



# Annual Report

## 2017-2018

Helping People with  
*Good Reason*

### Centre for Inquiry Canada

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We support the principle of freedom of religion which includes freedom from religion; a society where individuals can be free from other people's religious views.

Take action to become a trusted voice at government decision making tables; or at least take action to prevent religious or non-scientific view points from being there.

## Message to our members:

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### Message from Our President

For CFIC, 2017-18 was a year of regrouping. We spent a great deal of time and effort finding out what our members and volunteers thought about our future. Then, we took this data and created a strategic plan that will serve our organization for the next three years.

As part of this regrouping, we re-launched Critical Links, our monthly newsletter to members and supporters. Over the year we amassed an amazing team of 10 volunteer writers who provide monthly updates about things that matter to you. Each month we have articles that challenge current pseudo-science messaging. We highlight what is happening related to the secular agenda in Canada and around the world and we help our readers to think critically about the issues of the day.

Once again, CFIC was invited to be a part of the official meeting of the Government of Canada Office of Human Rights, Freedoms and Inclusion. It is significant that we are recognized as the voice of atheists and free thinkers in Canada. We will continue to represent the views of the secular community when consulting our federal government with zeal and the outmost care.

The spread of dangerous pseudo-scientific claims, religious infiltration into schools and other public institutions and the proliferation of fake news makes CFIC more relevant today than ever. CFIC, though the hard work of all its members is vital to building a more just, secular and compassionate society and to help people to protect themselves from those who make false statements and bogus claims.

Our voice needs to be heard. Our volunteers have been tirelessly working to make sure that we are heard - nationwide. The 2018 board would like to thank our members and volunteers for making this a reality. CFIC and our members are diligent, tenacious, and thoughtful.

As board president I'd like to personally thank our volunteers and board members for all the hard work they have done to build CFIC. My first year as president working with such talented people has doubled my commitment to our mission dedicated to reason, science, freedom of inquiry, and humanistic values.

**Gus Lyn-Piluso**

**President – Centre for Inquiry Canada**

We work to build up communities of interest around common secular and scientific values in a time when people who possess these values may feel isolated and powerless.

## What We Do

Our supporters make decisions based on evidence, rational thinking and compassion. They know the positive difference those kinds of decisions make for people, communities and organizations. They want to see more of that kind of thinking and action. So do we.

CFIC believes in promoting scientific and evidence-based thinking and decision-making. We do this to build a more just, secular society and to help people protect themselves from those who make false statements and bogus claims out of self-interest and ignorance.

We work with people and organizations who share our commitment to a just society that helps people rise above superstition and fear. We help them achieve their goals for a fair and prosperous society by defeating extremism, racism and pseudoscience with rationalism, evidence and compassion.

We work with our supporters to promote science understanding when it is at the very heart of the most pressing issues of our time, such as climate change, energy and healthcare. We work to spread critical thinking in a time when false information is instantly shared and lies are told out of greed and self-interest. We work to build up communities of interest around common secular and scientific values in a time when people who possess these values may feel isolated and powerless.

Last year our members, supporters and CFIC worked together in 4 core areas:

### Critical Thinking

Educate members, the public and government to interpret information effectively.

### Scientific Skepticism

Improve science literacy in the public and government in order to promote decision-making based on good science.

### Building Community

Improve members' access to community through "on the ground" and virtual branches.

### Secularism

Promote neutrality on matters of religious belief.

At CFIC we don't have all the answers, but we do provide a forum for like-minded people to engage in a method of inquiry that helps us cut through the bull and move closer to the truth.

### On CFIC's future

We need to have public debate on issues but it has to be grounded in reason, science and secular values.

Big thing is building a sense of community "I'm with them," "that's my world view," "they speak for me on public issues."

CFIC is an active organization. There are lots of local events, actions taken nationally, media, interviews, and written documents.

### Supporting Stronger Branches

CFIC works in a decentralized model. Local volunteer-led branches in larger communities across Canada hold events that are relevant to their membership. The success of these events is due entirely to the hard work of Branch Managers and other Branch Volunteers who plan, promote and execute them.

Living Without Religion is being offered monthly at two of our branches. LWR assists individuals who are leaving or have left religious groups to find support for their new way of life. LWR is also an important way to involve new members in the local CFIC group.

Other branch activities include:

- regular (weekly or monthly) discussion groups
- talks by academics and authors
- social events such as Darwin Day activities and Solstice celebrations
- participating in events with other like-minded groups (March for Science, Women's March, Pride Parade)

This year our Branch Managers took a more active role in planning for CFIC's future, locally and nationally including the development of a manual that will make it easier to start new branches.

