



Beaver Valley Outreach Annual Report

2003 - 2004

*Founded in 1982
Incorporated February 1988*

**64 Bruce Street South
Thornbury, ON
N0H 2P0
(519) 599-2577**

Beaver Valley Outreach Annual Report Table of Contents

Report From the Chair	<i>page one</i>
Rita Mary Coté	
A Brief History	<i>page two</i>
Norine Baron	
A Reflection From the Coordinator	<i>page three</i>
Carolyn Letourneau	
Mission Statement	<i>page four</i>
Terms of Reference	<i>pages five</i>
Board of Directors	<i>page six</i>
Staff of Beaver Valley Outreach	<i>page seven</i>
Programs and Services	<i>page eight & nine</i>
Early Years Programs	<i>page ten</i>
Community Partners	<i>page eleven & twelve</i>
Funding Sources	<i>page thirteen</i>
The Outreach Observer	<i>page fourteen & sixteen</i>
A Tribute to Rita Mary Coté	<i>page fifteen</i>
A Tribute to Volunteers	

Report from the Chair Rita Mary Coté

At Beaver Valley Outreach our mandate continues to be to assess gaps in services in the Beaver Valley and to enrich the community by offering programmes to meet its needs. Our goal is to assist individuals and families in our community, to heighten awareness of the programmes and services we offer, and to provide new services as required to meet the interests and needs of the community.

As in the beginning, our strength continues to lie in the generosity of our volunteers, the quality and commitment of staff (currently 10 part time staff), the participants/clients/ recipients of services and programmes, and the community at large which provides ongoing support and encouragement. We count on our partners - local churches, service organizations, government agencies, donors, and community members. Without support from the grass roots, BVO would have disappeared years ago.

BVO joins with others in our community who desire to share the good things in life that all should enjoy, such as a decent home to live in. More affordable housing is an ever-increasing need in our community, where many of those who work in the service industry cannot afford to live among us. There is much work to be done in The Blue Mountains to maintain a diverse social community where all are welcome and able to raise families in this beautiful area of Ontario. We look forward to the involvement of all of us in a Habitat Build here in 2005.

Our new home continues to be a hive of activity. Besides being the home of several programmes for children, it provides a meeting place for local people to access employment services, legal aid, social and community services, and My Friend's House. It houses a multi-purpose room, the emergency food and the ever-popular Treasure Shop. How can we thank the tireless volunteers who are there every day to sort and price and wash and iron and hang items to be sold at a great bargain? Let it not be forgotten, BVO continues to be an important recycle depot for The Blue Mountains! The continuing generosity of this community enables us to pay our bills and our mortgage, make necessary improvements in our site, and put away extra funds for a rainy day.

There are some changes in the make-up of the Board of Directors for the coming year. I want to say how grateful we are to those who have given of their time and energy over the past few years to help manage the affairs of BVO. Our thanks go out to them, knowing they will be remaining with us as volunteers. I also welcome the new people who have decided to put their skills, energy and time into the work of BVO. We look forward with them to another challenging year. All of us gathered here tonight are committed to "making good things happen" in our community in the coming months.

Early History Norine Baron

In the Fall of 1982, the local Children's Aid Society presented a film series called "Focus on the Family". Following that series, a few women who had been sensitized to community issues by the films, decided to meet to discuss the needs of the community and to investigate the possibility of taking action. This was the birth of Beaver Valley Outreach.

Representatives from the churches in the area met regarding the co-ordination of providing Christmas Hampers for families. This would ensure a better use of the community resources because there would be a single access point for assistance and would avoid duplication of services.

At the time, the Public Health nurse, Judy Jamieson, was visiting homes and she was the primary reference and resource person to identify families in need. To most people, poverty was virtually invisible in the community; in fact it *was* present and resulted in real physical needs.

