



The RCCUP Reader

Newsletter of the Renfrew County Community Upgrading Program

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Literacy in Ontario

Have you ever wondered about literacy training in Ontario, and where Literacy Plus fits into the picture? The Ministry's recently released annual report on the Literacy and Basic Skills Program contains some interesting facts.

In 2003-2004, 207 Ontario literacy programs served 45,462 adult learners, providing 5,600,406 training contact hours. The majority of these programs were in the Anglophone stream, but there were also Francophone (31), Native (26) and Deaf (5) programs. Ontario Works participants made up 13,706 or 30% of all Ontario learners.

Of the 207 literacy programs, 141 were community-based programs like Literacy Plus. The others were school board (42) and college (24) programs. Community-based programs delivered 1,406,322 training hours to 16,000 students. School board programs delivered 1,863,343 hours to 16,105 students, while colleges delivered 2,330,741 hours to 13,357.

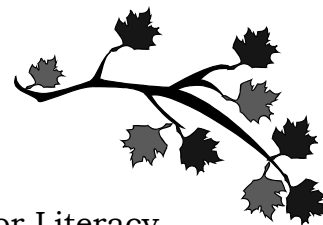
Over the year, 23,404 students finished or left their programs. Sixty per cent of these went on to jobs, further education and training, or volunteer work. Fifteen percent were recorded as "lost contacts." The rest are using their new skills for more independence in their personal lives.

New Website for Literacy Plus

The RCCUP/Literacy Plus website has been updated over the summer through the generosity of NALD, the National Adult Literacy Database. NALD staff contributed their skills to creating a site that looks professional, is easier to navigate, has pictures, and offers new features—we can post upcoming events and student writing, and our newsletter will be available on-line.

The site will also have the capacity to offer interactive programming to students working on computers at home. Diane will be adapting some of the workshop materials to an on-line format. Watch for more news as this is developed.

The official launch is planned for October 27, but you can see much of it now. Go to www.literacyplus-renfrewcounty.ca for a preview.



Calendar

- Sept. 7 - Swing for Literacy
 - Sept. 20 - computer-based classes begin
 - Oct. 6 - *Keeping a Job* workshops start
 - Oct. 25 - 1st meeting of Book Club
 - Oct. 27 - Board meeting
 - Nov. 24 - Calendar ready for distribution
 - Dec. 10 - Literacy Plus Christmas Party
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Swing for Literacy

What did you do on the first day back to school? One hundred and one intrepid golfers set out in a downpour on September 7 to raise funds for Literacy Plus. They were rewarded with radiant afternoon sunshine followed by a tasty turkey dinner and the chance to win some great prizes.

The tournament was supported by over 30 sponsors who donated everything from golf tees to lamps to cash. Everyone went home with some prize as a thank-you and reminder of the day. A draw was held for some of the larger donations. Winners won luggage (Oakridge Heating), a buffalo hide overnight bag (Paul Monnette, RBC Investments), a lamp (Sandstone Imports), a watch (Pembroke Honda), golf passes for 18 holes for four players (both Arnprior Golf and Country Club and the Oaks), a framed photo (Vicki Fletcher Photography) and a book (HummDinger Gifts).

The Oaks of Cobden Golf Club staff put in extra effort to making the rainy round of golf a day to remember. We are very grateful to them all. In particular, we thank Carrie Stoppa, club manager, for offering all participating golfers a card that entitles them to a free round of golf any time in the 2004/2005 season. The club also donated \$300 from the fees paid and the prize of an 18-hole round of golf for four players.

At the end of the day, \$2,440 had been raised to assist Literacy Plus with its programming. We thank all the volunteers who worked to organize and put on the event and all those who donated prizes. Thanks, too, to all who got wet during the first nine holes, dried off during the second nine, and hung in for a very pleasant evening. See you next year!

Literary Tuesdays

If you had the misfortune to miss them, we are happy to report that the Literary Tuesdays in July were a tremendous success. Attendance ranged from 95 to 150 for each of the four evenings, a remarkable turnout for readings anywhere—even the authors were surprised! Somehow, seats and desserts were found and the crowds were accommodated. After each reading, the authors answered questions from the audience about their books and how they approach writing.

Plans are already underway for an equally exciting event next year. Literacy Plus may partner in future with other organizations to present an authors festival that also includes children's writers. Watch for details later in the year.



Tutor Training

Literacy Plus is hosting a round-table discussion on working with learners for whom English is a second language. The format will involve experienced tutors sharing some of their best ideas with us. They will each bring one idea and one concern to share. Many of these ideas can also be used with English-speaking learners who are working on improving their speaking and listening skills.

