



Movement for Canadian Literacy

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“Building on Strength” *in the Voluntary Sector*

Challenge and Change

THIS IS A CHALLENGING TIME FOR THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR. As governments cut back their support for important programs and services, charitable and voluntary agencies are being called on to take on more responsibility than ever in their communities, often without adequate resources and infrastructure. As they scramble to do more with less, deal with growing community needs, work with new business and government partners, keep volunteers motivated and effective, and compete for scarce funds, voluntary organizations are stretched to the limit in almost every aspect of their work. To add to the challenges, they are increasingly expected to be “accountable” to various audiences, and to measure their “outcomes” even when this is difficult due to the long-term nature of their intervention.

A group of national voluntary organizations and coalitions

formed the Voluntary Sector Roundtable (VSR) in 1995 in an effort to respond proactively to these challenges, and “strengthen the voice of Canada’s voluntary sector.” In 1997 the VSR set up the Panel on Accountability and Governance in the Voluntary Sector (PAGVS), chaired by Ed Broadbent. After releasing the discussion paper *Helping Canadians Help Canadians: Improving Governance and Accountability in the Voluntary Sector* in May 1998, the Panel held consultations across the country and received written briefs from almost a hundred organizations. *Building on Strength: Improving Governance and Accountability in Canada’s Voluntary Sector* is the final report on the Panel’s research and consultations. It contains 41 recommendations, aimed at voluntary organizations, funders, corporations, and governments.

“Building on Strength”

Building on Strength makes it very clear that “extensive accountability

already exists in the sector.” It makes the case that “we also need to look seriously at ensuring that capacity exists to support existing and new demands within the sector. In order to do their work, voluntary organizations need resources, infrastructure, skills, knowledge, support and understanding. Capacity building is a vital component of increased accountability and improved governance. Without it, efforts to enhance accountability will fall short of their mark.”

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literacy.ca

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literacy.ca is an "information space" for the literacy community in Canada. Its purpose is to keep busy literacy workers posted on the most useful resources and research. Check MCL's website at www.literacy.ca for more information and links.

literacy.ca invites letters to the editor, articles, news items, ideas for future issues, and feed-back on any of the news and views you find in these pages. While we are particularly interested in material that addresses literacy issues, we welcome submissions that relate literacy to other social, economic or political issues. We have no formal submission guidelines, and the editor reserves the right to edit or not include submissions in future issues. The views expressed in *literacy.ca* are not necessarily those of MCL, its Board of Directors or the Editor, but are published to stimulate discussion on a range of adult literacy issues.

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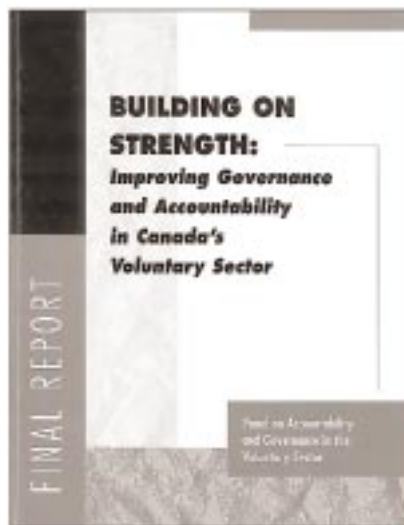
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(continued from page 1)

This is a very important message. If voluntary groups are expected to fill gaps being left by government cutbacks, it is important to develop an accurate picture of what they are accountable for and how they can best deal with this responsibility.



Building on Strength addresses what voluntary organizations can do to enhance their own accountability and what needs to be done by donors, funders, and governments.

It provides several useful tools for better governance and accountability, including a "Good Practice Guide for Governance;" sample codes of ethical behaviour and ethical fundraising / financial accountability; and descriptions of several approaches to outcome-based performance assessment.

