



## **ACER-CART Celebrates**

In June 2016 the Canadian Association of Retired Teachers (ACER-CART) will reach a significant benchmark in its history - its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary! Looking back to the first tentative discussions in the 1980s about the possibility of forming such an association, and the eventual success of this organization today, one realizes that it took the good will and hard work of many individuals to be able to celebrate in 2016. The discussions initiated by a BC Retired Teacher Association vice-president in 1984, the responding encouragement of a Canadian Teachers Federation president, and the early financial support by CTF for an initial meeting in Ottawa were critical for the eventual founding meeting on June 15, 1991.

Today this national association has 13 provincial/territory retired teacher association members representing 136,968 retired teachers, and it has continued to improve in its influence at the national level. Through its development years its annual general meetings have identified, discussed and debated issues that affect retired teachers and seniors in general. As a result, directions and decisions have been established that assist its members in their focus, their communication among themselves, and provide a collaborative approach in dealing with the national government.

Growth in ACER-CART's influence over 25 years has been steady. Its bylaws, policies and positions have reflected the commitments of its members during that period. In the mid-1990s the importance of being a bilingual organization was recognized, and into the 2000s the importance of group and collaborative advocacy was accepted. This perspective reflected back upon the issues at its founding - support for quality education, health care in all its aspects, and the safeguarding of retiree pensions.

In 2002 ACER-CART's public face was enhanced with the development of a website, and further in 2005 with the adoption of a logo and the naming of its national newsletter. In 2006, the production of important documents in both official languages was achieved. By 2007 ACER-CART had become incorporated, and its policies and practices codified for better understanding and consistency. ACER-CART proved its adaptability by updating its executive membership over the years to better reflect the size and location of its members, and in seeking ways to collaborate with other like minded national organizations.

An enhanced direct service to member Directors was achieved through the inclusion of training and discussion seminars at the ACER-CART annual general meetings. The development of a political advocacy strategy and support documents for the 2015 Canadian election were significant achievements that were well received across the country by retired teachers and others.

The 2016 AGM will celebrate the many individuals who, along with their provincial members, have contributed their time and talents since 1991 to energize the national association.

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