Following the distribution of Christmas Hampers in 1982, there was a quantity of used clothes left over so the group set up a used clothing depot in the home of Muriel and Ian Shaw. Group members and the Public Health nurse had access to these clothes over the winter. Donations accumulated quickly.

A paradigm shift occurred in 1985 when the group "Opportunities for Advancement" was contracted to conduct a leadership training course. This was seen to be important because after getting to know people and the issues, there was a realization that there was a need for basic education, self-esteem development and knowledge about community services. This OFA training led to support groups for women and was the beginning of a growth spurt in the organization.

Beaver Valley Outreach continued to operate with volunteers and a small amount of Christmas appeal money donated from service groups and churches from 1982 to 1987. Some small fundraising projects were undertaken by the organization as well. 'Beaver Valley Fare' cookbook was one such project. The areas of community involvement expanded to include year round assistance to those in need in the community as well as people who stayed in our community for a short time only. At this time, we started to develop programs to meet the needs of children and seniors.

The work of the organization became known in the wider area, resulting in talks with the Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS) in late 1987 to apply for a Community and Neighbourhood Support Services Program grant. This necessitated incorporation (February 1988). By-laws were written and an eight member Board was formed with representation from local groups, seniors, service clubs, the Town Council and the community at large. Charitable status was obtained the same year.

First Board

President: Diana McGregor, Vice-President: Norine Baron

Secretary: Hazel South, Treasurer: Rochelle Demerse

Directors: Michelle Fleming, Bill Houghton, Doris Kaye, Marj Stewart, Barb Swanson, Ingrid Vander Schans and Spiro Vozoris.

Coordinator's Report

Carolyn Letourneau

It is with great pleasure that I am writing my first annual report for Beaver Valley Outreach, on the occasion of its 21st Annual General Meeting. It was on August 6th 2003, that I began my journey here at BVO. Where to begin? There is already so much to reflect on! First I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has made my first ten months here so warm and welcoming. It has been a whirlwind since I came on board not to mention a huge transition trying to balance home, work and social life (what's that?). We have a beautiful little girl named Zoë who will be two in September; need I say more? Life is busy. I am definitely grateful and fortunate to have such a supportive and hard working Board of Directors and a wonderful, dedicated staff team to work with. I am honored to be a part of this dynamic, committed group and it is with energy and anticipation that I await what is yet to come from this great organization.

I could report on each and every one of our twenty programmes but that would be one less tree in our world, so please refer to the Programs and Services section of this report for details. In my short time here, many milestones have been achieved and yet still so many more to come. With the growing number of new families in the area, it has reinforced our need to continuously evaluate the nature of our services to families and individuals so that we can direct our resources to meet their needs and requests. I welcome input and feedback from anyone who wishes to comment on the programmes and services we offer and how these can be improved to better serve the needs of this community. Since our mandate is to meet the needs and interests of this community, it is primarily through the voice of its members, that effective change will occur.

I have grown to know many familiar faces through our various programmes and our involvement in the community. I have been overwhelmed and deeply touched on a number of occasions by the generosity, dedication and outpouring of support from individuals, families, groups and service clubs, churches and businesses throughout this unique community.

Never have I seen a place so rich in its bank of volunteers and "helpers" and I thank you all for helping Beaver Valley Outreach enrich our community and make it such a great place to be for **all** community members. I look forward to continuing to facilitate the community programmes that this community values and supports as we strive to enrich the lives of all individuals and families in The Blue Mountains.



Beaver Valley Outreach

Mission Statement

Beaver Valley Outreach is a charitable not-for-profit community based organization of staff and volunteers dedicated to "making good things happen in our community".

We are committed to providing quality programs and services which will enhance the well-being of families and individuals in The Blue Mountains and the Beaver Valley.

Terms of Reference

Objectives

- To assess the needs of the community
- To respond to the social service needs of families and individuals
- To develop programmes to serve the needs of the community
- To refer families and individuals to appropriate resources
- To provide access to services when required
- To provide programmes to parents and children, ages birth to six as per our commitment to 'Ontario Early Years'
- To administer the Recreational Subsidy Fund on behalf of the County of Grey to members of the community of The Blue Mountains, Meaford and the Beaver Valley.