The meeting will be held at our Eganville office on Thursday, November 4, beginning at 10:00 a.m. We expect to work together until about 1:00 p.m.—so bring a lunch or snack. We will supply tea, coffee, and treats. Several tutors have already signed up. If you need a ride, we'll try to find one for you. Please call Sue to confirm your attendance.

Join us. Share ideas. Have some fun!

International Literacy Day

September 8 was International Literacy Day, celebrated since 1967. The day promotes literacy throughout the world. Fifty years ago, the world illiteracy rate was 45%. Today it has fallen to 23%. However, in 1995, 19 countries had an illiteracy rate of 70% or higher and in some parts of the world—southern Asia, sub-Saharan Africa and some Arab states—the illiteracy rate is rising.

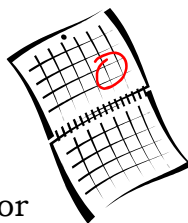
Although nearly 98% of the world's illiterate population lives in developing countries, there are remarkable achievements in some countries. In Sri Lanka, for instance, where approximately 650,000 people are displaced because of conflict, the literacy rate is 90%.

How does Canada compare? In Canada, the International Adult Literacy Survey (1994) found that 22% of adults have serious difficulty reading simple printed materials. Although they are not "illiterate," another 20% struggle with the more complex levels of reading, writing or math required for their jobs.

Contrary to popular belief, the majority of people struggling with literacy issues in Canada are not immigrants but people born and raised here. They may have learning disabilities, or life circumstances may have interfered with their learning. At Literacy Plus we believe that everyone can learn and that it is never too late to become literate.

Literacy Plus Calendar

Board members are busy collecting donations and cards for Literacy Plus's 2005 calendar. The calendars will be ready in late November. Please support the people who support us!



New Book Club

Literacy Plus tutor Doayne Ahern invites interested students to come to a lunchtime meeting once a month in Eganville to read and talk about books. Tutors are welcome to come with their students. You don't need great reading skills for this club—readers at all levels can participate. The idea is to have fun, enjoy each other's company, and enjoy reading and talking about books—or even just selections from books.



Plans are to meet at the office the last Monday of the month from 11:30 to 2:00, starting October 25. Bring a sandwich and Literacy Plus will supply tea or coffee and dessert.

The club will look at books chosen by the Golden Oak Book Club for new adult readers. This is Golden Oak's third season. This year's titles are a mix of fiction, stories from history, sports and a mystery. Come out to the meeting and help choose what the club will read.

Tutors, please encourage your students to try this out. Come with your student and share the fun!

Call the office for more information and to let us know you're coming.

Christmas Party

Mark Friday, December 10 on your calendar and plan to come to the Literacy Plus Christmas party. We're planning a drop-in potluck over the lunch hour, 11:00 to 2:00. Students, tutors and Board members are all invited. We'll send out details closer to the date.



Critical Thinking

In order to be effective consumers of products and information, we must be able to evaluate what we hear, see, and read. Critical thinking skills are essential consumer skills. Critical thinking includes many skills. Some of these are:

1. differentiating between facts and opinions:
 - A fact is a statement that can be proven to be true.
 - An opinion is a statement that expresses how a person feels about something or what a person thinks is true.
2. recognizing propaganda techniques such as:
 - use of words, phrases, or expressions with emotional connotations: slob, delicious, and so on
 - personal testimonials
 - use of celebrities to “sell” a product or idea
 - use of “just plain folks” images to identify a product with ordinary people
 - card stacking – presenting only that information or those arguments most favourable to a particular point of view, or presenting only the “pros” not the “cons” of something
 - bandwagon approach – “everyone” is using/buying/supporting something
3. evaluating speaker/author credibility, point of view, and/or bias:
 - What are the author’s/speaker’s qualifications on this subject?
 - What do you think the author/speaker wants us to do, think about, or believe?
 - When and where was this “published”?

Here is a table that you might use with your student(s) to help them develop

critical thinking skills. Select a commercial, a newspaper or magazine article and consider these questions:



Evaluation of Information

1. Accuracy/Relevance of Information

- Is the information fact or opinion?
- Who is the intended audience?
- What is the purpose of the document and why was it produced?
- What evidence is provided?

2. Authority/Credibility of Source

- Who is the speaker/author? Are they identifiable?
- Does the author/speaker have expertise on the subject?
- Who is the sponsor?

