of a team of volunteers: volunteers learning, growing and working side by side throughout Ontario. That's the way in which Home and School was born.

For over a century, Home and School members have continued to answer the challenge of our earliest members. They have contributed countless hours of their time at the local level volunteering in their children's schools; from tying on skates, cooking hot dogs, and reading with children to organizing parent evenings, fun fairs and activities in an effort to enhance student learning. The work of Home and School members hasn't stopped there. Many serve on Association or Home and School Council Executive Committees. Other members serve on the Federation Board of Directors heading up the many workgroups and representing members across the province. Home and School members have shared ideas and concerns, held information sessions, researched issues, written briefs, held workshops, offered training, written resources and set policies.

In celebration of Ada Courtice's vision, members have worked together to support public education across Ontario. In honour of the 2001 Year of the Volunteer, and in celebration of the hard work accomplished by its members across Ontario, the Ontario Federation of Home and School Associations established OFHSA's *Volunteer Skills Portfolio* and the *Ada Courtice Certificate of Leadership and Learning*.

PURPOSE OF THE PORTFOLIO

In the past, many OFHSA Workgroups have developed resources to help members do their jobs. We have prepared sample agendas, financial guidelines, executive skills handbooks and guidelines for the operation of all levels of the Federation. Our Awards Workgroup has also developed criteria for provincial awards that recognize outstanding educators, students and members of Home and School who have been active on the OFHSA Board of Directors. But what we have often failed to recognize is the enormous contributions to society that have been made, and are still being made, by our INDIVIDUAL Home and School members.

The purpose of the *Volunteer Skills Portfolio* is to help individual Home and School members record the myriad of activities undertaken on behalf of the Association, Home and School Council or Federation. These individual accomplishments showcase the enormous contributions made by the member, for which they should be recognized.

HOW TO USE THIS PORTFOLIO

The portfolio is designed to be used in one of two ways:

First, it is designed to provide a record of the volunteer activities completed by individual members. Members complete the Record of Accomplishments as they participate in activities at their Association, Home and School Council or the Federation. Sample activities are listed inside this portfolio to help members see the range of activities that can be included. This list is not meant to exclude other activities, but to help direct members in filling out the Record of Accomplishments. Once the required number of activities has been completed, the Association, Home and School Council or Federation, whichever is appropriate, recommends to the Awards Workgroup that the individual member be awarded the *Ada Courtice Certificate of Leadership and Learning*.

Second, the portfolio is designed to be a tool for leadership development. Often members fail to recognize the important skills that they are learning through their participation in Home and School activities. The Record of Accomplishments is designed to record the skills that volunteers practice and acquire as they complete those activities. A sample list of skills in various categories is also included inside this portfolio. This list is not exclusive but meant to guide you in filling out the Record of Accomplishments.

Many OFHSA members have practiced and learned a whole new set of skills through their participation in volunteer activities. These are skills that can be readily applied to other work, both paid and unpaid. When OFHSA members are applying for jobs, the *Volunteer Skills Portfolio* Record of Accomplishments can help members prepare resumes, and also act as a portfolio of work to present to prospective employers. Members can keep more detailed records and samples of work they have done for the Federation in this same portfolio. Employers, educational institutions and volunteer agencies alike, are now asking for this kind of documentation. In recognition of this, the curriculum now requires that our students maintain just such a portfolio of work, skills and activities as they move towards graduation.

Often Home and School volunteers downplay the importance of the work they are doing and fail to recognize the skills that they are learning. Our hope is that through OFHSA's *Volunteer Skills Portfolio*, members will be able to see what they have accomplished and gain the confidence to try new challenges. We hope that members will continue to use the *Volunteer Skills Portfolio* for many years to come.

