



# Literacy in Action

LITERACY ALBERTA NEWS

December 2008 Practitioner Edition

## Mark Your Calendar!

**December 22, 2008 –  
January 5, 2009**

Literacy Alberta is closed  
for the holidays.  
Happy New Year!

**January 27, 2009**

Family Literacy Day  
Celebrations around  
the province!

**March 2 – 8, 2009**

International Adult Learners'  
Week

**March 17, 18 and 20, 2009**

Dr. Jenny Horsman returns  
to Alberta for 3 workshops on  
the impact of violence on  
learning.  
See inside for more details.

**October 21 – 24, 2009**

Provincial Literacy and  
Learning Symposium,  
Red Deer Lodge, Red Deer  
See inside for more details

## Message from the Executive Director

As the days get shorter and the cold sets in, it is a relief to know that there is a break on the horizon. What a year this has been – and what a year 2009 is gearing up to be. We expect a lot of our members, and ourselves, as you will see inside this bulletin. Literacy Alberta members are our strength and our lifeblood. We gain so much from having you in our network – and we sincerely hope that you feel the same way.

This has been a year of new initiatives, partnership building, and increasing our number of contacts across Alberta. We hope that during the next year we can see long-term benefits from much of the outreach we have been doing for our organization – and yours.

We have just signed a deal for some PSAs to be aired on a few radio stations in January. Please let us know if you hear them. We will encourage people who call in response to them to contact the literacy programs in your communities.

Please take care of yourselves this holiday season and enjoy the time with family and friends. You mean the world to us.

Blessings and joy to you all,  
Janet

### Table of Contents

	Page
Family Literacy Day.....	1,2
International Adult Learners' Week.....	2
Think Tank.....	2
Health and Literacy Institute.....	3
Plain Language Health Materials Available.....	3
Professional Development.....	4,5
Provincial Literacy Symposium.....	6
iCCAN Update.....	6
News and Tips from Share.....	7
Literacy Audit Tool Kit.....	7,8
LearningLinks Resource Centre.....	9
Christmas Gift Ideas and Books.....	9,10
Taking Shelter with Literacy Project.....	11



**Literacy**  
Alberta

**What are you doing to celebrate Family Literacy Day®?**

In celebration of Family Literacy Day® 2009, Canada is going for a world record and your help is needed! ABC CANADA Literacy Foundation and Oxford Learning are asking Canadians of all ages to help break the Guinness World Record™ for “Most Children Reading With an Adult, Multiple Locations.”

For more information on how to organize an event or enter as a family, call 1-800-303-1004, or check out ABC Canada's website [www.abc-canada.org/](http://www.abc-canada.org/)

Contact Literacy Alberta for free promotional materials for FLD available from ABC Canada. 403-410-6990.

*Here are some of the Family Literacy Day® activities happening around the province:*

**Camrose Family Literacy** in partnership with Camrose Public Library, is pleased to bring storyteller extraordinaire MaryAnn Lippiatt on January 27. Contact: Camrose Family Literacy: 780-672-8754.

**Cold Lake Community Learning**, in partnership with the Cold Lake Public Library and Portage College is holding their 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Festival of Words on January 31. Contact: Cold Lake Community Learning 780-639-3134.

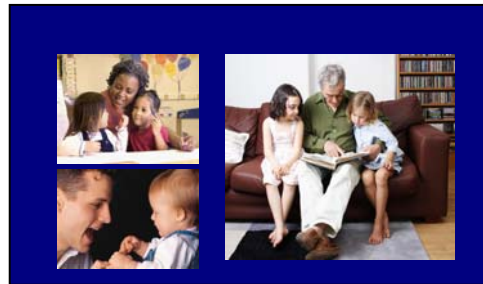
**Drayton Valley** will be taking part in the ABC Canada World Record attempt on Jan. 23 and 24 with readings at the library. On January 27, Drayton Valley Adult Literacy Society will host an event for families with young children including a play and refreshments. Contact: 780-542-3373 or 780-621-1722 for details.

**Edson Literacy Programs** will celebrate Family Literacy Day with the library on January 27, 5:00 – 7:30 with food, games, crafts, story-telling, and door prizes. Contact: Edson Literacy Programs 780-723-3630.

**Fox Creek Write Start Literacy** is promoting families reading together with scavenger hunts running from December 1 to January 27. Contact: Community Resource Centre 780-622-3758 for details.



