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# Literacy Plus Newsletter

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Issue #54

Spring 2009

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## Volunteer Month

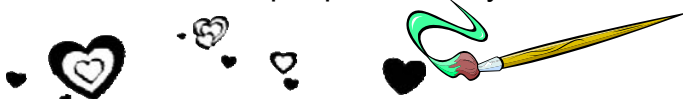
April is Volunteer Month and Literacy Plus is, as always, very grateful for all the volunteer help that keeps us going.

Our volunteer board gives many hours every year to overseeing the policies and finances of the organization, participating on committees, and planning and managing the fundraising activities that keep us afloat. The Bonnechere Authors Festival, the Annual Swing for Literacy golf tournament, and the Bonnechere Valley Christmas concert are three big events that require commitment and many helping hands.

Our dedicated volunteer tutors work one-to-one with students around the county who can't access classes or who need individual learning support. As well as teaching, tutors spend time planning lessons, finding materials to meet their students' needs, and even taking their students on learning outings. They also volunteer to take training to improve their own skills for tutoring.

In the office, we benefit from the help of volunteers who work on the seemingly endless job of organizing our library of resource materials, who perform a variety of tasks from filing to photocopying and who help with the day-to-day clean up that keeps the office and classrooms presentable.

We couldn't do what we do without the help of all these wonderful people—thank you all!

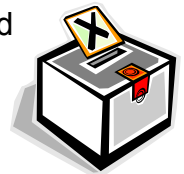


*Volunteering is a work of heart*

## Annual General Meeting

June 10 is the date of Literacy Plus's Annual General Meeting, to be held at St. James Church, 78 Wellington Street, Eganville. The Board and staff invite tutors, students and members of the public to attend. The evening will begin at 5:30 p.m. with meeting and greeting and the chance to see displays of student work. A potluck supper will follow—not to be missed!

Following the speaker (TBA), we will report to our members on Literacy Plus's activities and finances for the 2008/2009 year, and ask members to vote on the revised Bylaws (see below). We will also elect new Board members to fill vacancies created by members whose term is ending. For information about the Literacy Plus board and becoming a member, you can call the office for an information package and/or visit our website at [www.literacyplus-renfrewcounty.ca/volunt/board.htm](http://www.literacyplus-renfrewcounty.ca/volunt/board.htm).



## Notice of Bylaw Revision

The Board of Literacy Plus has reviewed and amended the organization's Bylaws. The revised Bylaws will be presented to the membership for approval at the Annual General Meeting. Copies of both the current Bylaws and the revised Bylaws may be obtained from the office by any member, either as paper copies or by e-mail. Please call (613) 628-1720 or e-mail [literacyplus@bellnet.ca](mailto:literacyplus@bellnet.ca) if you would like to review the changes.

## Tutor Training

Two tutor training days are scheduled for May 2009: Saturday, May 9 and Saturday, May 30. Both sessions take place at the office in Eganville and run from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

On May 9, tutors will learn how to help their students set goals, and how to use those goals to plan lessons and assess learning progress. You'll learn how to help your student with self-assessment and completing the monthly report forms. The afternoon session will look at planning your lessons for success. The May 30 workshop topics include teaching reading to adults, teaching writing, and teaching essential skills for work.

Both new tutors and tutors ready for a refresher are encouraged to attend. This is also great opportunity to meet and share experiences with other tutors. A minimum of four participants is needed to proceed. Please reply to Diane at [literacyplus@bellnet.ca](mailto:literacyplus@bellnet.ca) or telephone the office at (613) 628-1720 or 1-800-387-4712.



## Calendar

May 9:	Tutor Training 1
May 30:	Tutor Training 2
June 10:	Annual General Meeting
July 8:	BAF: Anthony Da Sa
July 15:	BAF: Andrew Pyper
July 22:	BAF: Glenda Ferguson Tippins
July 29:	BAF: Priscila Uppal
September 8:	Swing for Literacy

## Reminder

It's still two months off, but we remind you that the Literacy Plus office closes for the summer, when activities slow down. Staff continue to check phone messages and e-mail, and carry on essential business. This year we will close after Friday, June 26, and reopen Monday, August 31. Tutors who are continuing through the summer, **please send in your reports as usual at the end of each month.**

## Chamber of Commerce Nomination

Literacy Plus was surprised and pleased to be nominated for an Upper Ottawa Valley Chamber of Commerce award in the category "Best Community Organization." Awards were presented at a banquet and gala at Germania Hall in Pembroke on January 31. Although Literacy Plus didn't win, it was an honour to be recognized by the nomination in the company of Algonquin College and the Pembroke Hospital Ladies Auxiliary (the winner).

