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About the Otesha Project

"Otesha" is a Swahili word that means "reason to dream." The Otesha Project is a charitable organization that uses theatre to mobilize youth to create local and global change through their daily consumer choices. Our programs are created to show young people that there are alternatives to our culture of over-consumption, and that each one of us has the opportunity to have a positive impact on the world, every single day.

Jocelyn Land-Murphy and Jessica Lax founded The Otesha Project while studying sustainable development in Kenya in 2002. While there, they became overwhelmed by the inequity in living conditions between North Americans and Kenyans. They also saw some of the worst results of labour exploitation, resource over-consumption, and unfair trade with their own eyes. They felt powerless as individuals to solve such deep-rooted problems – until they brought it down to a personal level. They began to alter their own lifestyles to reflect the change they wanted to see in the world, and began to dream of the social change that could result if this mindset spread amongst Canada's youth. On Feb 16, 2002, in Kitale, Kenya, The Otesha Project was created.

Five years later, The Otesha Project has become a registered charitable organization and reached over 60,000 people with theatrical performances and workshops that inspire youth to make daily choices that reflect the kind of world they want to live in. Otesha has also co-ordinated five cycling and presenting tours and trained over 20 high school teams to deliver presentations, empowering hundreds of young team members to become role models for sustainable consumption. In 2005, the organization published *The Otesha Book: From Junk to Funk*, the collaborative product of more than 30 young writers from across Canada. The Otesha Project has been widely recognized for its innovative and creative activism, receiving the 2005 YouthActionNet award for emerging youth projects, the 2005 Tooker Gomberg Award for creative media engagement, the 2005 CAMBIO Scholarship Award for youth action against climate change, and the 2006 EECOM Award for outstanding non-profit organization.



Directors' Message

2006 marked The Otesha Project's fourth birthday and was a year of much dreaming and scheming for the future.

The end of 2005 brought with it a chance to evaluate all that The Otesha Project had accomplished. These evaluations planted the seeds of a bold new plan for the organization in our minds, and by the summer we were busily creating a document that will define The Otesha Project's future: the five-year strategic plan! This plan includes a restructured staff model, a strengthened role for alumni and the Board of Directors, increased program delivery, and the adoption of new income generators. Other highlights of the year included the establishment of Otesha chapters and affiliations all over the globe; the creation of "The Otesha Book Teacher Menu", a resource for teachers to accompany our book; the training of eleven more teams of "Hopeful High School Hooligans" (Triple-H); the launch of a new Triple-H distance program; and the planning of five bike tours for the summer of 2007.

Creating a strategic plan was a big step for us, but the process of establishing a long-term vision and course of action only reinforced our confidence in the ability of The Otesha Project to grow and improve. The plan is innovative and ambitious, plotting the course for The Otesha Project to become a financially independent, structurally stable, and even more effective organization. It sets out increased program delivery goals, aiming for 10 Triple-H teams a year and 10 bike tours a year by 2011. It outlines a fundraising strategy to allow Otesha to gain financial independence from grant-based funding. In order to diversify leadership and ensure continuous institutional memory, the plan also strengthens the role of the Board of Directors and establishes an Alumni Advisory Board. In November, The J.W. McConnell Family Foundation came on board to support our five-year plan, providing funding over the next four years so we can put it into action!

Part of our strategic plan is to expand the incredibly successfully Triple-H program from an Ontario-based program run solely by Otesha staff members into a national, volunteer-driven program. This year we developed the "Triple-H Team Facilitation Guide", which can be used by any bike tour alumnus to start a Triple-H team in his or her own community – and spread the empowerment even further.

Meanwhile, the second and third years of the Triple-H program respectively ended and began. Eleven more teams of high school students have been transformed into Hopeful Hooligans, gaining webs of peer support, confidence as public speakers knowledgeable about sustainability issues, and all the tools needed to perform the "Otesha Morning Choices" play in their communities. All the teams were from returning schools, and older students worked with the team facilitators to train the next generation of Otesha performers in their schools. These eleven teams made dozens of presentations to over 2,000 people—and they're still going!