Composition - Representatives of the Board of Directors are from the community at large.

Term of Service - Directors are to serve a minimum of two years with renewal of two terms to a maximum of six years. The executive officers will have a two-year term renewable for a second term.

Role of Directors - Directors are expected to attend monthly Board meetings. A director may be asked to step down if he/she is absent from three consecutive meetings without just cause. Directors are expected to take on a liaison role or responsibility for a particular area of BVO activities.

Directors can further assist the organization by:

- informing the executive and/or staff about significant events
- forwarding agenda items to the chair
- participating in discussions, projects and events
- becoming part of the executive in due course

Quorum - Minimum of 50%

Decision Making - By vote with 51%. Consensus will be the goal of decision-making, but whenever that is not possible, a vote will be taken. All financial matters will require a vote.

Role of Chair and other executive members shall be as per By- Laws.

Meeting Frequency

The Board will meet monthly on the second Thursday of the month unless otherwise decided. Meetings may be called more frequently from time to time as necessary. The executive will meet whenever an officer deems it to be necessary.

Duration - The organization is ongoing.

Reporting - The treasurer, in collaboration with the coordinator, shall report to all funding bodies as required.

Accountability - The Board of Directors shall be accountable to all funding bodies and to the Beaver Valley/The Blue Mountains community.

Minutes Distribution - Minutes of all meetings (Board and Executive) shall be distributed to all Directors seven days prior to the next meeting by the administrative assistant.

Date Board of Directors Formed - BVO incorporated February 29, 1988

Review of Terms of Reference - The terms shall be reviewed on a biennial basis

**Board of Directors
June 2002 - May 2003**

Name	Position	Address	P.C.	Phone	E-Mail
Rita Mary Cote	Chair	44 Alfred Street, Thornbury	N0H 2P0	599-6170	cotecorti@bmts.com
Marlene Yen	Vice Chair	Box 44 Heathcote	N0H 1N0	599-5510	marlene.west-yen@sympatico.ca
Martha Lacey	Treasurer	127 Slabtown Clarksburg	N0H 1J0	599-4580	marty.lacey@sympatico.ca
Norine Baron	Secretary	R.R. # 1Heathcote	N0H1N0	599-2442	nbaron@lynx.org
Riley Brethour	Board Member	864 Sunset Cres., Collingwood	L9Y 2L4	705-445-7145	
Joan Hutton	Board Member	135 Bay St. Thornbury	N0H 2P0	599-3834	
Mary Johnston	Board Member	53 King St. W Thornbury	N0H 2P0	599-9943	maryarundel@hotmail.com
Eleanor Maxwell	Board Member	47 Elma St. Thornbury	N0H 2P0	599-6862	emaxwell@sympatico.ca
Barb Moreau	Board Member	179 Mary St. Thornbury	N0H 2P0	599-2305	barbpete@sympatico.ca
David Perks	Board Member	14 McAuley St Thornbury	N0H 2P0	599-2338	parksd@rogers.com
Roberta Pfuetzner	Board Member	212 Peel St. Thornbury	N0H 2P0	599-6989	lud.rob@sympatico.ca
Wanda Winters	Board Member	75-100 Alice St. Thornbury	N0H 2P0	599-1080	wandawinters@bmts.ca

Staff 2003-2004

The Board of Directors is very proud of the staff of Beaver Valley Outreach and we congratulate them for their fine work in making our programs and services the best they can be. This community is enriched by their dedication and support.