A new relationship with government

This report and other work of the Voluntary Sector Roundtable are part of a dynamic of change in the relationship between the voluntary sector and the government. Recently 14 federal cabinet ministers met with representatives of the voluntary sector to discuss ways that the government and the sector can work together. At that meeting, the Honourable Pierre Pettigrew, Minister of Human Resources Development, said "The government's ability to redress the public finances of the country without major social disruption owes a great deal to the voluntary sector." He went on to conclude that "Government and the voluntary sector can do a lot more if they work together." Consultations between the two sectors have begun on three

themes: building a new relationship between the government and the voluntary sector, strengthening capacity in the voluntary sector, and improving the regulatory framework.

What might this mean for our organizations?

This process may lead to better public understanding of the work we do and what we need to do it well. As part of an empowered Voluntary Sector, with a seat at the cabinet table, we might have more of a say about things that affect our outcomes. We know that capacity building is a prerequisite of the kind of accountability that is being demanded of us. This report backs up our sense that we can't do it without adequate resources and support.

Some of the recommendations could make a big difference—e.g., multi-year funding to make outcome evaluation more feasible, grant funding that covers the actual costs of evaluation, support for core operations of voluntary organizations, charitable organizations being able to do “related business.”

A key recommendation concerns advocacy: “While partisan activities should continue to be forbidden, the right of bearing public witness on an issue affecting the very purpose of a

charitable organization should be affirmed. The rules governing advocacy activity need to be clarified in ways that can be better understood, that militate against arbitrary application and that cohere with the values of a healthy civil society.”

Over the next few months, federal officials and representatives of the voluntary sector will be working together on issues of building voluntary sector capacity, the relationship between the sector and the government, and the “regulatory framework.”

Building on Strength: Improving Governance and Accountability in Canada's Voluntary Sector is available in hard copy and on-line. The Panel's website also has factsheets on the voluntary sector and the Voluntary Sector Roundtable, briefs submitted to the Panel during its consultations, and more. For more information on *Building on Strength*, the work of the Voluntary Sector Roundtable, or the process of consultation with the federal government, contact The Panel on Accountability and Governance in the Voluntary Sector, 1 Nicholas Street, Suite 532, Ottawa, ON, K1N 7B7. Tel: 1-800-670-04001, Fax: 613-241-6725. Website: www.pagvs.com

Some facts on the voluntary sector

- ▶ As of December 1996, there were 74,918 charities registered with Revenue Canada. It is estimated that there are over 100,000 more voluntary organizations that are not registered charities.
 - ▶ In 1994, charities received an estimated \$10.1 billion in donations, earned \$23.5 billion through their activities, and received \$54.5 billion from government (most of this last amount went to hospitals and teaching institutions).
 - ▶ Almost half of charities have annual revenues of less than \$50,000.
 - ▶ Each Year Canadians donate over 900 million hours to the work of charities and voluntary organizations.
 - ▶ In 1993, 76% of senior executives in charities earned less than \$50,000.
- (Source: *Factsheet on voluntary sector* at www.pagvs.com/mhall.htm)

News from MCL

LAD 99 "breakthrough"

by Craig McNaughton, Executive Director, MCL

LITERACY ACTION DAY (LAD) 1999 was bigger and better than ever! 82 MPs from all 5 parties, as well as several Senators, met with 65 lobbyists from the six national literacy organizations - ABC CANADA, la Fédération canadienne pour l'alphabétisation en français (FCAF), Frontier College, Laubach Literacy of Canada (LLC), MCL, and the National Adult Literacy Database (NALD). The MCL team this year included a strong contingent of 15 lobbyists from the Ontario Literacy Coalition (OLC).

The lobbyists who came to Ottawa to speak on behalf of literacy practitioners and adult learners across the country worked hard to contact their own MPs, or at least MPs from their own provinces, before they arrived in Ottawa. That spadework paid off in a large number of engaging meetings during the Day—meetings that made good political sense to everyone involved.