**Family Literacy Day**  
World Record Attempt



**Saturday, January 24, 2009**  
**10:00am – Noon**  
**Edmonton City Hall**

Bring your family to help us break the world record for most children and adults reading together!

Enjoy family activities throughout the event. Each family will receive a book for participating!



For more information contact:  
Centre for Family Literacy  
Website: [www.familit.ca](http://www.familit.ca)

**Jasper Adult Learning Council** will be participating in the ABC Canada World Record attempt and hosting a Scrabble tournament for young adults/adults at a local café Jan. 27. Call 780-852-4418 for details.

Call your local literacy program or library for Family Literacy Day and International Adult Learners' week events happening in your community.

### **International Adult Learners' Week - March 2009**



Come and celebrate **International Adult Learners' Week** in Calgary on March 6 & 7<sup>th</sup>, 2009. Join us for free seminars, celebrity readings, and a resource fair for adult learning and literacy. The Champions of Learning Fair, will take place at the Calgary Public Library, Fish Creek Branch.

**March 6<sup>th</sup> – Professional Development Seminars** for professionals working in the adult learning field, volunteers, and tutors.

**March 7<sup>th</sup> – Public Seminars**  
Topics include Word Play, Money Matters for Seniors, Brain Gym and more.

For session details please visit our website at [www.literacyalberta.ca](http://www.literacyalberta.ca)  
Register on-line for free public seminars at: [calgarypubliclibrary.com](http://calgarypubliclibrary.com) or call 403-260-2602 beginning Dec. 22, 2008.

This event is sponsored by the Calgary Herald.

### **Think Tank 2008**

On November 3<sup>rd</sup>, Literacy Alberta hosted a roundtable event called, "Immigration, Employment and Your Business". Forty-two people including representatives from business, literacy and essential skills providers and immigrant serving agencies attended.

Craig Alexander, VP, TD Economics gave the keynote address on the importance of literacy and essential skills for all society, and the cost of not employing immigrants to their full potential – mostly because of their lack of English (or French) literacy skills.

John Simpson, Human Resources Manager at Standen's (a Calgary based employer of over 500 people who come from 50 countries) spoke briefly about the success he has in employing immigrants, the way diversity is celebrated in his workplace, and the value of providing literacy and essential skills training in the workplace.

The final speaker was Lorene Anderson, a Workplace Essential Skills practitioner who provided information about how employers can, and do, provide training in the workplace.

After the presentations, participants had an opportunity for discussions. As a result of the discussions, Literacy Alberta will look for funding to compile a comprehensive list of resources and supports for Workplace Essential Skills. We also plan to find ways to continue the discussions and to foster partnerships.

As well, we filmed the speakers and have their permission to use the DVD for other groups. Let us know if you are interested in bringing together a group for a similar event and we will try to organize it with you.

### **Health and Literacy Institute October 16 – 18, 2008, Calgary Coordinated by The Centre for Literacy of Quebec and Bow Valley College**

With participants from Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom, the institute provided a stimulating three days. Discussion ranged from the definition of health literacy, to how health literacy is applied in communities.

A broad definition for health literacy is the wide range of skills and competencies that people develop to seek out, comprehend, evaluate, and use health information and concepts to make informed choices, reduce health risks, and increase quality of life (Zarcadoolas, Pleasant, Greer, 2006).

The following questions were key throughout the institute:

- How do patients get the information they need and from which sources?
- How do health providers explain health information to patients?
- How do low literacy skills impact patients' ability to understand health information?
- What responsibility do institutions and businesses like hospitals, clinics, drug companies, medical testing centres, etc., have in clearly conveying health information to patients and the general public?

Suggestions for next steps in health literacy included more collaboration between health and literacy communities to expand each sector's understanding of health literacy.



“Health materials should address patients’ concerns and questions. Materials based on what health professionals believe patients “should” know are less likely to be understood than materials developed in the community or with patients.”

- The Centre for Literacy of Quebec,  
Research Brief in Health  
Communications

### **Plain Language Health Tabloids Available through Literacy Alberta**

Literacy Alberta is funding the reprinting of a series of health documents/tabloids originally designed by the Vocational Research and Rehabilitation Institute, Grace Women’s Health Centre, and the Calgary Health Region. These are large format plain language health materials suitable for the classroom, one to one tutoring, or for general distribution.

The series of 6 are:  
Simply Health – Dental  
Simply Health – Eye  
Simply Health – Hearing  
Simply Health – Podiatry  
Simply Health – Prostate  
Simply Health – Breast

We will be distributing them at cost (\$2.50 for a set of 6) plus shipping and handling in the New Year. Call LA for more information: 403-410-6990.