Coordinator

Carolyn Letourneau

Office Manager

Chris Blake

Crayon Box Nursery School

Julia Hinds

Jennifer Gordon

Early Years Play Group

Julia Hinds

Kids Club

Rosemary Barnett

Sharon Baker

Jennifer Gordon

Deborah Wilson

Judy Betts

School's Cool

Heather Dargelo

Michaelle Pratt

Cleaning Staff

Donna Rice

Sherri Deer (on sick leave)

Number of Staff Positions

One full time staff person

Twelve part-time staff positions

Programmes and Services

Programme	Description	Who Does the Work?	Who Participates?	How Many 2003?
Emergency Services	Assistance is provided for food, clothing and transportation, as well as payment of utility and medical bills for families in crisis. We also provide personal loans when needed.	Coordinator with coverage from the Executive in her absence.	Members in the community in need of short-term assistance and support.	Approx. 150 individuals
Special Needs Transportation	Transportation is provided and subsidized, or if necessary paid fully, for medical, dental, psychiatric, legal and parenting appointments.	Coordinator, Barb Swanson and 20 volunteer drivers	Any members of the community who are not covered by Home & Community Support Services or any other agencies.	6 BVO clients served. 322 HCSS clients served 25 drivers.
Information and Referral	We maintain contact with other service providers in the area and make referrals for individuals and families as appropriate	Coordinator	Any member of the community who makes a request	800 + phone calls per year requesting information. Some resulted in referrals.
Treasure Shop	We provide recycled clothing and housewares at very low cost.	Coordinators, Mary Johnston and Barb Moreau, Board Members, Roberta Pfuetzner and Eleanor Maxwell and 50 + volunteers	All members of the community.	Approx. 2,500 visits per year.
Valley Visitors	Visits are provided to Seniors and persons recuperating from illness. This program matches volunteers with persons who would like a friendly regular visit.	Lyn Morley and Norine Baron plus 9 volunteers.	Anyone in the community who makes a request.	10 clients for a total of approx. 170 visits
Christmas Hampers	Hampers, which include gifts and festive food and treats, are made available to community members the week before Christmas.	Coordinator, Board members and volunteers.	Any member in the community who makes a request.	45 families
Recreational Funding Subsidy Program.	We advertise and distribute funds to finance recreational, arts and sports activities for children.	Coordinator and Marlene Yen.	Families whose total gross income is below \$30,000. meet the criteria for receiving funds.	From Sept. 2001 to present, 54 families and their 108 children.
Breakfast Club	We purchase supplies, plan and prepare food for Breakfast Club at the local school.	Coordinator, Marty Lacey and 25 volunteers	Open to all students in the school.	35-40 children per day.
Crayon Box Nursery School	This is a half day program for 2 1/2 to 5 year olds, 2 mornings per week that offers opportunities for socialization as well as a supportive and nurturing learning environment.	Bonnie Finn. Jennifer Gordon and Julia Hinds	Children, age 2 1/2 to 5.	13 children

Programme	Description	Who Does the Work?	Who Participates?	How Many 2003?
Kids' Club	This Before and After School Care Programme provides a variety of activities on a daily basis. A Full day programme is offered on P.A. days.	Programme Coordinator, Rosemary Barnett, Sharon Baker, Jennifer Gordon, Deborah Wilson and Judy Betts	Families who require before or after School Care.	Fifty families are registered with a total of 80 children.
Easter Eggstravaganza	This is a family activity that was run for the 2nd time this year. Easter egg hunts prizes and scavenger hunts made this a very successful community event.	Our coordinator, Board and Katimavik participants Rocklyn Academy students and staff and Sherri Lee.	Families and their children.	200 participants
Good Food Box Programme	This is a joint effort of BVO and the Beaver Valley Pre-School. This monthly fruit and vegetable buying cooperative makes healthy food available at a very reasonable rate.	Coordinator, in partnership with Sherrie Lee from the Preschool.	Any member of the community	50 participants
Youth Music Programme	This programme allows youth an opportunity to gather in a relaxed, enjoyable setting on a weekly basis to nurture their love of music and to have fun. Opportunities are provided to further develop their musical skills.	Coordinator, Cliff Pratt, volunteer musicians and Teresa Pearson.	Any young person between the ages of 8 to 17.	15 students
National Child's Day Nov 20th.	BVO had special programs on this day to celebrate children.	Coordinator and Katimavik participants.	Any family in the community.	18 families
"School's Cool"	A six-week school readiness programme run during the summer for children ages 3 -5 years of age.	Coordinator, Board Members, Wanda Winters and Marlene Yen and staff, Michaelle Pratt Bonnie Finn and Heather Dongelo	Children ages 3 - 5 and their parents	15 children
Kindermusik	A 12-week music programme for children from birth to 7 years of age.	Instructor, Bonnie Perry	Children ages birth to 7 and their parents	33 children
Thanksgiving Community Dinner	A Thanksgiving Dinner prepared at the Community Centre	Coordinator, Ted De Corso, Teresa Pearson, Board Members, Volunteer chefs from the community and many volunteers.	Any member of the community	500 happy guests
Katimavik	This is a national programme that brings young people together from across the country and is sponsored by the Town of The Blue Mountains. BVO is one of 8 participating organizations in town.	Coordinator, and Board Members	Katimavik volunteers provided support to a range of BVO programs.	4 Katimavik participants