But the breakthrough this year was not a much in the number of MPs met as in the fact that the lobbyists and their partners within government managed to open up solid working links with officials in Human Resources Development Canada, Health Canada, Justice Canada and the Correctional Service of Canada. These meetings represented a major shift around the content and maturity of Literacy Action Day.

Readers of *literacy.ca* will recall (see Vol. 1, No. 2) that we made a special effort this year to engage both departmental officials and MPs on specific questions around federal policy and programs—to find out more about federal initiatives that bear or should bear on literacy and to open discussions of how those initiatives can be strengthened. (A copy of the final briefing and background notes used during LAD 99 can be found on the MCL website. Our thanks go out to the individuals across the country who sent in their suggestions for improving these notes. That

kind of grassroots and expert input is crucial to our effectiveness during LAD.)

The meetings with officials took place both on the Hill and in government offices across Ottawa-Hull. All of the meetings were highly informative and demonstrated that there is major support for literacy within the government as well as outside. Our notion of *who* constitutes the "literacy community" had to shift given the visible presence of so many passionate advocates for literacy coming from within government, on both non-political and political sides.

Officials from Human Resources Development and from Justice were so enthusiastic that they made a point of coming over to Parliament Hill to have their meetings. Their presence among the lobbyists in "Literacy Central" (our base of operations in the Aboriginal Peoples Room in the Senate Block) led to creation of a new feature for LAD: seminars on the Hill. In the morning, HRDC's Debra Mair led what turned into a "standing-room only" seminar on the Department's Essential Skills project. The same thing occurred in the afternoon with Cathy Chapman and Eileen Hornby from Justice. They made presentations on the Government's crime prevention and youth justice initiatives that led to excellent discussions on literacy and justice.

LAD 99 fell within the same week as the federal budget. That made our interventions timely, but it also made it difficult to line up our traditional meeting with the Minister of Human Resources Development, the Honourable Pierre Pettigrew, who is responsible for literacy. Mr Pettigrew nevertheless found time to meet with representatives of the literacy community at the beginning of the day. The exchange between the Minister and representatives of the six Nationals (including learner spokespersons from each linguistic community) was warm and energetic, as usual.

All five federal parties again sent representatives to the LAD Reception to express their support for the literacy cause in Canada. Speakers included

Senator Joyce Fairbairn representing the Government and the Liberals, Diane Ablonczy for Reform, Bernard Bigras for the Bloc Québécois, Peter Stoffer for the New Democrats, and Diane St. Jacques for the Progressive Conservatives.

Again this year at the Reception, learner leaders such as Dorothy Silver (MCL), Amède Brideau (FCAF) and Arnie Stewart (Laubach) made powerful appeals on behalf of low-literacy Canadians across the country. (See, for example, the speech by Dorothy Silver in this issue of *literacy.ca*.)

During the Reception, M.P. Don Boudria, the Government's House Leader, received a special award from the literacy community in recognition of his contribution to literacy in Canada. Mr Boudria had just graduated with a B.A. in History from the University of Waterloo. But that degree did not come easily: Mr Boudria had to study during the weekends for 11 years, having left high

school at the end of grade 11 for family reasons.

Cooperation and flexibility are essential to the success of LAD. Again this year, we benefited by sustained interest and support from Senator Joyce Fairbairn and her staff, and officials within the National Literacy Secretariat, and of course across the literacy community itself. LAD 99, as in previous years, was seen by everyone as a "win-win" event that is crucial to maintaining visibility and active support for the literacy cause on Parliament Hill.

The literacy community (in its fullest sense!) owes a debt of gratitude to this year's LAD Coordinator/Scheduler, Heather Sterling. Heather not only survived, but mastered, a complex and ever-changing schedule of meetings and preparations, pulling together with excellent support from Denise Bourdeau (coordination of French meetings) and Danielle Plouffe (French translation), a memorable and persuasive event.