Staff members Diane Litchfield and Peggy Bridgland attended the gala, as did Board Chair Linda McLaren and director Ross Meadows, a nominee and winner in his own right. We all enjoyed the excellent dinner and good music, and it was a great opportunity to learn more about the businesses and organizations of the Upper Ottawa Valley.

Literacy Plus gratefully thanks Chris Hinsperger of the Bonnechere Caves, who put forward the nomination.

## Swing for Literacy

Fore! The 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Swing for Literacy Golf Tournament will be held Tuesday, September 8, at the Whitetail Golf Club near Eganville. Although many schools will start a week early this year, the tournament will remain on the first Tuesday after Labour Day.

As before, the tournament will be a shotgun start, best ball foursome with registration at 11:00 a.m. and tee-off time at 12:00 p.m. After the golf, there will be a chance to mingle over drinks and a great dinner to round out the day. This tournament has developed a reputation among golfers as a fun and friendly event, worth returning to. Enlist some friends and plan to sign up.

To register, call Rosemary Cammaert (613) 628-3072 or e-mail [cammaert@nrtco.net](mailto:cammaert@nrtco.net). Please pre-register by August 15.

## Bonnechere Authors Festival

Plans are shaping up for the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Bonnechere Authors Festival in July. This year, all four evenings will once again be held in Eganville, at St. James Church Hall. We have four interesting and accomplished authors lined up for this year's festival. Although recognized with prizes and reviewers' praise, they are still on the edge of being well known. You can see them here first!

July 8: Anthony Da Sa  
 July 15: Andrew Pyper  
 July 22: Glenda Ferguson Tippins  
 July 29: Priscila Uppal

Anthony Da Sa's first book, *Barnacle Love*, was a finalist for the 2008 Giller prize. The book is a collection of interlinked stories described as "moving between folk tale, myth and narratives of contemporary displacement." They follow the story of a Portuguese fisherman who washes up half-drowned on the shores of Newfoundland and goes on to build a life in Toronto's Little Portugal. The stories are resonant tales of fathers and sons and parental expectations, and "have immense emotional and truthful powers."

Award-winning Toronto author Andrew Pyper treads the fine line between mystery genre and literary fiction. His fourth book, *The Killing Circle*, follows a reporter who joins a writers' group after his wife dies. As he struggles to find the book he feels has within him, a string of unsolved murders takes place, all seeming to lead back to him. The New York Times said it could be "either a classy ghost story or the tale of one man's mental breakdown...a terrific yarn."  
[www.andrewpyper.com](http://www.andrewpyper.com)



Glenda Ferguson Tippins was born and raised in Renfrew, the third youngest in a family deeply rooted in the Ottawa Valley. Her novels *The Simple Hand of Fate*, *A Time of Reckoning* and *Keeper of the Dream* (Spring 2009) follow the Wieland family through good

and hard times, starting with Cantly, a young girl who defies her family when she falls in love with an "unsuitable" boy.  
[www.glendafergusontippins.com](http://www.glendafergusontippins.com)

Priscila Uppal is a novelist, poet and professor of English at York University, with five books of poetry (one a finalist for the prestigious 2007 Griffin Prize) and two novels published. Her most recent novel, *To Whom It May Concern*, has been likened to a "modern, multicultural re-telling of King Lear," exploring the comedies and tragedies of miscommunications and betrayals within a colourful family.  
[www.priscilauppal.ca](http://www.priscilauppal.ca)

Single tickets are \$15, available at the door the night of the reading. Series passes for all four readings are \$55, available from the Literacy Plus office till the end of June, and at the door July 8. Come at 7:30 p.m. for dessert and coffee, and to browse the author's books. Readings start at 8:00 p.m.