3. Objectivity

- What goals/objectives does this information have?
- How detailed is the information?
- What opinions (if any) are expressed by the author?
- Again, what evidence is provided?
- Is there any evidence of propaganda techniques being used?

4. Currency

- When was it produced?
- When was it updated?

Sandra Gulland Reads

On October 3, fifty-five people attended an afternoon with local author Sandra Gulland, put on by the Canadian Cancer Society, Eganville Branch. Well known internationally for her trilogy about Josephine Bonaparte, Sandra read from the third book, talked about writing historical fiction and answered questions. She is currently working on a new book, which she hopes to complete next year, set two centuries earlier in the court of Louis the Sun King.

Keeping a Job: Who You Are Matters

In order to find a job, a worker needs many skills. A worker needs to be able to:

- fill out a job application and/or write a cover letter and a résumé
- do well in the job interview
- know how to do the job
- read the instructions and manuals for the job

In order to keep the job, a worker needs many skills as well. A worker needs to be able to:

- communicate effectively
- work as part of a team
- solve problems effectively
- demonstrate positive work habits

In fact, many surveys of employers have suggested that employers often value these personal skills more than some other work skills. Many employers would argue that they can teach a good worker how to do a job more easily than they can integrate a worker with poor work habits into a work setting.

Beginning on Wednesday, October 6, Literacy Plus will be offering an eight-week course called **Keeping a Job: Who You Are Matters**. This

- course will enhance the participants' skills in
- speaking and listening
 - reading
 - writing
 - working in a group



- As well, the participants will begin to
- build their self-awareness and self-esteem
 - learn how to find information and to evaluate what they find
 - develop goal-setting, problem-solving, and decision-making skills

This course will soon be available on-line for those who can't come to the Eganville office. Watch for more information on this new approach to learning at Literacy Plus.



Writenet.ca

Writenet.ca is a new website for those who teach new or reluctant adult writers. It promotes the use and value of writing as a fun and effective way—for students and for all of us—to increase literacy skills, feel part of the community and make healthy changes in our lives.

Writenet.ca grew out of Deborah Morgan's popular approach and techniques called *Writing Out Loud*. Working with a group of discouraged women on social assistance, she found that freewriting loosened fears and pens. The writing that followed, supported by reflection and discussion, helped the women begin to validate their stories and their lives, identify their values, hopes and goals, and see that they could effectively express thoughts and ideas. As Deborah says, "Pretty powerful stuff."



Many literacy instructors across Canada have used the *Writing Out Loud* approach. Now a dedicated group has developed Writenet.ca as a place to find information and support to help bring writing to learning settings in new and engaging ways. Writenet.ca as it stands now is a starting point. It is designed to change and grow according to the needs and interests of the membership.

Visit www.writenet.ca to read all about it, see reviews of resources, and register for dynamic and educational discussions.

Student Writing

Colours



The grass is still green but fading
As I sit atop the Foymount hill
Looking out at forever
It really is quite a thrill

The fall quilt that she has made
More spectacular than ever before
The colours blend and sway together
Like a kaleidoscopic floor

As always there is a breeze here
I am awed by the sight
So taken by its beauty
My heart has taken flight

My mind is like a paintbrush
Saving this picture for all time
As a hawk leaves his resting place
And slowly starts to climb

It seems he too wants to see this
And he gets an aerial view
Of the beauty that she has created
A quilt of every hue



Porte

- R Wayne

Students and Tutors

We encourage learners at all levels to send in their writing for publication. Pieces don't have to be long or complex. We would be delighted to have some writing by new writers in the newsletter. Our new website also has a page for student writing. We will publish pieces with your first name and last initial, or even anonymously if you prefer.

The Literacy and Basic Skills Program is funded by the Government of Ontario.

Student Writing Contest

Don't forget the 3rd Annual Frances Lever Memorial Writing Contest. Student writers at all levels from beginner to advanced can enter. There are five cash prizes of \$50, one for each of five writing levels.

Poem and story entries are to be based on a picture provided by LLEO, this time a painting by Alex Colville of a woman on an ocean ferry looking through binoculars. The writing must be done in class or as part of your tutoring session. The contest closes November 1, 2004.

For details about the contest and how to submit your stories, and to see the picture, go to the LLEO website at www.lleo.ca and click on Newslink. Good luck!



In Common

What is the one thing shared by all three items in each group below?

- a) a cow, a shoe, a baby
- b) a zipper, a shark, a comb
- c) a potato, a hurricane, a target
- d) a river, a person, a cave
- e) a shopper, a bird, Parliament



Answers
(a) a tongue (b) teeth (c) an eye (d) a mouth (e) a bill

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