



IODE Canada *Express News*

Address of the National President IODE National Annual Meeting 2021

Make It Happen, Make A Difference

IODE Canada President Carol McCall delivered such a compelling speech, that those attending voted to have her address distributed.

During the past 121 years, IODE's focus has changed. These changes in focus have been the bases for IODE surviving for 121 years. Had IODE continued to focus only on supporting of our war effort and servicemen, it is most unlikely that we would be here as a strong organization of 1,750 members. The fact that we used our strong organizational structure to support other causes of education, service and citizenship in our communities has strengthened us. We became a registered charity in 1991, moving our organization into a premium category of non-profit organizations. Sometimes our members complain about our annual fees and extra charges. Sometimes we are compared by our members to volunteer organizations that charge minimal annual fees or none at all. Well, the old expression of comparing apples to apples is important. If it costs nothing in membership fees, it is likely that you do not receive anything from the organization.

What does IODE provide? We can provide excellent service, solid reputation, support for charitable programs and charitable tax receipts for our members and to the members of other organizations who have members that do not pay fees, but have deep pockets. We can provide them with tax receipts and we receive their money to spend on services to help people we have identified as in need. We can put other peoples' money to good use with our community-partner social agencies. We can partner our strength – strong infrastructure as a charity and deep community involvement - with the financial resources of people who want to donate and make a difference. Our primary chapters know what their communities need. Our primary chapters who successfully recruit and attract new members have shown us the way. Every chapter looking for new members needs to maximize its exposure within the community and develop strong community partnerships. We can tell the stories of how money donated to us has made a difference in a person's life and how it supports a community service. Our organization as a charity is our strength. Our mission to deliver education support, community service and citizenship programs is broad enough to allow us to serve everyone with money to donate. We can be personal shoppers for donors that want their money to go into their community and to make a difference.

We can help working women direct their charitable donations to meaningful projects where they may also be able to spend their available time working at a community event. We know how many of our members enjoy being hands-on and we can figure out how to provide this opportunity to women in our communities who have very little time for volunteer activities, but enjoy being part of them. There are also women who have an interest in meaningful volunteer work and have the time to dedicate to it. IODE is well placed as a successful charity that can provide an organized structure and other committed women to work with in many communities across Canada. IODE has the flexibility in its structure to provide women with a platform that suits them for participating in charitable support and services in their communities. We also have capable members who are ready to help establish new chapters of women who can organize themselves in a way that suits their available time and their interests. A chapter can have a lean officer structure with just a secretary and a treasurer and meet less frequently or by Zoom only. We know how to be a registered charity, we have the infrastructure in place, we know other service organizations in our communities and we know people in need and how to deliver real help. Be proud of IODE! We do a wonderful job of operating as a charity and helping people in need.

During this past year, with Covid-19 restrictions, we have all experienced the frustration of trying to continue our usual IODE activities. Chapters and members commented that 2020 was a time to be kind, to connect with people, to care, to be positive, to keep in touch and to realize that small amounts of assistance are also welcome. One chapter described doing random acts of kindness. We can make a difference by simply caring about people and showing that care in small ways. It is a time of loneliness and we can help with that too. Our members have described how much the members in their chapters enjoy the friendship and company of others in their chapter. Keeping in contact with others is particularly important and continuing to give of ourselves to others has attracted 66 new members during the past year. Your directors are looking at ways that we can help primary chapters to increase their membership and will be reporting to you about the strengths of IODE and about how we can work on addressing its weaknesses. Primarily, we need to keep up the good work and remember to offer other women the opportunity of joining us and becoming part of a great organization – IODE!

Thank you for the opportunity of serving you and for your support and I am looking forward to another year as president working with an amazing group of dedicated and talented national officers. I hope that our next annual meeting will see us meeting with each other in person and that we will also be able to have members present by videoconference.

Founded in 1900, IODE Canada is a national women's charitable organization dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for individuals through education support, community services and citizenship programs. For more information about our organization and charitable work, please visit our website.