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# Literacy Plus Newsletter

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Issue #60

Fall 2011

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## Community Outreach Partnership

Literacy Plus has recently begun a collaborative partnership to create a work placement and remove barriers to employment for a young local man, Josh Gale.

ODSP (Ontario Disability Support Program) through Links to Health, Literacy Plus\* and the Combermere Heritage Society Inc., are each contributing to Josh's wage; Josh himself is contributing volunteer time to extend what would be a 16-week project to a 30-week project. (\*Literacy Plus's contribution is from fundraised dollars.)

Josh will work at the Literacy Plus office on two projects. For Literacy Plus, he will review and catalogue the library of teaching resources with reference to the new adult literacy curriculum framework (OALCF). For the Heritage Society, he will use media skills to support a funded program to develop a 'Community Memories' exhibit. This will be available on the Internet under the Virtual Museum Canada (VMC) from August 2012.

Josh enrolled as a student in the computer literacy program last winter, but left to take part in a six-month TYPS (Town Youth Participation Strategy) project coordinated by the Community Resource Centre based in Killaloe. That project funded several youths to learn and use multi-media skills to enhance their employability. Through that project, Josh (under the direction of Scott Moore) continued his association with Literacy Plus by creating a promotional video for us. (View it at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N8CxfFSNIYM>).

They also created a video for the Mission House Museum in Combermere (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N8CxfFSNIYM>).

Josh is legally blind but his visual impairment is helped using assistive devices provided by CNIB and Exceptional Supports, a program component of Employment Support. When his family lost their house to fire last summer, Josh also lost the assistive aids (computer, special software, a visual enhancement viewer) that CNIB had provided for him.

Josh's computer has since been replaced. A document viewer is available at Literacy Plus, enabling Josh to work on these projects. With adaption of the office computer, Josh is also now coping with the challenges of completing a large scale data entry and cataloguing exercise.

## Literacy Plus says Good-bye

By now, most of you will know that Peggy Bridgland is leaving Literacy Plus. Peggy announced her retirement on October 19. This is both a loss and a challenge for all of us at Literacy Plus.

The staff and board, students and teachers will miss you Peggy, but we wish you well in your retirement. Expect to be hearing from us.



## Christmas Party



The students, teachers and staff will hold the annual Literacy Plus Christmas Party & Potluck on Monday, November 28, from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Please join us to celebrate the holiday season.

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## Board of Directors for 2011/2012

Literacy Plus is going into 2011/2012 with a small but dedicated Board of Directors:

Cathy Hunt	Acting Chair
Jean Davies	Acting Vice-Chair
Cathy Lyons	Treasurer
Heather Saar	Director
Laura Zdyrko	Director

Former Chair Jennifer Coleman-Davidson is returning to the Board in November.

Two other Board members were elected at the AGM but are unable to serve. Neil Etienne was offered a job in Bracebridge as of September and left the area. Steve Fiegen found he was unable to serve after all.

## Mobile Program

Literacy Plus is piloting a mobile computer program this fall and winter, in order to reach clients who may be unable or unwilling to make the trek to Eganville.

A few enquiries to gauge interest in the Combermere area brought a deluge of interested students. The courses are up and running, with two separate groups meeting on alternate Tuesday evenings with David Henstock, and two other groups meeting on alternate Wednesday evenings with Nancy Ord.



The Board approved the purchase of several laptops, a projector and other equipment from Literacy Plus funds to enable this program. The funding for one of the two Eganville evening classes has been redirected to support this initiative.

The program is currently running at the Golden Years Activity Centre in Combermere. The laptops make it easy to set up and take down in a borrowed space without tying it up. We expect to offer courses in other locations in future, as time and funding allow.

## Comings and Goings

- ◆ Our long-time evening computer class teacher Kim Meisel was offered a job with the elders of Pikwakanagan in Golden Lake and had to give up her Literacy Plus teaching. Program Director David Henstock has stepped in to take on the evening classes.

David has experience with teaching adults as well as extensive knowledge of computers. With the new Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework coming in, he welcomes this opportunity to meet it head on and see how it will affect our approach to teaching and evaluating student progress.

