



Literacy in Action

The Bulletin of Literacy Alberta

Spring 2007 Practitioner--Volunteer Edition

Mark Your Calendar!

April 27, 2007

"Learning Disabilities—Learning Differently"

Norquest College, Edmonton
cjackson@literacyalberta.ca
Phone 780-416-8210

April 23 to 27, 2007

CLN conference
"Leading the Way"
Calgary AB
clnadmin@telus.net

June 7-9, 2007

OLC's 20th Anniversary
Conference
Literacy Takes Centre Stage:
Spotlight on Learning!
Toronto ON
www.on.literacy.ca

June 7-9, 2007

Vitalize Conference
Calgary AB
vitalize@gov.ab.ca

June 27-29, 2007

Libraries and Literacy:
Making it Work
Summer Institute 2007
Montreal QC
www.centreforliteracy.qc.ca



Literacy
Alberta

Announcements

Hello and Happy Spring!

Every once in a while, life throws a curve ball at you and your resilience is tested. I'm pleased to report that Literacy Alberta is very resilient! We have survived the initially devastating news that our funding from the federal government was to be cut. And now we have some better news.

We, together with our colleagues across the country, provided a loud and sustained protest after the cuts were announced and by November we had heard that our proposals were to be reviewed after all. We are still in the approval process for three projects. We are pleased to tell you we have just signed a contract for some transitional funding which will enable us to continue with our basic services until the new program is announced.

If we are successful in the outstanding proposals, and with the new funding just signed, we will be in better shape to continue our other work – the exciting forays into policy development and implementation that is so important in this time of change and recognition of literacy as a major factor in the quality of our society.

We are working hard to garner support for and implementation of our proposed literacy policy "Literacy for a Life of Learning". We have had a successful meeting with Minister Doug Horner and he is supporting our follow-up to the Think Tank, which will be held in May.

The inclusion of "increased support to community education and literacy programs" in the mandate letter to our new Minister means that literacy is higher on the government agenda. We look forward to working with the Minister to achieve this mandate. As well, we are beginning to provide support in workplace essential skills and are pursuing projects in this field.

For more good news, read on! Enjoy this fresh season, which brings with it new opportunities and new experiences.

Janet Lane
Executive Director

Literacy Alberta Board of Directors 2007-2008

- President: Elaine Cairns (acclaimed)
- Vice President: Ian Kennedy
- Student Director: Daniel Haines (acclaimed)
- Student Director: Paul Ruot-Galuak
- General Director: Jo-Ann Lewthwaite (acclaimed)
- General Director: Bonnie Ireland, appointed for a 1 year term
- Literacy Practitioner Director: Holly Handfield

Welcome to Jo-Ann, our newest board member. We look forward to working with you and getting to know you!

Heartfelt thanks to Bev Norman for her contribution to the board over the past two years. We wish her all the best.

Daniel Haines Speaks to the Senate

Danny Haines, one of our student Board members, and Janet had the opportunity to speak (at separate times in February) to the Senate Committee on Social Issues, Science and Technology about the impact of the cuts to literacy.

Minister of Human Resources and Social Development Canada, Monte Solberg, authorized the release of transitional funding for literacy coalitions across the country at about the same time. This release of funds saved at least three organizations that would not have been able to stay open after March 31 without these funds.

Student voices make a big difference when working with government!

Surfing Sites...

www.morevolunteers.com

Check this site for ideas on how to assist your organization to gain, sustain, and retain more volunteers than ever before.



What's New in the Library

Our new soon to be named library is taking shape! In our last bulletin, we announced our collaboration with the library at the Calgary Learning Centre. Laura Godfrey is managing this expanded resource collection.

The library is open for business as usual! Please call Laura at 403-686-9300 (Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday) for more information and to order your resources.

Tutor Tools

Due to the success of our last printing of this handy little book, we have printed more!

- \$12 for members
- \$15 for non-members

Shipping costs are extra.

To order, contact office@literacyalberta.ca.

Our Literacy Network

BLAST

The BLAST team of speakers is available for speaking engagements in your community. The training was very successful this year and we have some funds left to cover travel, admin and honoraria.

We will be applying for funds next year to continue this project. To book a speaker, please contact the office at 1-800-410-6584.

Regional Meeting

The annual two day **Regional Resource People meeting**, held March 28-30, included a one-day workshop on facilitation skills with Ann Goldblatt. Special guests included three Regional Resource Leaders (RRL) with CLN: Nancy Dinsdale, Jo Goebel, and Donna Arnold.

Literacy Alberta Resource People are:

- Kathryn Ponomar, Lethbridge region
- Bonnie Ireland, Red Deer region
- Carol McCullough, Calgary region
- Wendy Rhodes, Edmonton region
- Marilyn Campbell, Whitecourt region
- Yvonne Remple, Grande Prairie region
- Lynn Webb, Lloydminster region

Literacy Alberta continues to lead in the planning and delivery of **professional development** for literacy practitioners. Here's an update on recent workshops, funded by Alberta Advanced Education and Technology:

Best Practices: Demystifying Working Partnerships seminars were offered in Calgary and Edmonton in March. Audrey Gardner created an excellent day of learning about the care, clarity and commitment necessary for purposeful and useful working partnerships.