*Seanna Watson – Branch Liaison, Vice President*

### Building Our Communications

Communication is a key, perhaps the largest, determinant of our success as an organization that hopes to bring greater reason and compassion to our secular society. Planning for the development of a Communications Committee that took place late in the fiscal year will reap big rewards next year as CFIC's communication mandate is strategically planned and implemented. We have an amazing group of volunteers who have come together to ensure that CFIC's communications are reliable, accurate and (sometimes) entertaining. A special thanks to our Critical Links volunteer team; Edan Tasca, Editor, along with our many, regular contributors for this excellent and informative monthly newsletter.

*John McKay – Chair, CFIC Communications Committee*



### Supporting Our Amazing Volunteers

Thanks to the 50+ volunteers who give their time to Centre for Inquiry Canada. Our diverse volunteers offer their time and talents as writers, organizers, and leaders. Our volunteers include board members, branch managers and IT specialists. If you love what CFIC is doing, chances are these activities have been spearheaded by one of our free-thinking volunteers.

This year we began to formalize our volunteer program by implementing a volunteer registration process. This helps us to keep track of the people who are involved with CFIC and to recognize their valuable contributions. Next year we are launching a newsletter just for volunteers and beginning work on a volunteer time tracking program.



If you would like to be more involved, please visit our [website](#) and click “[join us.](#)”

***Michelle Warren – Volunteer Coordinator***

### Promoting Human Rights

Once again CFIC was invited to attend a meeting of the Office of Human Rights, Freedoms, and Inclusion to participate in a discussion about the challenges facing international freedom of religion or belief. CFIC presented information about the findings from the International Humanist and Ethical Union (IHEU); Canada’s commitment to combating blasphemy laws globally; and the status of Canada’s own blasphemy law. Most importantly, CFIC raised concerns about the challenges faced by many atheist, agnostic and apostate asylum seekers around the world.

Through our local branches, CFIC supports individuals facing religious persecution on an *ad hoc* basis with assistance with the process of seeking asylum and with support from Living Without Religion groups.

***Jason Lawrence – Human Rights Chair***

### Countering Pseudo-science with Actual Science



CFIC continues to call out pseudo-science with our monthly Science Check content in Critical Links and dialogue through social media. We were pleased when Georgian College in Ontario reversed its controversial decision to offer a Homeopathy program. CFIC was also named in an article on the Science Based Medicine website about the discredited “thermography” process.

This year, the science team expanded with the addition of 3 regular contributors including a physician, a pharmacist and a food scientist. There remains a great deal of work to be done in this important area.

*Blythe Nilson, Science Chair*

### Building Financial Health

In 2017-18 Centre for Inquiry Canada relied on previous years’ accumulated surplus to expand our work, even with the loss of a major donor. We have plans in place to continue this trend for the next year. We are now seeing our membership numbers and donors increase and are confident that with your support our future will be sustainable and promising.

It is the tireless work of volunteers across Canada that enables CFIC to achieve a great deal with a very small financial investment.



*Kevin Brown – Treasurer*

## Statement of Financial Position As at September 30, 2018

	2018	2017
<b>Assets</b>		
Cash	\$ 23,833	\$ 19,687
Accounts receivable	4,918	50,000
Government remittances recoverable	24,308	19,578
Prepaid expenses	1,645	1,645
Long term capital assets	2,073	2,624
	<u>56,777</u>	<u>93,534</u>
<b>Liabilities and Net Assets</b>		
Accounts payable & accrued liabilities	\$ 10,885	\$ 7,805
Deferred income	3,662	--
Unrestricted net assets	<u>42,230</u>	<u>85,729</u>
	<u>\$ 56,777</u>	<u>\$ 93,534</u>

## Statement of Operations For the Year Ending September 30, 2018

	2018	2017
<b>Revenue</b>		
Donations	\$ 36,686	\$ 65,511
Events	2,753	10,408
Membership dues	7,640	10,524
	<u>47,079</u>	<u>86,443</u>
<b>Expenses</b>		
Occupancy costs	11,880	22,641
Consulting and professional fees	67,174	18,800
Office and general administration	11,123	15,418
Events and fund raising	401	8,155
	<u>90,578</u>	<u>65,014</u>
<b>Net surplus (loss)</b>	<u>(43,499)</u>	<u>65,014</u>

## 2017-18 Directors:

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Gus Lyn-Piluso	President
Seanna Watson	Vice President, Education Chair; Branch Liaison
Blythe Nilson	Science Chair
Jason Lawrence	Human Rights Chair
Christopher Myrick	Communications Chair
Alex Kenjeev	Director at Large
Sarah Pekeles (resigned during year)	
Kevin Smith	Past Chair

## 2017-18 Leadership Team

Kevin Brown	Treasurer
Sandra Dunham	Executive Director of Development
Mark Maharaj	Office Manager
John McKay	Chair, Communications Committee
David Simmons	Manager of Records and Recording Secretary
Edan Tasca	Editor Critical Links
Michelle Warren	Volunteer Coordinator

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