Learners in Action

Dorothy Silver Wins Award

Dorothy was recently named Woman of the Year in Fredericton. She received the award from Beta Sigma Phi, the university women's organization. It is an award of recognition for outstanding work in the community. Dorothy spoke for 20 minutes at the award dinner and received a standing ovation. At MCL we know from direct experience just how powerful Dorothy's speeches can be! This is the opening address she gave at LAD 99:

Take Literacy to Heart

Usually when I get up to speak, I talk about my school experience. Most learners do start here. School is the first place that we find out that we are different. It's where we experience failure, embarrassment and other negative feelings.

But, with the recent release of the paper, "How Does Literacy Affect the Health of Canadians?" and with the good news of federal money being

given to health care, I want to bring you directly to the link between health care and literacy.

The health paper I referred to states some of the direct effects of literacy on health such as:

- incorrect use of medicines
- that it's hard to read labels
- people give the wrong dosage
- or mix the baby's formula the wrong way.

Other things the report says are:

- don't blame the victim ... (they mean the person with low literacy skills).
- It also says that using clear language is not enough and while it helps, I agree it is not enough.

One doctor that I know says that the greatest waste in health care is the young parent who can not understand the message on the medicine bottle. They give the child the antibiotic for two days, see improvement, stop the medicine and a

few days later end up in the emergency room again. And this happens again and again. Why? Because they can't read well enough to follow directions.

Recently I have had my own challenges with my health and in the past my husband and I have had our share of health problems. The health care system is not set up to understand the helplessness and fear that goes along with health problems. With waiting lists and less access to health care, the people who are least empowered suffer the most.

But what do you do when you are sick and feeling helpless? When everyone else in the world seems to think that we can all read and write?

When my husband had his heart attack, we were scared to death. After going home I was responsible for taking care of him. He was supposed to take aspirin. I gave him too many and this caused a G.I. Bleed. My husband almost died.

Another time he had an allergic reaction to paint and the doctor felt that he had cancer of the voice box. They would not let him speak. The nurses handed him a pen and paper to communicate with. He could not write. He could not write down that he could not write. They did not understand why he was not cooperating.

Imagine the fear of losing your only communication! I thought we would never be able to talk together again! He could not write me a letter, or note, and not able to speak! I feared that never again would I hear my husband say, "I love you."

Fortunately he did not lose his voice but that experience was a hard lesson for both of us. This was a turning point for us. We knew that we had to learn to read. It took us another ten years but we did it and literacy helped us take control of our health.

My husband was still learning to read when he had his first heart attack. This meant he had to slow down with his learning because when he made a mistake he would get upset. But he learned to read enough to get by and to enjoy

reading. My husband has had a lot of heart problems but he loves to read stories of the heart.

If we had not learned to read, we would not have changed our eating habits. We would not be able to read labels on food. We would not have learned about vitamins. We would not have learned about the importance of exercise. Reading, learning and becoming aware changed us.

Every government department needs to take to the heart the serious impact of low literacy. Every government department must take literacy and its impact into consideration. One of the ways to reach people with low literacy is to support the people who can get the message out...the learners. Right now in this room we have learners who volunteer twenty hours every week to promote literacy and support learners. We know from personal experience the change that comes from learning to read.

People are unemployed, are poor, are addicted, are ripped off and are discriminated against because they can't read. People get in trouble with Revenue Canada, employment insurance and other government programs because they can't read. People are in jail because they can't read. I know that people die because they can't read.

I know that government is sympathetic to literacy and that government gives a lot of support. But literacy programs need help reaching all of those Canadians who do not read or read well. Forty-seven percent of Canadians have had the same problems I've just talked about. You might think that you can't afford more for literacy. But...if you think literacy is expensive...try ignorance.

Developing Provincial Learner Networks

Over the past decade or so, many literacy programs and coalitions have seen the value of the learners' perspective in their work, and have struggled to find ways to include learners in their decision-making processes. MCL is no exception —this issue has been on MCL's agenda since at least the mid-80's.