Early Years Programmes

Funding for Early Years Programmes is a recent initiative of the Provincial Government. Beaver Valley Outreach has been designated a 'Satellite Centre' and receives \$21,000 annually to provide programs for families and their children from birth to six years of age. The programmes we have established are based on the requests of parents as determined in surveys and parent focus groups held in the spring and fall of 2001.

Play Group

Although Beaver Valley Outreach has facilitated a successful playgroup for many years, we received funding which has allowed us to expand and enhance this programme. Now that we have a permanent location, we have purchased new equipment and furniture. We have used our funding to renew our materials and resources and to provide a healthy snack. Most importantly, we were able to hire an Early Child Educator to work with parents to facilitate these sessions and to plan workshops on issues related to literacy, parenting, health and safety. Parent and child craft programmes continue throughout the year.

'Kindermusik'

We are very excited that we can offer Kindermusik in The Blue Mountains and have had a very successful second year. We are again providing classes in fall and spring. Kindermusik is a comprehensive and well-established music program for young children and many parents in our community have travelled to Owen Sound over the years to provide this experience to their children.

'Baby's First Months'

Had a new baby? Then this programme is for you. Come and have your baby weighed and meet other new parents for informal group discussions about adjusting to parenthood, family and baby health, as well as breastfeeding support.

'Terrific Toddlers'

This course discusses the normal developmental milestones of toddlers such as effective discipline and building your child's self-esteem.

Access

Our goal at Beaver Valley Outreach is to provide full access to each of our programs for all members of the community. We will therefore offer support for transportation and funding as the need arises.

Community Partners

When Beaver Valley Outreach first considered a new home for our offices, Treasure Shop and Nursery School, we also felt the need to provide the community with opportunities to meet with representatives from various social service groups. With this in mind, our Coordinator, Teresa Pearson, started discussions with several groups and agencies with whom we already had close connections. It was her belief that there was a need for these services to be visible and present in this community. These early investigations have resulted in a number of programmes that are now directly available to our community in The Blue Mountains. We are very proud to be working with these organizations and are happy that we can support their work in the community by providing them with a home within Beaver Valley Outreach. The following is a list of organizations and agencies that are now delivering direct service to people in The Blue Mountains and the Beaver Valley, from the Community Office at Beaver Valley Outreach.