## Clear Language and Essential Skills Workshops

On Tuesday, May 5, the Renfrew County Literacy Service Planning (LSP) committee will host two workshops for Employment Ontario agencies in Renfrew County, one on Clear Language and the other on Essential Skills.

The workshops follow up on an information meeting the LSP held last September for other Employment Ontario agencies. At that time, agencies asked for more information about identifying and serving people who may have problems with reading. Making printed materials easier to read is one effective way to do this. As well, knowledge of Essential Skills will help agencies better understand the needs of their clients.

Lesley Hamilton, coordinator of the LOCS network, will lead both workshops. Agencies will bring samples of their own printed information for a hands-on experience in using Clear Language principles.

## MTCU Directions and Priorities

The Ontario budget tabled recently contained \$90M in new funding for literacy, to be allocated over the next two years. If passed, these funds will be targeted not to bolstering core funding, as literacy agencies had hoped, but to activities and programs specifically related to student preparation for employment.



While the goals of moving on to further education or developing skills for independence will still be valid paths for literacy training, progress towards employment is the Ministry's priority and is the path that will receive any new program dollars.

In line with this direction, closer partnerships between literacy agencies and Employment Assistance Services are also an increasing priority for MTCU, with the aim of helping the unemployed find the shortest route back to work with the specific skills they need.

Literacy Plus already enjoys a partnership with Employment Networks in Renfrew, where for several years we have been offering computer skills classes to some of their clients. Literacy Plus has also been discussing with Rural Outreach Employment Services some ways we can partner to better serve clients in the Eganville area.

Another way to help people prepare for work is to give them experience with the kinds of materials and tasks they will encounter in the workplace. This month, Diane will attend a workshop in using and adapting authentic workplace materials for literacy programs, tailored to student goals. She will later share this training with other literacy practitioners in our LOCS network.

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

## Program Changes

Starting April 1, we have made some changes to our classes and timetable. In both the Upgrading and the Computer classes, mornings now start at 8:30 a.m. and run to 12:00, while afternoons run from 12:30 to 4:00 p.m.; there is a half-hour break for lunch.

The Upgrading Class has expanded to three days per week, now running Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. The additional time allows for more intensive learning for students wanting to improve their skills and move on to work or other training.

Teacher Pam Smith will continue two days a week to the end of June, when she leaves us for new things. Other staff are providing computer training, employment skills, and some special workshops on Wednesdays. We will be advertising for a new teacher for the 3-day program, to start in September.

## Statistics for 2008/2009

The year-end service statistics have just been tallied and sent to our funder. These stats tell us various things about the people we have served and what their goals were. We'll go on to do a further breakdown into classes and programs, but here are a few things we know.

- From April 1, 2008 to March 31, 2009, Literacy Plus delivered 7,136 hours of training to 153 students.
- Two thirds of our students were women, one third were men.
- Our largest age groups remained 25 to 44 years, with 44 students; and 45 to 65 years, with 79 students. We also had 11 students aged 24 or under, and 19 students over the age of 65.
- With the majority of our students still in their working years, it's not surprising that 76% had employment as their goal for upgrading their skills. Nearly 40% were working but wanted to improve their skills for job security or to find a better job.

## Computer Class News

Terrie's computer students are getting experience navigating the Internet through "blogging" at the Eganville cyberclass blogspot. At the blog, students can try all kinds of activities. You can start by learning the elements of both an e-mail and an Internet address, how to read them aloud—and why it's important to get the details exactly right. You can learn how to build your family tree online, and invite friends and family to view and update your site.

In February, Terrie launched a Cyber Café in collaboration with two former students who are members of the Eganville Seniors Club. Other club members can log onto the site to post messages, use the links, and get help from Terrie if they need it. Students participated in a Valentine's Day Trivia Hunt and in the Movement for Canadian Literacy's Scavenger Hunt celebrating International Learners' Week.

Finally, the site has links to a number of interesting websites that will help you learn to type, improve your memory, start a business, create a book, and more. You can visit the blog at <http://eganvillecyberclass.blogspot.com>.

## International Adult Learner Week

Launched by UNESCO in 2002, International Adult Learner Week promotes the value of lifelong learning, builds support networks for adult learners and encourages their participation. This year, IALW was celebrated March 2 to 8.