### Professional Development

As always, the fall was a very busy time for our professional development team:

#### Pathways: Professional Development for Adult Literacy Practitioners

Work continues to complete the course of study for the Pathways program and to ensure that the program has a solid base of support for years to come. Literacy practitioners can register in the program at any time and can complete modules in Cycle One or Two in any order.

There have been a couple of changes for Cycle Three. Cycle Three will be offered in 2009 through the Certificate in Adult and Continuing Education (CACE) program administered by the University of Alberta Department of Extension. The course will run February 5 – June 19, 2009. The last date to register is January 19, 2009. The full cost of the course is \$545; literacy coordinators can register through Literacy Alberta for \$125 with the remainder of the cost subsidized by the SPPD project. The course is open to any adult educator interested in adult literacy. The revised information poster and registration form are posted on Share and will also be posted on the Literacy Alberta web page.

We are planning a second Pathways Spring Institute for June 2009. Dates for the Institute will be posted in January. The people who attended last June were impressed with the format, which allowed them to participate in up to 4 different modules. As a result of attending the Institute, several literacy coordinators are very close to completing their Cycle One certificate. The Pathways Program Book has been revised with up to date information on

the program, including registration information. You can find the book on Literacy Alberta Share or at the Literacy Alberta webpage:  
<http://www.literacyalberta.ca/training.htm>

I am always interested in your comments about the Pathways program. Please contact me with questions or suggestions:  
[cjackson@literacyalberta.ca](mailto:cjackson@literacyalberta.ca) or call 780-416-8210.

#### New Coordinator Training

Over the past few months, eleven new people attended New Coordinator training and eight others attended New Coordinator Follow-up Training, the second phase of the training. This training incorporates workshops and networking opportunities to assist new coordinators in adapting to their new roles as literacy coordinators.

#### Regional Resource People and Meetings

Seven resource people from around the province attended regional meetings this fall. These meetings give the regional leaders an opportunity to discuss provincial and local issues, and apply their learning to working with and mentoring new coordinators.

Current Resource People are:

Carol McCullough – Calgary region  
Wendy Rhodes – Edmonton region  
Carol Edwards – Grand Prairie region  
Lois Polege – Lloydminster region  
Lorna Armstrong – Lethbridge region  
Jodi Mantey – Whitecourt region  
Allie Spicer-Riess - Red Deer region

New training dates will be posted on Share as they are set.

**Professional Development Workshops**

Are you interested in having a fun, stimulating workshop at your next staff or regional meeting? Terri Peters can deliver a workshop for you on the following topics:

- Numeracy/Math
- Learning Portfolio Development

These workshops have been developed and pilot tested in Alberta.

Workshops are ½ day and cost \$250 for non-profit organizations or \$450 for profit organizations. Travel (\$0.46/km), meals, and accommodations are extra.

Contact Terri Peters to book your workshop today: (403) 410-6775 or [tpeters@literacyalberta.ca](mailto:tpeters@literacyalberta.ca).

Terri and all the literacy specialists in the province can also provide Plain Language and Literacy Awareness workshops. For a literacy specialist near you, or to book Terri call Literacy Alberta: 1-800-767-3231 or 403-410-6990.

**A Message from Berniece Gowan, Regional Support Manager, Literacy Alberta**

Hello all,

I hope this note finds you well. This is such a busy time in our lives and our work.

I want to mention that I have had the great pleasure of attending two Literacy and Learning Anniversary celebrations this fall:

Sept. 10, 2008: Community Learning Council for Wetaskiwin and Area/Wetaskiwin Community Literacy Program in Wetaskiwin

Dec. 4, 2008: Rainbow Literacy Society/Write Break Literacy in Vulcan

In evidence at these celebrations is the strength of the working relationships, support from a committed board, reciprocal community investment, engagement of volunteers, and a mindful intention to provide relevant and accessible literacy and learning opportunities within their communities.

Demographics, economics, community needs, and program delivery have all shifted in the past 15 – 30 years. All of your programs have evolved. In many ways a celebration of one is a celebration of you all. Sustainability requires so many levels of attention and innovation, stewardship and hard work.

At regional meetings, I have met ‘seasoned’ coordinators who have been with their programs from the beginning. At new coordinator training I meet the newest coordinators each year. Each of you have had to find a way to bring all of your life experience and learning into your jobs. You have had to make a commitment to have an important role in your community: To be responsive, to learn new skills, and to create relationships with individuals, organizations, business, and government in order to do your work.