Grey-Bruce Community Legal Clinic

The Grey-Bruce Community Legal Clinic provides free legal information, advice and representation, as well as other services to low- income residents of Grey and Bruce Counties. 'Clinic law' means areas of law, which particularly affect low-income people such as social assistance (Ontario Works and Ontario Disability), rental housing and many government programs such as Canada Pension Plan and Employment Insurance. In these areas of law, this organization may be able to act for you before a board or tribunal. They may also be able to assist members of the community in representing themselves. For more information on services, or to make an appointment at the Thornbury office, call 519-370-2200 or 1-877-832-1435

Glenda MacKenzie, a community legal worker, is available at the Beaver Valley Outreach Community Office the first and third Wednesday of every month from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

My Friend's House

This is an Emergency Shelter for abused women with or without children located in Collingwood. In addition to providing a safe place for women and children who are fleeing abuse in their own homes, this organization provides the following services:

- telephone and in-person counselling for women who are not staying in the shelter.
- information about the impact of abuse on women and children.
- child support programme
- referrals and information about other services.
- public information

You can contact Rose Peters at (705) 444-2586. She is available at the Beaver Valley Outreach Community Office by appointment.

Tracks Employment Service

'Tracks' is a job connect program for youth in the community, specifically for young people, between the ages of 16-24 who are out of work and out of school. This organization can help to find local jobs and training opportunities. Clients will learn about jobs that are in demand and the skills that are needed to do them and will also help participants write a resume'. They will teach the skills necessary for a successful job interview. For potential employers, Tracks will help to find people who are willing and ready to work and will provide on-the-job training.

Tracks Service can be reached at 705-444-1580. A Tracks counsellor is available at the Beaver Valley Outreach Community Office every Wednesday morning.

Family Y Employment Services

This organization, based in Owen Sound, provides job opportunities as well as job counselling, interview and resumé writing skills for members of our community from the age of 25 and up. They will work with potential employers to find a good match for the jobs that they have available and will support workers on site.

A counsellor can be reached at 371-9222 / 371-9246 and is available at the Beaver Valley Outreach Community Office on Fridays by appointment.

Partners for Affordable Housing

This ad-hoc committee has been established by concerned citizens, including three Board Members of BVO. Its purpose is to pursue options for more affordable housing in The Blue Mountains. The members of the committee recognize that there are many groups facing challenges for more affordable housing, including families, seniors and individuals. A committee has now been structured by The Blue Mountain's council and is working on issues around more affordable housing.

For more information, speak to Rita Mary Côté at 599-2577 (BVO).

Sources of Funding

Recreational Funding Subsidy Programme

Once again, in 2003 and 2004 we received \$25,000 to fund recreational activities for children up to the age of 18. To qualify for this subsidy total family income must be less than \$30,000.

Although this money comes to us through Grey County, it is funded at 100% by the Federal Government as part of the National Child Benefit programme.

Breakfast Club

We received approximately \$800 this year to operate our Breakfast Club. This funding is provided by the Canadian Living Foundation. The programme is also subsidised by BVO to meet the actual costs of running this programme.

Ontario Early Years Programmes

We operate a parent and child **playgroup**, as well as **Educational Programs for Parents**. We receive \$21,000 per year from Grey County Children's Services as part of the provincial Early Years Program.

This funding is provided by the Province of Ontario.

Crayon Box Nursery School

This program is operated and staffed by Beaver Valley Outreach. Parents pay a fee, which helps to offset our costs. There are subsidies available for families who meet the criteria as established in the needs testing for which the Municipality is responsible. This programme is open to all members of the community.

Kids' Club

This is a before and after school care programme. This programme is operated and staffed by Beaver Valley Outreach. Parents pay a fee, which is sufficient to cover our costs. There are subsidies available for families who meet the criteria, as established in the needs testing for which the Municipality is responsible.

Wage Subsidy

We receive approximately \$11,468 from Grey County for wage subsidy for our Child Care programmes, which included the Crayon Box Nursery School and Kids' Club.

Donations

Beaver Valley Outreach could not provide its programmes and services without the support of this community. We receive donations from: Individuals, Families, Associations, Service Clubs, Local Businesses, Churches, the Town of The Blue Mountains, and others.