- ◆ Administrative Director Peggy Bridgland will retire this winter after time off to recover from hip surgery. Peggy leaves with mixed feelings. She has been with the program since it started in 1993, and on staff (along with Sue) since 1994. There have been many changes in this time, both in the Literacy and Basic Skills program and at Literacy Plus. The three administrative jobs will be restructured and streamlined, and David Henstock and Sue Rupert will each assume new duties.
- ◆ Literacy Plus regretfully said goodbye to Board member Barbara Dubé in June. Barbara was a member for six years, the statutory limit. She was Board Secretary, a member of the Human Resources Committee and the Fundraising Committee, and Chair of the Bonnechere Authors Festival for the past two years. Literacy Plus will miss her.
- ◆ We welcome back former Board Chair Jennifer Coleman-Davidson, who returns in November after a year's maternity leave.

This *Employment Ontario* program is funded by the Ontario Government.

## Summer Fundraisers

Literacy Plus had a busy and successful summer, with three overlapping fundraising ventures.

### Bonnechere Authors Festival

The ninth **Bonnechere Authors Festival** had a great season. Author Roy MacGregor drew an all-time record crowd of 175 people—a surprise even to him. All the events were well-attended, the desserts provided by the Friends of the Library were excellent, and Joyce Gutzeit outdid herself selling raffle tickets each evening for the authors' books. The four events netted just over \$7,100.

Many thanks are due for this major event: to BAF Chair Barbara Dubé; board members Cathy Lyons (and husband Phil), Jean Davies and Laura Zdyrko; volunteers Helen and Al Dixon, Diane and John Walsworth, Joyce Gutzeit, Maxine Golden, Colleen Yuke, Maggie Lavigne-Jukes, and Crystal, Taylor and Vanessa Schroeder.

Special thanks to Doyné Ahern, who signs up the authors, introduces them at the events, and with husband Frank provides bed and breakfast when needed. Warm thanks to our sponsors and supporters: Frisco's, Serendipity on the River, the Bonnechere Caves, The Meadows, and Father Lacey and the parishioners of St. James the Less Roman Catholic Church. And last but not least, we thank the authors for their support: Roy MacGregor, Alissa York, Marilyn Simonds and Wayne Grady, and Nick Crowe.

### 50/50 Raffle

The **Stone Fence Theatre** kindly partnered with Literacy Plus, as well as Victims Services of Renfrew County, on their nightly 50/50 Raffle sales. Literacy Plus provided three people at each of 10 performances to sell the tickets. Proceeds were shared with Stone Fence, and the volunteers also got to enjoy both the show and the roast beef dinner. Thanks to Stone Fence Theatre and to Phil

and Cathy Lyons for arranging our participation; and thanks to ticket sellers Laura and Dave Zdyrko, Heather and Mike Saar, Neil Etienne, Hilary Robinson, Cathy Hunt and Linda Ryan, and David and Pat Henstock.

### Barbecue

On August 17, Caveman Chris Hinsperger again co-hosted a **barbecue** at the Bonnechere Caves, combining it this year with a showcase for local musicians. Our own Sue Rupert sang several tunes, backed up by partner Ron Daley and Morgan Weeks. (You can see them on YouTube.) It was a lovely late summer evening, and the event raised \$505. Thanks, Chris, and thanks also to Joyce Gutzeit, who took on the organization of the event and, with Laura and Dave Zdyrko, kept the hamburgers and hotdogs coming.

## Is That What They *Meant* to Say?

A collection of headlines culled from different places—with commentary.

### Police Begin Campaign to Run Down Jaywalkers

*Now that's taking things a bit far!*

### Juvenile Court to Try Shooting Defendant

*See if that works any better than a fair trial!*

### Red Tape Holds Up New Bridges

*There's something stronger than duct tape?*

### Man Struck by Lightning: Faces Battery Charge

*He probably IS the battery charge!*

### Astronaut Takes Blame for Gas in Spacecraft

*That's what he gets for eating those beans!*

### Kids Make Nutritious Snacks

*Do they taste like chicken?*

### Local High School Dropouts Cut in Half

*Chainsaw Massacre all over again!*



- Thanks to Barbara Dubé

## 60th Issue of the Newsletter

This issue of our newsletter is Number 60. The first issue came out in January 1995 as *The RCCUP Reader*, the title we kept till Spring 2007. That issue and the next were laid out in Microsoft Word (column by column—no templates or layout program!) and the graphics, culled from here and there, were literally cut and pasted in. Soon we had MS Publisher on our one office computer and things got a bit slicker.