Worldwide, the picture can be discouraging, with one in five adults—774 million people—lacking necessary literacy skills. In Canada, over 10 million people are working at marginal or modest levels of literacy. This has a huge impact on the productivity of individuals, society, and the economy. UNESCO calls for a greater commitment worldwide to literacy, improved literacy programming; and more funding to support literacy.

## Student Success Stories

Occasionally we get letters or e-mails from former students letting us know where they are now. We are always pleased to hear that we have helped someone move on towards their larger goals, both through new skills and, often more important, the confidence they gain as they develop those skills.

Following are excerpts from two letters, the first from a one-to-one student in a rural area, who went on to write her GED exams and get a job in retail sales, the second from a graduate of the computer class.

Venessa wrote "I have come to realize the importance of Literacy Plus and how it has impacted my life. If it was not for the program, I wouldn't be where I am today. It has not only improved my outlook for life but also my self-esteem. I came out of school...into the real world and did not know which way to turn, and that's where your program came in. Words have a hard time expressing how this program has changed my life."



Linda said "I am writing to thank you for the opportunity I had of being able to attend the classes in basic computer literacy: Computer Operation Skills... At the time I thoroughly enjoyed the classes never realizing what an asset they would be to me in the future.

"I am now enrolled at Willis College of Business & Technology I Ottawa. I am in the Business Administration, 52 Week—2-Year Equivalency Diploma Program. This is a quick paced program and I would have been lost without my prior knowledge of computer skills that I learned through your program. Your program enabled me to have the confidence and familiarity I needed in the beginning of my course at Willis to stay on top of things.

I thank you again for the opportunity and for instructors like Terrie, who was always encouraging and helpful."

## Student Writing

### My Love Winnie

Winnie came into my life two and half years ago. In Korea, we lived in a condo, so I promised my daughter, Evelyn, we would adopt a dog when we got a house. Evelyn had wanted one for 10 years. At that time, I thought I wouldn't have to keep my promise forever because I never considered immigrating or buying a house.

I hated how restricted my life was, and I didn't like keeping pets in cages. Who says that parents always win arguments with their children? Over the years, pets came and went, fish, hamsters, chicks, and turtles lived with us and then got buried in the ground.

When we moved to Pembroke, my daughter started reading the papers. I thought she was going to be a top student, but she was reading ads for puppies. She bugged my husband and me everyday. My neighbor lent me a book on dogs and I searched the Internet to learn how to care for them. One day Evelyn saw an ad for puppies, which I liked, so we went to see it. We weren't sure but one of the puppies walked around and around my husband and Evelyn said, "This is the one!"



I made Evelyn promise before the puppy, Winnie came to our home that she would take care of her all the time, except when studying. It slowly turned into my job after she kept the promise for about a month. Three years ago, when I dropped my son off at his dormitory and gave him a good-bye hug, his eyes became watery. I knew I would miss him, even so, on my way home, I shouted to myself "Yes, I'm Free!!" Unfortunately, my lovely daughter, Evelyn turned away from Winnie, hanging out with her friends most of the time and always having something else to do – violin practices,

homework, and reading a book. OH! MY GOD!!!!

Anyway, I already knew I loved my little angel, Winnie. Without her, I don't know how I would've survived this ice-cold blizzard winter, which is Canada. Winnie was, and still is by my side.

Today, I'll be playing hide and seek with my family and Winnie. We have a ball!!

- Maria Jeong

## Hybrid Words

The following funny words and definitions were created by *Washington Post* contest winners, where the challenge was to alter a word by one letter and supply a new definition.

- **Cashtration** (n.) The act of buying a house, which renders the buyer financially impotent for an indefinite period.
- **Bozone** (n.) The substance surrounding stupid people that stops bright ideas from penetrating.
- **Inoculatte** (v.) To take coffee intravenously when you are running late.
- **Hipatitis** (n.) Terminal coolness.
- **Osteopornosis** (n.) A degenerate disease.
- **Decafalon** (n.) The grueling event of getting through the day consuming only things that are good for you.
- **Glibido** (n.) All talk and no action.
- **Dopeler effect** (n.) The tendency of stupid ideas to seem smarter when they come at you rapidly.
- **Caterpallor** (n.) The colour you turn after finding half a grub in the fruit you're eating.

### Newsletter Production

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