

Michael Morin – volunteering provides a whole new perspective

Michael's day job is in property management, he works closely with a lot of adults and families, he's been doing this for nine years. Just recently though, he started volunteering with the Ottawa Network for Education (ONFE) and it's opened his eyes to how children interpret things completely differently than adults.



A dad himself with two children, he always enjoys reading to his kids, and having them read to him. "It improves their self confidence, enhances their language skills and frees their imagination."

At ONFE he spends one hour a week in a school reading to, and listening to children read to him. "At first the children (third graders) were a bit intimidated," says Michael. "But every week I see the shyness fall away, and new ideas emerge, they are totally engaged in this program."

"It's really fascinating to see how differently a child might interpret something I see as very straightforward," says Michael. The school reserves a class room for the volunteers and they work with the same group every week for an hour.

"The time is really only 60 minutes, but the results are amazing," says Michael. "The kids love when it's their turn to read, or answer questions, they really love being involved and hearing their names called. I don't know who looks more forward to this, them or me."

The children come from different social and cultural backgrounds, but they share the desire to be involved, to learn more and to participate.

The book that Michael and his students are reading is "**Unstoppable me! 10 ways to Soar**" by Dr. Wayne Dyer. It takes a head on approach to issues that might intimidate children, like low self esteem, or lack of confidence, it helps them believe that they can do whatever they want in life in a positive way.

"I see positive reactions to this book every week," says Michael. He plans to continue to volunteer with ONFE, "I have only great things to say about doing this and working with the children. It's even better than I thought."

Michael, interacts with many people every day -- people he works with and the people he works for in his property management role. "I talk to them all about the benefits of volunteering and reading to children, I want to pass the word on about a great venture that offers 100 per cent reward."

To find out more about the different programs that ONFE supports and where you can volunteer visit www.onfe-rope.ca. As Michael says, "the results are enlightening, I only want to do more."