The Otesha Project's presence in high schools was further increased this year with "The Otesha Book Teacher Menu", a curriculum-linked guide for integrating the book's content into classroom lessons and assignments. Complete with an array of activities divided into "Hors d'oeuvres," "Entrées," and "Desserts," this resource has met rave reviews from teachers across Canada!

Another fascinating development this year has been the expression of interest in The Otesha Project by a variety of organizations overseas. One official Otesha chapter is being set up in the UK, an Otesha-inspired bike tour took place in the Philippines, and the Australian group Cycling for Sustainability used Otesha materials for their own bike tours.

But amidst all this strategic planning, school outreach, and international liaising, we have kept our focus on The Otesha Project's core program: bike tours. This October, we began recruiting tour members for the five 2007 tours, sending a callout far and wide. The applications have been streaming in.

All in all, 2006 was a pivotal year, which saw the start of many good things and set the foundation for many years of hopeful hooliganism to come!

Yours in hope and gratitude,

The folks at The Otesha Project



Program highlights:

Hopeful High School Hooligans (Triple-H)

This year we continued the successful Triple-H training program, turning dozens of not-so-average Ontario high school students into Sustainability Superheroes who spread the word about a new wave of hope that begins in our bathroom, closet, kitchen, or on the way to school. This peer-to-peer education program creates an important support network for young people who are eager to make a difference. As they perform the "Otesha Morning Choices" play for their peers, they share their enthusiasm and hope and become active, empowered citizens.

Each Triple-H team is made up of 10-15 students. The eight schools that participated this year were:

- Cobourg District Collegiate Institute East, Cobourg
- East Northumberland Secondary School, Brighton
- Dr. John M. Denison Secondary School, Newmarket
- Heart Lake Secondary School, Brampton (two trainings)
- Lincoln M. Alexander Secondary School, Mississauga
- Central Peel Secondary School, Brampton
- Unionville High School, Unionville
- Lisgar Collegiate Institute, Ottawa (two trainings)
- Applewood Heights Secondary, Mississauga



Combined, these teams made 29 presentations to 2,221 people!

Each team received an intensive, three-day training session from the Otesha staff, in which the participants were immersed in the issues of sustainable consumption, and served organic, vegan food—a first for many of the students! They received extensive training in theatre, public speaking, leadership, youth engagement, and critical thinking. Each team took the "Otesha Morning Choices" performance and made it their own, adding new dances and raps, local references, and incredibly creative characters. With the help of their teacher-advisors, each team held rehearsals, and booked and delivered presentations at schools and local events.

Members from seven of the 2005-2006 Triple-H teams took part in a rousing Super Sustainability Summit in Ottawa at the end of April to evaluate the program and brainstorm improvements. These team members come together to celebrate their accomplishments, share their lessons learned, and gain new skills with which to return back to their teams.

A vegan baking workshop, a bicycle jewelry workshop, and a sustainability joy ride of Ottawa were among the weekend highlights.



"I never realized how connected many of the world's problems are and how I myself am woven into them. Otesha's Triple-H program taught me so much about these issues and about the hundreds of changes we are capable of - as opposed to everything we can't change."

- Triple-H team member

(Triple H continued)

Like all of The Otesha Project's programs, the Triple-H program has undergone some changes in the past year. The biggest change is that participants now contribute to the cost of the training weekend. This will allow the Triple-H program to become financially self-sufficient – a trend that Otesha is aiming for in all of its programs from here forward.

The other major change is that the program will now be available to youth across Canada, through an exciting new Team Facilitation Program (see below).

The impacts and objectives of the Triple-H program are twofold. Audience members are inspired to see their peers on stage, confidently sharing their hope that a better future can result if we make conscious changes to our lifestyles. Team members, meanwhile, gain new confidence and direction as they see the impact they have on the world and on their peers, while becoming part of a committed, open, and caring community!

Team Facilitation Program

In our efforts to expand Otesha's program delivery, we are planning to decentralize the Triple-H program, transforming it from an Ontario-based program run solely by Otesha staff members into a national program organized by bike tour alumni. To that end, we have created the "Triple-H Team Facilitation Guide", which shares all of the tools we use when training passionate teams of high school youth.