Outreach Observer

Purpose and Goals

The purpose of publishing this newsletter is to keep our staff, volunteers, programme participants, financial supporters, members of the community, local business people and our partners in delivering services apprised of the ongoing nature of the work of BVO. Many of the groups mentioned above have some relationship with Beaver Valley Outreach but may not be aware of the many facets of service and programmes we provide. This publication allows us an opportunity to provide information about new developments and upcoming events and activities. We also use the opportunity to feature specific programmes and to provide tributes and messages of thanks.

Times

Quarterly

Publication Dates

November, March, June and September

Distribution

Beaver Valley Outreach

Board members

BVO Staff and Programs

Crayon Box

Early Years Play Group

Youth Music Programme

Kindermusik Participants

School's Cool

Treasure Shop volunteers

Breakfast Club participants

Valley Visitors

Kids Club

Transportation Programme

Community

Beaver Valley Community School, Principal, Parent Council

Churches, Pastor, extra copies for posting

Business, through the Chamber of Commerce

Errinrung, Jean Lune, Terry Robbins, posting

Medical Clinic Dr. Remillard, Dr. Sauriol, posting

Programme Partners

Tracks, Employment Services Counsellor

Y Employment Services, Counsellor

Legal Aid Clinic, Counsellor

My Friend's House, Counsellor

The Town of The Blue Mountains, Mayor, Clerk, Manager

Early Years: Kathy MacMurdo, Joan Allan, Shelly Gilkinson

Community and Social Services, Rosalind Brooks, Linda Veige

Health: Maureen LaPointe, Linda Bumstead

More Affordable Housing Committee, c/o Muriel Anderson

Marsh Street Centre, c/o Rob Potter

L. E. Shore Memorial Library

If you are not included in any of the above groups and are not able to pick up a newsletter at the BVO Office or Treasure Shop, please let us know and we will gladly mail a copy to you.

A Tribute to Rita Mary Coté

Rita Mary Coté has been a dedicated volunteer and Board Member for Beaver Valley Outreach for the past twelve years. For many of those years she acted as our very able and capable Treasurer. For the past two years, Rita Mary has served as Chair of the Board. Under her leadership, BVO found a new home on Bruce Street.

During Rita Mary's watch, we have expanded our services and programmes in the community and have witnessed a steady increase in the numbers of volunteers who share Rita Mary's vision and dedication. If you are the type of person who is interested in getting to know your community better, Rita Mary is the person to ask. If you're not that kind of person - too bad - she'll get you involved anyway! No wonder she was the obvious choice for the volunteer of the year award for Beaver Valley Outreach in 2003.

No one can talk about Rita Mary's involvement with BVO without mentioning the Silent Auction. This annual event has come a long way from its humble beginnings when Rita Mary and Chris Blake ran the first Auction in 1995. This continues to be the best run Silent Auction in the Town of The Blue Mountains, perhaps even in Bruce and Grey Counties. Funds from the Silent Auction continue to be a significant source of income for Beaver Valley Outreach. The recipe for success is simple. Many, many hours of hard work on the part of Rita Mary and her legions of volunteers and a very generous community - especially the small businesses that continue to graciously provide us with donations. However, people in the know also realize that it is the organization and leadership that Rita Mary has provided that brings all these groups together to organize this truly amazing event.

Apart from her work with BVO, Rita Mary has devoted her time and talents to the Committee for Affordable Housing and to the development of a local chapter of Life Long Learning. And who else could possibly bring 35 individuals together to participate in discussions about scripture? Adult education is Rita Mary's second love. Needless to say her first is community.

The really interesting thing about this is that Rita Mary does all of this when she's in town. And given her penchant for travelling, her commitment to friends and a very large extended family this is truly amazing!!

This year Rita Mary is stepping down from her position as Chair of the Board of Directors. However, we are encouraged that she will remain with us as Past Chair, and will continue to provide us with her vision and her ability to bring people together in pursuit of her mission to "making good things happen in our community."

A Tribute to Volunteers

Volunteers form the heart of BVO!