CRITERIA FOR THE ADA COURTICE CERTIFICATE OF LEADERSHIP AND LEARNING

In order to qualify for the *Ada Courtice Certificate of Leadership and Learning* certificate & pin, the Home and School Member shall:

- ✓ Register with OFHSA that they intend to complete the requirements for the *Ada Courtice Certificate of Leadership and Learning*.
- ✓ Fill in the Record of Accomplishments as activities are completed at the Association, Home and School Council or Federation levels of OFHSA.
- ✓ Obtain verification signatures for all activities listed on the Record of Accomplishments from any person who can confirm that you completed those activities.
- ✓ Participate in activities over a minimum of an 18 month period. **Activities completed up to one year prior to registering for the *Volunteer Skills Portfolio* are eligible.**
- ✓ Participate in a minimum of 15 activities described in the Sample Activities List. A minimum of three activities must be completed in each of the four categories: Communication; Community Involvement; Leadership; Advocacy.
- ✓ Submit the verified documentation of the completed activities to an Executive Member of the Association, Home and School Council or Federation level (whichever is most appropriate) with a cover letter requesting that a recommendation supporting the awarding of the *Ada Courtice Certificate of Leadership and Learning* be sent to OFHSA's Awards Workgroup. A sample letter is included on page 12.

SAMPLE ACTIVITIES LIST BY CATEGORY

COMMUNICATION	LEADERSHIP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate a meeting between parents and school staff • Write an article for the <i>OFHSA Bulletin</i> • Write about H&S in your school newsletter • Prepare an H&S info sheet for students to take home • Participate in a school’s Safe Arrival program • Write a letter about education issues to the newspaper • Prepare a H&S info package to present to staff at your school or school board • Ensure that H&S members regularly receive information from OFHSA • Speak to a parent group about OFHSA • Serve as a liaison between parents and the school board (email or other committee platform) • Set up a classroom volunteer network • Serve on a committee for your Association • Organize contact lists of volunteers for activities and events • Set up/maintain a bulletin board for parents at your school • Speak about OFHSA at a kindergarten parent night • Set up/maintain a website, social media or a newsletter to provide parents in the community with information • Set up an interview with local media about events or important issues • Collate and summarize input from parents on and educational or school-related issue • Prepare and distribute a calendar of Home and School events for your school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair H&S Association or committee meetings • Set up a committee to research an education issue • Attend a leadership skills workshop / event • Co-ordinate a family information session at your school • Prepare and distribute agendas and other resources at meetings • Learn and use Robert’s Rules of Order to conduct meetings • Serve as an elected member of the H&S Executive • Organize a parent delegation to speak to the school board/town council on a school-related issue • Facilitate a meeting to discuss a controversial issue • Represent parents on a school/board committee (e.g. Pupil Accommodation Review) • Organize an event at your school • Lead a focus group for parents at your school; organize an all candidates meeting for school trustees • Gather feedback and evaluate the success of an event • Encourage teamwork among volunteers • Organize a fundraising campaign • Organize meal opportunities for students (e.g. breakfast, snack or lunch programs) • Recruit volunteers for a school project or program • Assist with strategic planning for your Association • Conduct leadership skills workshop at conference • Prepare PRO Grant or other proposals • Plan and prepare annual budget and calendar

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COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT	ADVOCACY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer in the classroom • Prepare materials to use in the classroom • Read with students • Organize/run a school club • Coach a school team • Serve on a school committee • Participate in a Safe Arrival program • Represent your Association at the OFHSA Annual Meeting • Organize Teacher/Staff Appreciation Week • Count money/collate orders for a lunch programs, school fun fair or fundraising • Volunteer at a school breakfast program • Volunteer in the school library or office • Drive students to team games • Prepare/provide refreshments for H&S meetings or other school events • Connect members to community events • Volunteer as a Block Parent • Organize a welcome kit for new families in your school • Organize a backpack/school supply program for families in need • Organize a coat/boot/hat/mitten drive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speak as a delegate at a district school board meeting about a school-related issue • Speak as a delegate at the OFHSA Annual Meeting • Prepare/present a resolution at the OFHSA Annual Meeting • Research OFHSA’s policy/position on education issues or child welfare issues • Plan an information session for parents about the education decisions at your school board (e.g. trustee roles) • Write a letter to a newspaper advocating support for public education • Write a newsletter article about the needs of special education students or another important focus • Organize parents to focus attention on a school-related issue (e.g. playground safety, school growth, safe travel to school, crossing guards) • Prepare/present a brief to the school administration, school board/town council • Attend Advocacy workshops at conference • Serve on OFHSA’s Advocacy Workgroup • Serve on a Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) • Make recommendations/motions at H&S meetings • Write a letter to advocate for an issue with a school board trustee • Represent OFHSA at a Ministry or Partnership Table (e.g. EQAO) • Represent your school on local committees (e.g. Pupil Accommodation Review) • Recruit members for your Association • Speak about OFHSA at a parent information session