The guide includes step-by-step guidelines on assembling a team, running team-building exercises, training the team to perform the "Morning Choices" play, and booking and delivering presentations in the community. The guide also includes a slew of valuable resources essential to any facilitator, including Otesha's favourite energizers, as well as guidelines on running a successful meeting, working with the media, and motivating a team.

Combined with future facilitator training sessions to be given by Otesha Project staff members, this resource will allow motivated bike tour alumni to continue to spread Otesha's message of hopeful action to hundreds of people in their communities.



"Thinking about how proud I am of my school's team, how amazed I get when I meet other people concerned about the same issues, how inspired I get by an audience's reaction at a presentation, all these things remind me that there is always hope. Otesha has truly changed me as a person, I now know that cool sneakers and strong coffee aren't really happiness; I will never forget the things I have learned about social justice, the environment and myself."

- Triple-H team member

The Otesha Teacher

Menu

With well over 4,500 copies of The Otesha Book in circulation, and many in use in classrooms across Canada, we decided to make it even easier for teachers to integrate the book into their lesson plans. Written in collaboration with the formal education sector, "The Otesha Teacher Menu" is a curriculum-linked guide to creating lesson plans, classroom activities, and assignments based on the information and resources found in The Otesha Book. The guide is printed in-house, on reused paper, using solid inks (virtually waste-free!). It can be easily inserted into the back of any the homemade copy of The Otesha Book, and is available online at:

http://www.otesha.ca/files/teacher_insert.pdf

The guide is divided into the same six areas of action as The Otesha Book and the "Otesha Morning Choices" play: water, clothing, media, coffee, food, and transportation. To aid in lesson-planning, each section is subdivided into three activity areas:

☒ **Hors D'oeuvres:** starters and icebreakers, including surveys, community mapping and investigative reports

☒ **Entrées:** in-class activities and discussions, including stakeholder debates and creative exercises requiring students to assume different perspectives

☒ **Desserts:** assignments for full term papers and extra-credit assignments, including "Go Further!" reports, and research and presentations on global issues

Filled with creativity, this latest resource will help to bring The Otesha Book to life in classrooms across Canada.



"I find this resource extremely useful for teaching ESD (education for sustainable development). Firstly, it is geared very specifically to a teen audience. The aesthetic is "urban-trendy" and funky. The language it uses is at the level of high school students. And it is written as though a narrator is speaking to the student directly. Therefore it engages students right away because it has a "youth to youth" feeling. Secondly, this resource focuses on several relevant issues that can appeal to high school students - clothing, coffee, media, food, water and transport. Each issue is examined from the perspective of how this teen might interact with these things in one day. Therefore it transforms what could be seen as a enormous, global catastrophe into a manageable size, a tangible scope - one day. Lastly, this resource weaves together social, environmental and economic issues seamlessly. In so doing, it doesn't ever set up the idea that these things are separate and maintains that you must view these factors as inextricably interconnected."

- High school teacher

National Outreach and Education

National outreach and education is comprised of three key elements: The Otesha Project website, The Otesha Book, and keynote speeches and workshops given by Otesha Project staff members and alumni.

The website receives 10,000 new visitors each month (that's, on average, a new person discovering and visiting the Otesha website every four minutes)! Visitors can access information, in both official languages, about sustainable actions they can take, how to book Otesha Project bike tour performances, how to order copies of The Otesha Book, and upcoming Otesha events – in addition to information about all The Otesha Project's programs.

The Otesha Book continues to be popular – and in addition to online sales, it is carried by a number of bookstores in Ottawa, including Mountain Equipment Co-op. Over 4,500 copies are now in circulation, and combined with "The Otesha Book Teacher

"I want to thank you so much for the wonderful talk that really empowered everyone in the room at the conference. Otesha's work is very special and that came through, but also that anyone who really reflects deeply and acts on their values can make a huge difference too!"

- Alan Warner, EECOM 2006 conference organizer

Menu", this is one rockin' educational tool!

Requests for Otesha Project workshops and presentations streamed in throughout the year, with invitations to present at numerous conventions, university classes, and fairs across the continent. Requests from schools in Ottawa or the Greater Toronto area were directed to Triple-H teams; Otesha staff members and alumni fulfilled other requests whenever possible. In total, Otesha Project staff members and volunteers gave 58 presentations to 4,155 people over the course of 2006.