MCL's board and staff are convinced of the value of the "learners' voice" and committed to strengthening it. As an organization, MCL has tried a number of things to advance this cause, some more successful than others. Some of the challenges come from the differences in background between learners and other board members; the way we do business (using big words, lots of paper, and new technologies); and the limited chances for learner representatives to meet with each other and with other learners in their regions. From a distance, it's hard to do enough to help with these barriers. We are now thinking that as a community, we (MCL and the provincial / territorial coalitions) need to put some energy into a more "bottom-up" approach.

MCL has funding from the NLS for a project to do just that. The Provincial Learner Networks project aims to consolidate what MCL and the coalitions are doing to foster learner participation. We want to:

- build an excellent MCL "team," with learners and practitioners working together as equals
- share good ideas across the country so that we can learn from and build on them
- list the best practices, tools and resources for learner participation, learner support and learner leadership projects, and make this information available through our publications and website
- map how each of the provincial and territorial literacy coalitions involves learners, and the supports they provide
- develop a system of support closer to home for learners on the MCL board and committees
- contribute to the development of provincial learner networks (where they don't already exist and where this is also a goal for the provincial/territorial coalition)



Abe Friesen and Judith Hayes
leading Provincial Learner Networks Workshop in February.

The project kicked off last February with a day-long workshop for MCL's Board of Directors and Learners Advisory Network. The workshop was called "Exploring / Developing Successful Learner Involvement Models." It was led by Judith Hayes, Provincial Learner Coordinator for Literacy Partners of Manitoba, and Abe Friesen, who was elected by Manitoba learners to represent them on MCL's Learners Advisory Network. MCL's Board representative from Manitoba, Joy So, also helped out.

Working in groups, learners identified the benefits of learner involvement from a learners point of view while practitioners identified the benefits from an organizational standpoint. Then these insights were shared in the larger group. There was plenty of agreement between the two groups on the benefits for learners and for the organization. Roles the group saw for learners included public speaking, mentoring other learners,

**Benefits
for Learners**
personal growth
learning new skills
empowerment
a chance to help others
validation

Benefits for organization

credibility
effectiveness
democracy
a "reality check"
more effective publicity and outreach

participating on boards and committees, advisory roles, and more. The last question in this brainstorming section of the workshop was (for the learner

group) "What supports might learners need to become involved in their coalitions?" and for the practitioners "What resources would your coalition need to support increased learner involvement?"

Judith and Abe described the successes and challenges so far in Manitoba's learner involvement project. The project has two parts: developing a Learners Speakers Bureau to increase awareness about literacy for learners, potential learners, community, business and industry, and setting up regional Learner Circles to encourage

learner input in all areas of literacy.

Next, the two representatives from each coalition (learner and other) worked together to think through some ways learners have been involved

in their own coalition in the past and present, and to brainstorm some bright ideas for how they could be more involved in the future. The provincial "twosomes" then went on to take one of the bright ideas and develop it in terms of expected outcomes, resources needed, and necessary steps to making it happen.

This was a very positive workshop for MCL, and a model of what is needed to make learner involvement work. Personally, as someone who has grappled with the challenges of authentically involving learners, I found this workshop and the "Manitoba model" very encouraging.

I think it worked so well because it brought practitioners and learners together on a "level playing field" organized so learners could participate equally, and because it allowed the "team" from each province or territory to focus constructively on their own situation. Comments from the teams indicated that they rarely get this opportunity.

Most of the coalitions are working on this issue in some form or other. In addition to the Literacy Partners of Manitoba project profiled in this workshop, the provincial and territorial teams shared some of the excellent work they have done and are doing. For example:

- Literacy BC has held 3 provincial learner conferences, and is planning an action research project to develop a model for a provincial learner network.
- The Alberta Association for Adult Literacy has 9 regional representative teams, each made up of one learner and one practitioner.