Literacy practitioners as well as people from the wider community worked together to examine the many kinds of partnerships we establish to do our work. This workshop was developed as a module within **Pathways**, a professional development program for adult literacy practitioners.

New Coordinator Training (NCT) was held March 12-14. Welcome to

- Susan Irla, Athabasca
- Judy Bortnik, Wetaskiwin
- Erin Delaire, Lloydminster
- Diana Tyler-Moon, St. Paul
- Rachel Posch, Edmonton John Howard Society

New Coordinator Training follow up workshop was held March 18-21. Coordinators attending this six month follow up to NCT discussed learner assessment with Dr. Pat Campbell, Program Planning and Management with Judy Murphy, and helping tutors with lesson planning facilitated by Rebecca Still. An open dialogue with Bev Sochatsky from Advanced Education and Technology provided a forum for coordinators to ask questions and discuss important issues.

Professional Development for Literacy And Learning Calendar

On the heels of the very successful first edition, we are working to develop the 07-08 PD and Learning Calendar. This new calendar will be available exclusively online and updated monthly. If you have an event to add, please send details to Berniece at bgowan@literacyalberta.ca.

Creating Learning Partners: a facilitator's guide to training adult literacy tutors will be published in late April. The completed manual will be posted on *Share* and our website. If literacy coordinators plan to attend a training workshop, you can pick up your program's copy at that time. If not a copy will be mailed to each VTALP program in May.

Literacy Alberta is planning one-day workshops to introduce coordinators to the manual. Travel expenses will be covered for VTALP coordinators. Registration forms will be available on *Share* in April.

Consider attending a workshop closest to you:

- May 15 Valleyview
- May 25 Calgary
- May 17 Edmonton
- May 28 Lethbridge

Provincial and National Involvement

After being on the brink of closing its doors, Movement for Canadian Literacy has received some transitional funding from HRSDC and will survive another year at least. Janet is the Treasurer for MCL and is working with the rest of the board to determine next steps and possible new strategic directions. The federal financial support of the coalitions and MCL are changing, and so must the way we see our roles and responsibilities.

Since January, Janet has also been involved with a variety of consultations regarding health literacy, the future of advanced education, workplace essential skills, the voluntary sector, community partnerships with other sectors, and community mapping. Our willingness to collaborate and partner with agencies involved directly and indirectly with literacy is expanding our reach and influence.

Literacy Helpline 1-800-767-3231

We see great things for the future of our Helpline as the awareness of literacy issues increases, driving up demand for programming. However, at this time, with less funding for advertising our call volume is down.

Currently, Myra is answering the Helpline and her friendly and supportive manner is really ensuring that it is indeed a Help Line.

Electronic Bulletins on Horizon

In order to save costs and administration, Literacy Alberta will move to an electronic format for practitioner/volunteer edition as of September 1, 2007. The student edition will continue to be mailed.

The Literacy in Action bulletins are posted electronically on our web site and on *Share* so they are already available to a wider community.

Many non-profits have changed the way they share information and using electronic means is the way of the future. We regularly use *Share* and our web site as electronic tools to get information out to the public. Callers to the Literacy Help Line often find our number through internet searches.



We encourage you to use *Share* <http://share.literacyalberta.ca> and our web site www.literacyalberta.ca more often. The information in these two electronic mediums is current and more comprehensive than what is included in a hard copy bulletin.

If you have concerns about this new electronic format, please let us know. For training and info on our electronic community *Share*, call Yvonne at 1-866-410-5708 or email sharehelp@literacyalberta.ca.

Hold the Press!!!

Literacy Alberta, Word on the Street, and the Calgary Public Library have formed a partnership to create a photo/essay book by adult learners. The project is called **Word on the Prairie**. This book will be released at Word on the Street, September 30, 2007 in Calgary.

The book will be an ambassador for literacy...to speak in more than just words about what literacy looks like from the inside. Adult learners from rural and urban Alberta will be represented both by their photographs and their words.

Adult Learner and Tutor Conferences a Great Success!

Canadian Council on Learning (Adult Learning Knowledge Centre) provided funding for Literacy Alberta to support three adult learner and tutor conferences across the province this year.

Explore the World of Lifelong Learning, coordinated by Monica Ekvall and a group of Lethbridge Community College students, was held on Feb. 7 at Lethbridge Community College. Over 200 people registered!

Learning Together Conference coordinated by Mary Norton and Students Voices for Students, was held on Mar. 3 at The Learning Centre, Edmonton. Thirty-seven people attended this wonderful learning day!

The **Adult Learner and Tutor Conference** for the Calgary area was held on March 24. A working group made up of the conference partners, Bow Valley College, Calgary Public Library, Calgary John Howard Society, The Mustard Seed and Literacy Alberta, brought together over 70 learners and tutors for a chance to learn new skills and share ideas.

Each of the conferences were evaluated by the participants and the comments clearly tell us that events like these have an important place both in the learning opportunities they present and also the community building that takes place.

Thank you to the planning committee for everyone's hard work and to the people in these communities who supported and also donated door prizes to the conferences. **Starbucks Coffee Canada** provided coffee, baked goods and/or door prizes. All of these donations made the day more abundant!