Four of these presentations were keynote speeches delivered at conferences and large events such as the EECOM Salt of the Earth conference and the Youth for Social Justice Forum in Minnesota. In 2006, Jessica Lax shared her thoughts on the experience of founding The Otesha Project and on the power of individual action with 930 people of all ages and backgrounds. Honorariums for keynote speeches are one of The Otesha Project's alternative income streams.



International Partnerships

Joint Projects and

2006 proved to be a big year for The Otesha Project internationally. Jessica Lax visited the Philippines in December to take part in a collaboration project between The Otesha Project and the Young Artists Fellowship for the Environment (YAFE), a youth organization in the Philippines. Fifteen youth participated in the first YAFE-Otesha bike tour and together



– accompanied by a gallery of powerful paintings on consumption issues, and an interpretive dance piece – they spoke to over 1,600 people about sustainability and ethical consumerism in the Philippines.

This fall, Michael Norton – author of *The Everyday Activist* – secured two large grants to start Otesha's first international

branch in the UK. Their newly hired Executive Director, Liz McDowell will join one of Otesha's 2007 bike tours as part of her training. Michael is also working to publish an international edition of *The Otesha Book*.

A member of the 2005 Coast-2-Coast bike tour, Kazuki Taira, returned home to his native Japan to start spreading the Otesha message. He is currently doing presentations about The Otesha Project in Okinawa, has translated part of *The Otesha Book* into Japanese, and is partnering with other organizations to try to organize a bike tour in Japan.

Cycling for Sustainability, an organization in Australia, is performing the Otesha play on their bike tours, and is working with Otesha to help us run our first car-free tours in 2007!



Organizational Highlights

Five-Year Strategic Plan and McConnell funding

After the incredibly busy successful year The Otesha Project had in 2005, a lot of thought and research was put into writing the five-year strategic plan. This innovative and ambitious plan will provide us with the security and capacity needed to build organizational and financial sustainability, allowing us to take a successful approach and increase its scale – reaching more young people, in a more effective way, to create long-term change. This plan outlines The Otesha Project's long-term organizational goals, and addresses some specific issues that will arise in the process of transformation, such as founder transition and achieving financial independence. This document lays out how Otesha will achieve its goals – creating organizational stability, achieving funding self-sufficiency, and more than doubling annual program delivery – in the next five years.

A summary of The Otesha Project's next five years:

- 40 more cycling & presenting tours (10 per year by 2011)
- 40 more Triple-H teams (10 per year by 2011)
- 1,200 more cycling & Triple-H team members trained (300 per year by 2011)
- 650 more keynote speeches and alumni presentations (162 per year by 2011)
- 125,000 more audience members reached (31,000 per year by 2011)
- 7,000 more copies of The Otesha Book in circulation (2,000 per year by 2011)
- 900,000 more website visitors (240,000 per year by 2011)

In combination with the above goals, the plan outlines a strategy to achieve financial and organizational sustainability by 2011. It introduces three new revenue sources to replace foundation support: participant fundraising, organizational fundraising campaigns, and presentation honorariums. The plan also establishes a strengthened Board of Directors, an Alumni Advisory Board, increased internal evaluation activities, a larger volunteer base, new leadership positions, and new opportunities for participants' to pursue long-term involvement with the organization.

In November, The Otesha Project received word from the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation that they would financially support the five-year plan – supplying the financial resources needed for the organization to grow towards self-sufficiency. This was a turning point for The Otesha Project, and we are incredibly grateful to have received the Foundation's support!



Staff Changes

One of the reasons for creating the five-year strategic plan was to aid in the transition of the founders from their work as co-directors to other roles in the organization. The first shift occurred this fall as Jocelyn Land-Murphy, The Otesha Project's co-founder and co-director for the past five years, moved into a different role in the organization. Still involved as the President of the Board of Directors and as The Otesha Project's accountant, Jocelyn is focusing on finishing her degree in Global Resource Systems at the University of British Columbia and starting her own family. Jocelyn has made an incredibly deep commitment to The Otesha Project over the years, and it is thanks to her competence, dedication, and determination that it has thrived. Her daily presence is missed, but her advice, feedback, and support continue to help the organization grow.