Supports Learners Need

scribe
facilitation
learner support group
cooperation
administrative support
skill development

Resources Coalitions Need

\$ for staff with specific skills
\$ for childcare and travel
a plan or model
public acceptance
networking

Comments on Workshop

"everyone had a voice"
"working through the process made the ideas seem do-able"
"leaving with concrete ideas and benefiting from other people's ideas"
"information + action = great accomplishments"
"left feeling renewed"

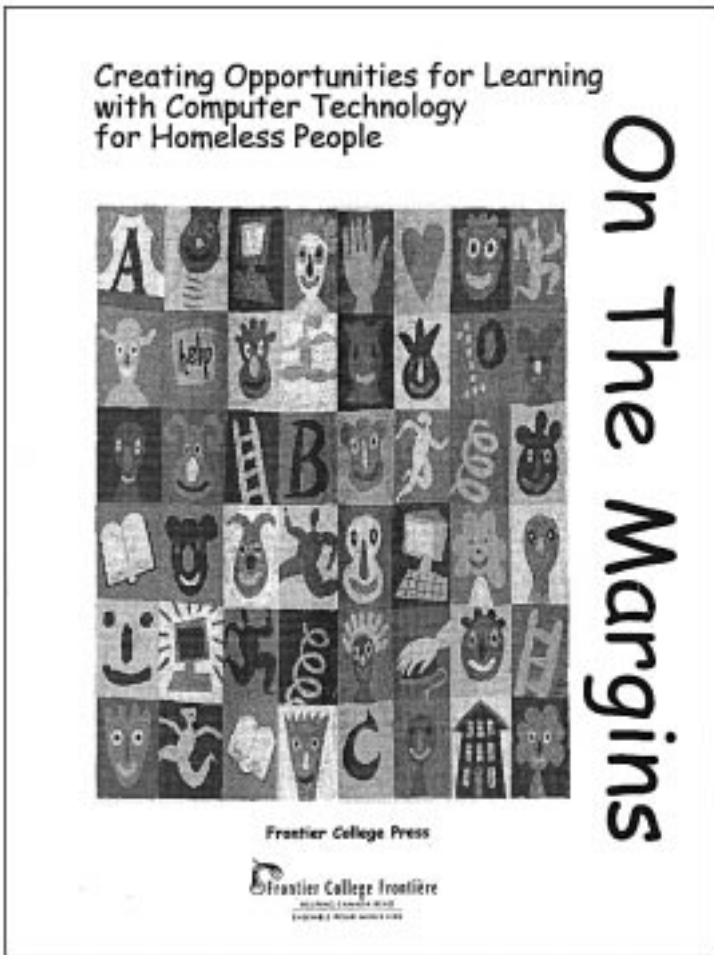
- Learners at the New Brunswick Committee on Literacy organized a Learners Power Forum last year and produced a document about the problems of accessing programs that was presented to the Minister of State for Literacy. NBCL is also developing a Learners Network and a Speakers Bureau.
- The PEI Literacy Alliance helped develop an Adult Learners Association, which is now an independent organization run by Lillian Mead, PEILA's Learner Representative to MCL.

Effective learner participation at a national level will require strong teamwork and support closer

to home. The will to do this certainly exists at the coalition level, but the "know-how" and the resources are what we need to work on now. I might add that learner involvement has the same benefits at the local level as at the provincial and national levels, and that this involvement builds the capacity and solidarity of the literacy community as a whole. Hopefully the learner development work that you do in your local programs will "trickle up" to make our national literacy movement more authentic and inclusive. We would like to hear about your experiences and about good resources you have developed or found.



Resources for Literacy Work



On the Margins – Creating Opportunities for Learning with Computer Technology with Homeless People

"We recognize computer and information technology as a tool that can enhance the learning process and facilitate positive learning experiences. We strive to encourage and direct students to think critically about how they use technology and how they can control its use for their own creative purposes and literacy skill development."