On behalf of Literacy Alberta, I want to say thank you for all that you do.

I hope the holiday season brings you both peace and joy.

*Berniece*



**Provincial Literacy and Learning Symposium**  
**Oct. 21 – 24, 2009**

Mark your calendars! Literacy Alberta and the Community Learning Network are co-hosting a Literacy & Learning Symposium October 21-24, 2009 at the Red Deer Lodge, Red Deer Alberta.

The Symposium includes:

- Pre-conference lunch & workshop on the afternoon of the 21st
- 2 full days of workshops on the 22nd & 23rd, and morning workshops on the 24th
- Annual General Meetings for both organizations
- Evening Gala

If you are preparing your professional development budget for 2009, here are some estimated costs:

- Conference package: approximately \$300; includes two breakfasts, two lunches, one dinner, coffee breaks, and professional development sessions.
- Optional pre-conference lunch & afternoon workshop: \$65
- Hotel room cost ranges from \$119 to \$179 with the majority costing \$129 per night plus applicable taxes.

For more information, contact Candice Jackson, [cjackson@literacyalberta.ca](mailto:cjackson@literacyalberta.ca) or phone 780-416-8210.



**Innovative Communities Connecting and Networking Project (iCCAN)**

What do Provost, Vegreville, Killam, Hanna, Edmonton, and Calgary have in common?

Literacy coordinators in those communities can now use video conferencing technology to bring programming to their students and staff for tutoring, training, meetings, and professional development opportunities.

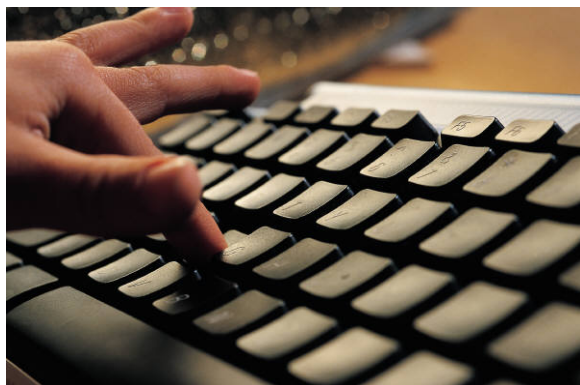
For example, they can access the Royal Tyrell Museum of Paleontology, Family Resource Centre, NAIT (Program information sessions), and the Canadian Space Agency using either classroom or desktop video conferencing. Members of the literacy community are excited about the possibilities of offering tutor training on a monthly basis via video conferencing and being able to access ESL expertise. Stay tuned as more programs and pilot projects are developed and become available.

Some coordinators are developing a cost-recovery plan for this project and are planning to advertise and charge community members and organizations to rent their facility and use their video conferencing equipment. Others are building a partnership with other community organizations so that a common space or learning classroom with VC resources can be shared.

This project is ongoing until 2010 with the hopes that by that time at least 50 sites will be connected and have fully operational videoconferencing capacities.

If you would like to find out more information about the iCCAN video conferencing project, or need help determining whether the computers in your program meet the minimum technical standards for video conferencing, please contact Yvonne Stewart @ 1-866-410-5708.

(see Share→Main Menu→Video Conferencing for details)



### News and Tips from Share

Check out the new ESL, Workplace Essential Skills, Family Literacy and Video Conferencing resources on Share. On the right hand side under Main Menu you can access information on a variety of literacy topics.

If you are offering an online course in the New Year and need an area for posting information, having learners complete lessons, or practice their computer skills – please give Yvonne a call. The Share online conferencing system was originally developed by the University of New Zealand (Moodle) for teachers to use to deliver online courses or courses with online components.

If you can't find a resource, email [sharehelp@literacyalberta.ca](mailto:sharehelp@literacyalberta.ca) and let us know. Laura at LearningLinks and Yvonne at Share work together to provide print and on-line resources.

We will help narrow down your information search and provide you with a list of relevant online and offline publications, practice materials, etc.

### Website Update

Check out the LA Tutor Treats promotion: Lightweight Tape Measures. They are 60" long, plastic, and flexible. These tape measures fit easily into a pocket or sewing box. If you run a family literacy program, boys and girls 3 years and up love to measure or play Bob the builder with them.