This year also saw the departure of Jeff Carolin, The Otesha Project's first intern, and co-director since 2005. Jeff kept the O-team energized and on-task throughout 2005 and 2006. In April Jeff left The Otesha Project to travel through South America, leaving many a heartbroken Triple-H-er!

Jessica Lax, co-founder and director, is keeping the tiller on a straight course as The Otesha Project makes this transition. This fall two new co-directors were hired, and together these three directors will serve as the permanent staff members at the Otesha office in Ottawa.

In 2007, two tour logistics coordinators will be hired, as well as a co-op student, bringing The Otesha Project's number of full-time staff members up to five.

The Board of Directors

The end of 2006 closed with five new people nominated to the board of directors, and one, Jessica Lax, stepping down. These seven members (to formally start their term in 2007) are all past staff, alumni, or other key stakeholders. They are excited to guide the organization through its most ambitious growth phase to date, and to provide continuity and institutional memory for the organization.

The new and returning Board of Directors members are:

Jocelyn Land-Murphy – President
Lori Waller – Vice-President (returning member)
Anita Imrie (returning member)
Ed Gillis
Lauren Malach
Jeff Carolin
Brook Land-Murphy



Alumni Advisory Board

The Otesha Alumni Advisory Board was created in September 2006. Eleven alumni sit on this board and have provided feedback on the bike tour application process and programming. They also played a key role in outreach – helping to get the word out about the 2007 bike tours.

The current OAAB members are:

Elisha Macmillan
Laen Hershler
Mel Jellett
Michelle Hur
Nick Townley
Alex Way
Anna Vesala
Jodi Meacher
Sarah Agnolin
Jess Abramson
Paula Richardson

Awards & Recognition

Awards

This year, The Otesha Project was honoured to receive the Excellence in Education Award for Outstanding Non-Profit from the Canadian Network for Environmental Education and Communication (EECOM). Co-founder Jessica Lax accepted the award and made an inspiring keynote speech at the EECOM conference in Halifax in October.

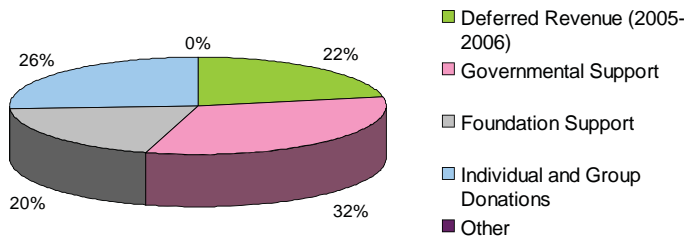
Media Coverage

The Otesha Project received media coverage on CBC radio and in multiple independent newspapers and publications in 2006. One of the highlights was being included in Michael Norton's *The Everyday Activist: 365 Ways to Change the World* (House of Anansi Press), to which we contributed an introductory section on "Making the Most of your World-Changing Efforts" (written by bike tour alumnus and board member Lori Waller). The Otesha Project is also featured in the book as the entry for March 30th.



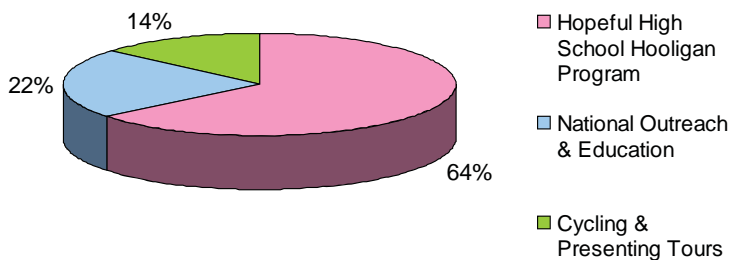
Financial Statement 2006

Income



Deferred Revenue (2005-2006) -----	\$27,389.00
Government Support -----	\$40,450.00
Foundation Support -----	\$24,600.00
Individual and Group Donations -----	\$32,212.00
Other -----	\$137.00
TOTAL -----	\$124,788.00

Expenses



Hopeful High school Hooligan Program -	\$71,979.00
National Outreach and Education -----	\$24,834.00
Cycling and Presenting Tours -----	\$15,431.00
TOTAL -----	\$112,244.00

Deferred Revenue (2006) \$12,544.00



Our Thanks

We are continually astounded and grateful for the incredible support we receive from our community – from people who put up bike tours in their backyard to folks who donate their time helping us set up our computer network. And who could forget the hundreds of volunteers who have participated in our programs, helped us make books, or given us feedback on our work.

