

## EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

January 25, 2005

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: A. McBeath, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Recognition of ORT Youth Technology and Mentor Program

ORIGINATOR: B. Holt, Executive Director Instructional and Curricular Support Services

RESOURCE  
STAFF: Carol Suddards

### INFORMATION

Organization for Educational Resources and Technological Training (ORT) is an international non-governmental fundraising organization founded in St. Petersburg in Russia in the late 1800s to help people learn a trade in order to become self sufficient. With operations in more than 60 countries, in over 800 schools and programs, ORT has served more than 3,000,000 young people internationally since its inception. With the leadership of Sandra and Gordon Grosh, and in partnership with Edmonton Public Schools Metro Continuing Education, Edmonton ORT provides technology training and mentorship programs to disadvantaged children in district schools.

Beginning in 1999, Metro and Edmonton ORT partnered to deliver the Youth Technology and Mentor Program. Currently we have targeted children in grades four to six. This enriched computer training program is taught by certified teachers and supported by volunteer high school and junior high school student mentors. The focus of the after school program is on building self-confidence in the use of computer technology, language and social skills. Every student is provided with a mentor from a junior or senior high school, who serves as a positive role model. The mentors also experience personal growth through their involvement with the program. Participants develop the desire and the confidence to succeed in school. Teachers and parents have noted a dramatic improvement in the children's motivation to learn and achieve in school. A snack is provided each day and at the end of the program, participants and mentors are recognized at a culminating event.

Initially, program funds were used to fully fund one school program each spring and fall. In the spring of 2002, the program was modified to be a cost-shared model whereby the schools and Metro share the cost by providing in-kind services. By sharing the costs, more young people are able to benefit from the program each year.

Since its inception, Edmonton ORT has donated over \$57,000 to the program costs. Schools involved in the program to date are Delton, Eastwood, Evansdale, Meyokumin, McCauley, McDougall, Norwood, Parkdale, Spruce Avenue, Talmud Torah, Thorncliffe and Rundle schools.

Sandra and Gordon Grosh continue to work with Metro's staff to bring the program to disadvantaged students and look forward to the growth of the program to more schools and students.

CS/tdm