SAMPLE SKILLS LIST

LEADERSHIP

- organize a volume of work
- clarify and identify tasks (individual, committee, association)
- subdivide the task list
- assign/delegate roles and tasks
- think clearly
- set goals
- solve problems creatively/collaboratively
- set priorities
- actively listen to others
- evaluate projects
- keep people on track
- chair meetings
- speak in public
- take responsibility
- prioritize

OTHER

- work one-on-one with a student
- practise computer skills
- gain a new skill
- learn bookkeeping
- take minutes at meetings
- send correspondence
- plan menus and purchase supplies
- set up schedules
- shelve books and do research in a library
- maintain communication contact lists
- learn Robert's Rules of Order
- liaise with OFHSA
- use website/social media to gain and distribute knowledge

ADVOCACY

- speak in public
- defend a position
- research background material
- present a problem or an argument
- identify problems and solutions
- evaluate progress
- co-ordinate responses
- write responses and position papers
- carry through with a project
- facilitate a meeting
- achieve a goal
- connect to experts and/or opportunities for members to access

TEAM BUILDING

- recruit others
- build a team environment
- recognize and use the skills of others
- foster relationships
- resolve conflict
- work as part of a team
- foster co-operation/collaboration
- validate concerns of others
- reach consensus
- co-ordinate the efforts of others
- liaise to a committee
- make the work fun! – SMILE & LAUGH

TIME MANAGEMENT

- meet deadlines
- anticipate potential problems
- plan ahead
- be on time
- co-ordinate events
- plan association calendar (annually)

RECORD OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The following page shows an example of how to record your accomplishments towards this certificate. A template (the last page in this document) can also be sent to you from the OFHSA office in electronic format (Word), if you prefer to fill it in electronically. The other option, is to make copies of the template and hand write as necessary. Both ways are accepted by OFHSA.

To fill out the *Record of Accomplishments*, simply list the *Activity*, and be it big or small, along with the *Date(s)* completed. Was this a one-time thing or did it take place over a school year? The *Skills Learned/ Practiced* are all the skills you gained during the time which you did the activity. The *Category* (see pages 5 & 6) describes how the activity qualifies your volunteer experience in: Communication; Community Involvement; Advocacy and Leadership. The person who will *Verify* your activity must sign your Record of Accomplishments in the appropriate area. This may be a member of your executive, another member of your association, the principal, or a member of your committee or community who can confirm that you completed the activity stated. Think of this as the person who is verifying your volunteer hours.

It may be helpful to partner with someone else to help fill in your Record of Accomplishments. Together you can recognize the volunteer skills that you are acquiring. Sometimes we underestimate the value of the work we do and the skills that come naturally to us. Working together, we can have discussions acknowledging each other's strengths and build upon them in order to obtain **“The Best for Each Student”**.

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Volunteer Skills Portfolio – Record of Accomplishments for Joan Smith of ABC Home & School

<u>ACTIVITY</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>SKILLS LEARNED / PRACTICED</u>	<u>CATEGORY</u>	<u>VERIFIED BY:</u>
Chairperson of the Fun Fair	May 6, 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • organized a lot of work • subdivided, delegated and assigned necessary jobs • solved many problems creatively • we made the work fun • built a strong team of volunteers • took responsibility for making sure things happened • we met all our deadlines • enlisted the help of community volunteers outside our school • set up volunteer schedule 	Leadership Community Involvement	P. Johnson, President <i>P. Johnson</i>
Wrote an article for parents about special needs students in our school	October 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • did research through our school board staff, library, spec. ed. teachers and parents at our school • organized the background material • wrote and edited the article • presented the material in a way that parents could understand • followed up with a special education night for parents at our school 	Advocacy Leadership Communication	T. Fuller, Principal <i>T. Fuller</i>
Served as Treasurer of our H&S Association	September 2015 – June 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • kept the Associations' books • prepared monthly financial statements • reconciled the bank statements • set up the Association's books • counted money raised through fundraising • paid all invoices for the Association 	Communication Leadership	P. Johnson, President <i>P. Johnson</i>

I HAVE COMPLETED THE REQUIREMENTS – NOW WHAT?