We would like to thank the following people for their dedication to The Otesha Project over the past year.

Our Staff

Full Time:

Jeff Carolin
Jocelyn Land-Murphy
Jessica Lax
Michelle Lee
Shoshanah Waxman

Part-time/Contract

John Stuart
Colin White
Izaak Branderhorst

Our Volunteers

Aaron Fossett
Aidan Parchelo
Alaine Querijero
Alex Way
Alexandra Armstrong
Alina Kinos-Varo
Alyssa Bird
Alyssia Allene
Amanda Central
Andrea Luksts
Anita Imrie
Anna Vesala
Annelies Collins
Bhumi Mehta
Billy Dyriv
Bo Liu
Brittany Warren
Brook Land-Murphy
Caryma Sa'd
Cassandra Harris
Catherine McLaughlin
Charelle Scott
Charlene Boddie
Charlie Davis
Cheryl McConnell
Christine Crawford
Colette St-Onge
Dan Gravenor
Dan Teleki
David Brouitt
David Parrott

David Westwood
Devon Boddie
Dhriti Chabra
Dominique Fenton
Donna McAdam
Dylan Albon
Dylan Lidbetter
Elisha Macmillan
Ed Gillis
Elizabeth Clarkson
Emilie Grimes
Emily Clarey
Emma Slykhuis
Erica Mah
Erin Murphy
Gaby Charron-Merritt
Garnet Paton
Genevieve Plumptre
Grace Hummel
Grace Querijero
Hannah Mills
Jaclyn Bird
James Grigg
Jaskirt Halait
Jasmine Chung
Jeff Cheng
Jeff Ho
Jenika Wong
Jennefer Barua
Jennifer Lee
Jennifer St-Onge
Jerdon Small Phillips
Jess Abramson
Jessica St-Onge
Jodi Meacher
Jonathan Farrow
Jonathan Kui
Josh Bullen
Julia Kolesnik
Justin Rodgers
Kailan McGee
Katie Allen
Katy Brisebois
Kayla Wood
Kellie McKibbon
Kesha Frank
Kirk Kelly
Kyle Bulgin
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Laen Hershler
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Lev Platt
Lilly Wilson
Lina Crompton
Lindsey Bennett
Liz Kreitner
Lori Waller
Mala Sharma
Mamta Babbar
Manuel Jose Iglecias
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Paula Richardson
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Rachel Weddel
Ramla Shakoor
Rudayna Bahubeshi
Ruth Crabtree
Ryan Elliott
Ryan Habibi
Ryan Plant
Ryan Smith
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Sarah Khaizaran
Sarah Lush
Sarah Switzer
Sean King
Sebastian Marziali
Shannon McRae
Shinjini Sur
Sneha Makkar
Sojung Yoo
Sophie Barbier
Sukhjeet Johal
Sun Ooi
Susan Du
Tania Cheng
Ted Arniotis
Thomas Humphrey
Toni Abramson
Vanessa Taylor
Veronica Persico
Vinita Bijur
Xing Ci Zhou
Xixi Dai
Yvonne Su
Zachary Zulauf
Zainab Furqan
Zoe Hussey



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(\$10 000 – \$60 000)

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JW McConnell Family Foundation
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(\$5000 – \$10 000)

Green Street

(\$500 – \$1000)

Amos Hayes
Genuine Progress Index – Atlantic Canada
La Siembra Co-operative
Jessica Lax

(\$200 – \$500)

Alexa McDonough
Shane Bill
Dr Charles Best Secondary School
Rick Kool

(\$200 and under)

Alexis Asselin
Ashleigh Bowins
Canadian Biodiversity Institute
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Janice Astbury
Janice Carolin
Jean-Martin Chamberland
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Julie Picard
Mary Race
Karen Stringer
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