Shop for literacy at:  
<http://www.literacyalberta.ca/shop.htm>



### Coming in January – The Literacy Audit Tool Kit!

Project Manager:  
Terri Peters  
Literacy Alberta  
(403) 410-6775  
[tpeters@literacyalberta.ca](mailto:tpeters@literacyalberta.ca)

#### What is the Literacy Audit Tool Kit?

Opening Doors: A Literacy Audit Tool Kit for Customer Service Excellence is a resource that teaches organizations and businesses effective techniques for improving their client service. Organizations can use the audit to assess the literacy-friendliness of their own advertising, service delivery, verbal communication, print materials, and staff training.

**What comes in the kit?**

- A manual including: facilitation guide, literacy audit tool, literacy awareness facts, action planning templates, plain language guidelines, a glossary, and a bibliography.
- The Way In: a beautiful photo essay book of inspiring stories written by adult learners about their lifelong literacy journeys.
- A literacy awareness DVD in 2 parts: Our Stories (15 mins.) – literacy awareness stories told by adult learners from The Way In; Opening the Door (20 mins.)– a dramatization and tips on providing literacy-friendly customer service.
- Coming in spring of 2009: Health Literacy Audit and Workplace Essential Skills Training supplements. (Anyone interested in providing feedback on or piloting these supplements in Jan./Feb. of 2009, please contact Terri Peters.)

For those of you who have been wondering, the DVD production and editing took much longer than was originally anticipated. However, the whole kit will now be available in January.

**How can I get a copy?**

If you are a Literacy or CALC Coordinator, you will be receiving your free copy in the mail in the new year. For all others, copies are \$80 for non-profit organizations and \$120 for profit organizations.

Contact Terri Peters to pre-order your copy.



**What if I want a literacy audit at my workplace?**

Terri Peters has provided numerous literacy audits at community service agencies already. The cost for a literacy audit is:

Non profit organizations	\$250 ½ day \$500 full day
For profit organizations	\$450 ½ day \$900 full day

Full day audits are highly recommended because you will be able to assess your organization's strengths and needs in serving your customers as well as participate in a plain language workshop. Organizations who have participated in full day audits have been able to immediately improve their literacy-friendliness by editing brochures, business cards, handouts, and web pages using plain language.

---

When we first saw the Literacy Audit we were really excited...Overall, the success of our organization in general speaks to the fact that we have incorporated literacy strategies within our programming.  
- Momentum: A Community Economic Development Organization

---

## LearningLinks Resource Centre: A Growing Enterprise



This joint partnership between Literacy Alberta and the Calgary Learning Centre continues to thrive. LearningLinks has the largest collection of professional development resources, research materials and new resources on literacy and learning disabilities in western Canada.

As the word gets out, our circulation numbers continue to grow. Last month saw 388 materials go out to educators, literacy coordinators, tutors, and parents.

The following are just a few of the new resources available at LearningLinks:

*Alone Together: Making an Asperger marriage work*, Bentley, Gavin

*The Best I Can Be: Living with alcohol syndrome/effects*, Kulp, Liz, Kulp, Jodee

*Handbook of individualized strategies for building resiliency in at-risk students*, Selig, W. George, Western Psychological Services

*Visual Supports for People with Autism: A guide for parents and professionals*, Cohen, Marlene, Sloan, Donna L.

To scan our diverse selection, check [www.literacyalberta.ca](http://www.literacyalberta.ca) and click on "LearningLinks Resource Centre" then click on "Go To Library Catalogue". To contact the library email us at [learninglinks@literacyalberta.ca](mailto:learninglinks@literacyalberta.ca).

## Great Christmas Gift Ideas

### Portfolios from the Community Learning Network

Looking for gifts for board members, volunteers, or your favorite lifelong learner? CLN has put one of their most popular marketing items on sale for the holiday season. CALC zippered portfolios are a great way to organize papers and documents for conferences, travelling, and board meetings. The Learning Person logo and "What did you learn today" are stamped on front. Includes a removable 3 ring binder, note pad, and plenty of pockets.

Regular Price: \$25.00

**Christmas Special: 5 for \$100.00  
or \$22.00 each!**  
(shipping not included)



For questions, or to place an order, please contact the CLN office at 780-485-4926 or email [clnadmin@telus.net](mailto:clnadmin@telus.net)

### Online Christmas Shopping

Don't forget to do your shopping through CanGive and select your favorite charity to receive a donation of a percentage of your purchases. Participating retailers include Toys R'Us, Apple Canada (iPods, computers), Chapters, Canadian Tire, Laptops for Less, Dell, eBay, WestJet and Cabelas among others.