Flipping through back issues (there's a binder full in the office) is a quick trip through our history—and a reminder of all the great people who have been a part of Literacy Plus—Board, staff, volunteers and students.

The newsletter started as a means of connecting the tutors, who were working in isolation all over the county. We provided teaching tips, featured resources that they might want to borrow, and profiled some of the tutors themselves. We tried to provide activities and games they could do with students, and lightened things up with funny bits to do with language. (We still do that.)

In 1999 we launched a computer class: four or five one-hour classes for groups of two or three, held one day a week ("Wild Wednesdays"). The computer classes took off, until eventually we were offering 8 half-day classes per week—the biggest single part of our programming. In 2006 we added an Essential Skills class, which later became the Upgrading class, to offer a more intensive learning opportunity.

We've also offered classes in many places besides Eganville: Cobden, Barry's Bay, Combermere, Madawaska, Killaloe and Renfrew, often using borrowed space and equipment—as we are again.

Over the years, as the program changed and broadened, we have tried to present a range of news and information of interest to tutors,

teachers, students, our board members past and present, and other agencies or members of the public. It remains a place for students to show off their writing, and classes to let people know what they are doing.

In these years we've also fallen under the wing of three different funders: OTAB (Ontario Training and Adjustment Board), MET (Ministry of Education and Training, and now MTCU (Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities). And we've reported on the impact of their various initiatives

This issue may be the last one in this format. With jobs changing, communications will change too. Sue and Peggy have enjoyed working together on all these issues—we hope you've enjoyed them too.

## Financial Literacy Week

ABC Life Literacy Canada, with founding sponsor TD Bank Group, celebrated Financial Literacy Week, October 30 to November 5. With the motto "small change adds up," the week started a national awareness campaign to encourage Canadians to increase their knowledge and comfort with financial literacy and math skills. The campaign includes access to tools, resources and community events.

At ABC's website (<http://abclifeliteracy.ca/flw/financial-literacy-main>) you'll find Tips & Resources including information, worksheets for tracking spending, budgeting and saving, a crossword; a video featuring advice from financial expert Gail Vaz-Oxlade, a daily tip from Moneyville.ca, and more. There is also a place to share money-saving tips.

Some shared tips:

- For the last few months I've taken all my spare change and added it to my 'money jar' at home. At the end of each month I go to the bank and deposit it into my emergency fund. Amazing how it adds up.
- I wait 48 hours before committing to a large purchase to make sure I really want it.
- Don't spend more than you make.

## Student Writing

Several Literacy Plus students entered Literacy Link of Eastern Ontario's (LLEO) 2011 Frances Lever Memorial Writing Contest. Four were among this year's winners.

Writing was inspired by the painting below by Ellen Cowie, of Peterborough. Excerpts are printed here. Thanks to teachers Gayle Timm and Nancy Ord, who encouraged their students to write and to enter the contest.



### Mornings

I sit here in the cool morning air just waiting for the rest of the world to wake up enjoying the peace and quiet while I can.

Now, I can hear some stirring from the upstairs bedroom; the day is really starting. Small little feet are hitting the cold floor of the old farm house. I can hear her banging around, talking to herself, looking for shoes and socks. The next thing she is doing is running down the stairs out through the old screen door, down the wooden steps, and across the yard through the flowerbed to the rickety little hen house. "Chick, chick," I can hear her call in her soft little voice. Then down they come from their night roost, three little red hens waddling over to her the way only fat little hens can. Their feathers are all ruffled and their red combs are standing straight on their little heads. Peeping and stretching, they make their way over the old wired-up door of their hen house....