Now that the requirements have been met, what happens next?

1. Send your completed Record of Accomplishments to an Executive Member of your Association, Home and School Council or the Federation, whichever is most appropriate. Let them know you have completed the requirements for the *Ada Courtice Certificate of Leadership and Learning*. They will in turn:
 - ✓ Assess the documentation to ensure that the minimum requirements have been met and that the activities have been verified.
 - ✓ Send a letter to the Awards Workgroup, through the Federation, accompanying your Record of Accomplishments recommending you be presented with the *Ada Courtice Certificate of Leadership and Learning*. This may be mailed or sent electronically to the Federation.
 - ✓ Once the member's registration and membership is confirmed by the Federation, the package will be forwarded to OFHSA's Awards Workgroup. The Federation will confirm the eligibility of the candidate to the submitting unit. Please retain a copy of your Record of Accomplishments.

2. OFHSA's Awards Workgroup, at a regular meeting, shall:
 - ✓ Consider all requests to award the *Ada Courtice Certificate of Leadership and Learning*.
 - ✓ Submit a list of accepted recipients to the Federation so that the certificates can be prepared.

3. OFHSA will in turn:
 - ✓ Forward an acceptance letter to the submitting unit to arrange the presentation of the award(s).
 - ✓ Prepare and distribute any certificates and pins in an appropriate manner. This may include:
 - i. Presentation of the certificates/pins at the OFHSA Conference & Annual Meeting.
 - ii. Sending the certificates/pins to the Home and School Council or Association to be presented at an appropriate event.
 - iii. Presentation of the certificates/pins at some other locally organized special event.

*** If assistance is required in submitting your completed Record of Accomplishments, please contact the OFHSA office.

APPENDICES

Accompanying Letter

Included is a sample letter that may be used to accompany the Record of Accomplishments. Feel free to use this as a guide and create your own. You may want to provide detail as to why this member should receive the *Ada Courtice Certificate of Leadership and Learning*.

Record of Accomplishments

Included is a template of the Record of Accomplishments. Feel free to make as many copies as necessary. If you would prefer an electronic version which you can edit, save and submit electronically, please contact the OFHSA office at info@ofhsa.on.ca.

Good luck working towards the
***ADA COURTICE CERTIFICATE OF
LEADERSHIP AND LEARNING!***

ONTARIO FEDERATION OF HOME AND SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS, INC.

OFHSA Awards Workgroup
c/o Ontario Federation of Home and School Associations
51 Stuart Street
Hamilton ON L8L 1B5

Re: Ada Courtice Certificate of Leadership and Learning

To Whom It May Concern:

The _____ is pleased to recommend that
(Name of Association, H&S Council or OFHSA Board of Directors)

_____, a member in good standing, be awarded the
(Name of Applicant)

Ada Courtice Certificate of Leadership and Learning.

Attached you will find the Record of Accomplishments where the member has shown considerable participation in Communication, Leadership, Community Involvement and Advocacy as per the requirements.

If there are any questions or concerns regarding this member's application, please don't hesitate to contact the member or myself directly.

Regards,

Name

Title (if applicable)

Association, H&S Council or OFHSA Board

Date

E-mail

Phone #

ONTARIO FEDERATION OF HOME AND SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS, INC.

Volunteer Skills Portfolio – Record of Accomplishments for _____

<u>ACTIVITY</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>SKILLS LEARNED / PRACTICED</u>	<u>CATEGORY</u>	<u>VERIFIED BY:</u>