<http://www.cangive.ca/index.asp>

## New Literacy Resources

### ***Moving Research about Addressing the Impacts of Violence on Learning into Practice***

By Evelyn Battell, Shayna Hornstein, Jenny Horsman, Christianna Jones, Judy Murphy, Ninwakwe/E., Priscilla George, Kate Nonesuch, Mary Norton, Nadine Sookermany, Sheila Stewart and Heather Ward

Research has helped us to understand the impacts of violence on learning and to identify ways to address them. How can we move this research more widely into literacy practice? This question was the starting point for research by eleven practitioners from across Canada. In this publication, they describe their research and share what they learned. Topics include:

- What do participants in my workshops really learn: A personal exploration of more effective ways to design and facilitate workshops and courses
- Stories that breathe: Practitioners' stories opening windows and doors on learning and violence
- Balancing: The impact of residential school on second and third generations
- The unfinished college: Examining the impact of violence on the lives of literacy learners and their children



*Mary Norton (l.) and Judy Murphy (r.) launching Moving Research into Practice at the Literacy Alberta AGM.*

### ***Move the Body Stretch the Mind Open yourself to learning through breathwork, movement and meditation***

By Judy Murphy

This simply illustrated elegant book invites adult learners and teachers to prepare the whole self – mind, body, spirit and emotions – for learning. Drawing on her experience as an adult educator, yoga teacher, and lifelong learner, the author explains how the mind and the body interact to support or get in the way of learning. Developed with adults in literacy and community learning groups, the activities require no prior experience, or special equipment, and can be done standing or sitting. Written in plain language, this book is accessible to learners and teachers alike.

**To order either of these books email [windsoundlearning@gmail.com](mailto:windsoundlearning@gmail.com) or check out Share - Alberta News Forum – NEW literacy resources and click on the order forms.**

### ***Promotional Items Coming in the New Year***

In October, we posted a survey on Share asking for your thoughts on selected promotional items. As a result of your input, we have ordered a backpack that will have the “Reading Buddy” logo with the text “Pack for your future – Read”. Also on order is a black bib apron with “Literacy ... the essential ingredient” in red text.

For volunteer appreciation, we have ordered the tins of mints with the text “Volunteers are worth a mint”.

When these great promotional items are available we will let you know through Share.

If you have any questions regarding these items, please call Literacy Alberta at 403-410-6990.

## **Taking Shelter with Literacy Project**

Literacy Alberta has received some private funding to do a pilot project connected to the research of Dr. Jenny Horsman. Dr. Horsman's work identifies the impact of violence on learning and the potential impact on an individual's capacity for change.

The project involves working with the staff of two Calgary women's shelters to develop a list of literacy and learning resources that would be beneficial for women and families. Literacy Alberta will create resource kits containing information on health, parenting, relationships, financial literacy, etc. All resources will be in Plain Language as well as culturally diverse. A travelling trunk for LearningLinks Resource Centre will also be created. A prototype of the shelter resource kits will be developed with the hope of going to other agencies in the future.

Mark your calendars! In conjunction with this project, Literacy Alberta is bringing Dr. Jenny Horsman back for 3 workshops:  
March 17, St. Albert  
March 18, Jasper  
March 20, Literacy Alberta office, Calgary

Literacy Alberta has funding to subsidize some of the costs for the literacy and learning coordinators attending this workshop. Registration will be made available in early January.

## **Room for Rent at Literacy Alberta**

We have a workshop space for rent that will hold 20 people comfortably. Please call Literacy Alberta at 403-410-6990 for information. (We also have video-conferencing capacity and free parking!)

## **Thank you!**

We'd like to thank all the organizations and groups who sent in submissions for this newsletter:

- Centre for Family Literacy
- Community Learning Network
- Camrose Family Literacy
- Cold Lake Community Learning
- Drayton Valley Adult Literacy Society
- Edson Literacy Programs
- Fox Creek Write Start Literacy
- Jasper Adult Learning Council
- LearningLinks Resource Centre

Our next newsletter is coming out in April. We'd love to hear from you and welcome your contributions to *Literacy in Action*. Write to us and share learners' stories, and what's happening in your community. Hearing your stories inspires us all!



*Literacy Alberta's Board: l. back row: Michael Raven, Christina Tortorelli, Ian Kennedy, Fay Holt-Begg, Daniel Haines l. front row: Elaine Cairns, Dariel Bateman, Kate Nesbitt.*

**From all of us to all of you -  
Our warmest wishes for a safe and  
happy holiday season!**

**Literacy Alberta  
Board and Staff**