- Marie Lehman, 1<sup>st</sup> Place

## My First Friends on the Farm

Well, Grandma is finally gone. We are all gathered at her farm after her funeral to remember her. All my aunts, uncles, cousins and Grandma's friends are sitting around eating, drinking and telling stories about her. It is really depressing. I have to get out of here before I start crying again.

I decide to go for a walk. I walk toward the barn area and come to the building where the chickens were kept. I just stand there. I can remember when I was a little girl, coming here and being fascinated by the chickens. I would spend all day long just sitting and watching the chickens go about their business. I would pretend that they were my best friends and we would have tea parties and play school; I was the teacher and they were the students. I would read to them and pretend to teach them to spell and say the times tables. Grandma would come up to me and ask me what I was doing. When I told her, she would look at me strangely and then she would walk away laughing her head off. All the animals on the farm would gaze up at her with strange looks on their faces. I couldn't understand what Grandma was laughing at. I mean the chickens were my best friends. We weren't doing anything wrong....

- Colleen Yuke, Honourable Mention

## Our Students Succeed

Some students come to us with big goals and ambitions. Two Literacy Plus students successfully achieved such goals this year.

One student, who began his work at Literacy Plus without a Grade 9 education, was able to qualify for his high school diploma last June, within a year and a half of coming to us.

Another learner, who had not completed her grade 12 in Ontario, worked to upgrade her English skills and qualified this fall for community college by passing her English Requirements exam.

### A Visit to the Farm

I smile as I remember a simpler time in my life when my biggest worry was how much longer the drive would take before we arrived at Nanny and Gramp's farm. One of the best times of my life was when my family would all pile into my Dad's station wagon and head down the road with great anticipation of things to come. On the way we played games and sang at the top our lungs to the songs on the car radio. In those days, there were no portable DVD players on the back of the car seats, no GPS screens to follow, or earphones to take us off in to our own little worlds. We were FAMILY, close together and loving every minute of it.

Once we arrived at the farm, we would all trip over each other, trying to be the first one to reach my Nanny for one of her special hugs. She would wrap me up in her arms and hug so tight, I could hardly breathe. She smelled like the peanut butter cookies she had just baked for us. After enjoying my cookies and milk, I would head for the barn not caring what dirt I picked up on my Sunday best.

My favourite place on the farm was the chicken coop. My Nanny and I had named three of the chickens especially for me. Their names were Gwendolyn, Geraldine and of course my favourite, Matilda, called Mattie for short. I was thrilled that my chickens never forgot me. As soon as I would see them, they'd run around clucking and flapping their wings....

- Diane Felske, Honourable Mention



#### Newsletter Production

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### My Day at the Farm

When I wake up in the morning, I think about what I am going to do today at the farm. My name is Sue and I live in a small town called Eganville. I live with my mom and dad. We live in a small house on a farm with our cows and other animals like horses and chickens. They make me laugh so much because of the way they move their heads. When I talk to them, they make funny noises. When I start feeding them, they all come running to me and make all their cackle noises. I can sit here all day and watch them just moving around here, but I go to see our horses too. They look so big to me. They scare me because I am so small. I try to ride the horses with my dad when he can help me, but he is really busy on the farm. So, I go back to my chickens and talk to them. That is my day at the farm.

- Monica Dupuis, Honourable Mention

### Hope

The sun shone over the ridge of the maple bush, bringing with it an overpowering heat wave.... Harnesses and lunge lines for the horses hung by the chicken coop, some in desperate need of repair, others old but doing the job. Soon new ones would be needed. We just didn't know where the money would come from....

Our granddaughter Hope had taken to farm life with ease. Each morning after breakfast, she would dress...and head outside.... I was surprised to see her squatting beside the chicken coop. Usually when someone approached the barn the chickens would make loud squawks and take off every which way. It seemed that Hope and the chickens were mesmerized by each other. This went on for some time. Finally, Hope giggled a little, got up, and headed for the horse paddock. She climbed up on the wooden stand in order to hang her arms over the fence. Slowly the horses headed her way. They stopped close enough to the fence that Hope was able to touch each one. I was amazed....

- Karen Dombroskie