Beat the Street, a program of Frontier College, offers basic literacy instruction and upgrading to street youth and homeless adults. In 1996, a donated computer lab with internet access helped Beat the Street work with learners in new and innovative ways. *On the Margins* is about their experience, and about how computer technology can be used effectively. The first section

discusses issues of accessibility, effective planning, building a solid foundation, and supporting instructional activities with software. The second section reviews a range of basic education software and lists other resources to help programs use technology. Published by Frontier College Press, 35 Jackes Avenue, Toronto, ON, M4T 1E2. Beat the Street can be reached by telephone: (416) 979-3361, by e-mail: bts@ican.net, or through their website: www.nald.ca/bts.htm

CONNECT National Newsletter on Technology & Adult Literacy

Hopefully most of you already know and subscribe to this very useful Canadian periodical. Each issue contains reviews of software, websites and other resources; descriptions of how technology is being used in literacy programs; lesson plans; and more. For example, the February 1999 issue describes a Saskatchewan study that assessed the effectiveness of using the Internet in career planning with adult basic education students at a community college; a lesson plan on creating a classroom newsletter; and "technical tips" on using networks such as local area networks (LANs) and wide area networks (WANs). CONNECT is cheap or free! A subscription costs only \$6 (contact Connie Belanger, LBS/LINC Department, Ottawa-Carleton District School Board, 515 Cambridge Street S., Ottawa, ON, K1S 4H9. Tel: 613-239-2656, Fax: 613-239-2324, E-mail: connie_belanger@ocdsb.edu.on.ca). The newsletter can also be accessed on-line at <http://www.nald.ca/connect.htm>

WEB TIP!

When viewing many web pages you can highlight the text with your cursor, copy it to the clipboard, switch applications and then paste the text directly into your document. This is especially handy if you are in a hurry or are unable to print the web page.

Try it!

Courtesy: *The Right Type*

The Literacy Materials Bulletin

Good news! This excellent resource from British Columbia is now on-line at www.nald.ca/bulletin.htm. For those who are not familiar with it, it is a periodical collection of reviews of literacy resources, with a description,



cataloguing and ordering information, and a sample page for each resource. The Bulletin is distributed free to the literacy community of BC and for a yearly fee of \$15 to out-of-province subscribers. To subscribe, contact Literacy BC, Tel: 604-684-0624, Fax: 604-684-8520.

The Literacy Materials Committee would like to hear from you if you would like to recommend materials or if you would like them to seek out, field test or review a certain type of material. Send information and questions to Evelyn Battell, Malaspina University-College, 222 Cowichan Way, Duncan, BC, V9L 6P4, Tel: 250-746-3500, Fax: 250-746-3529, E-mail: battelle@mala.bc.ca

For the Love of Words

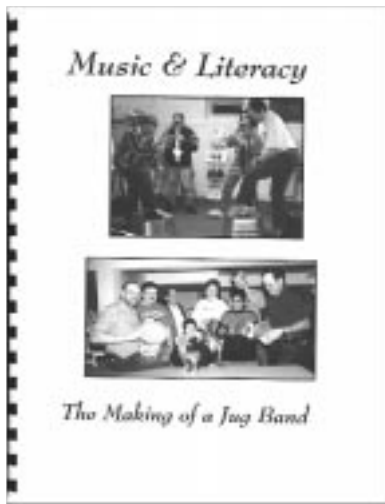
This 41-page book contains many different types of poetry written by adult learners at Action Read, along with brief descriptions of the exercises used to get people writing. The book is dedicated to

the memory of Shirley Graham Almack, a well-known Ontario learner activist. Available for \$8 from Action Read Community Literacy Centre, 206-20 Fountain Street West, Guelph, ON, N1H 3P2. Tel: 519-836-279, Fax: 519-836-7020, E-mail: actionr@golden.net, Website: www.golden.net/~actionr

Growing Bolder: A Workbook on Growing Older and Herstory for Women in Literacy Programs

This workbook was developed by the Women’s Group of Action Read, with funding from the NLS and the Ontario Women's Directorate. It contains many interesting stories and many creative and useful exercises for women in literacy programs to work on in groups or with their tutors. To order, contact Literacy Services of Canada, PO Box 52192, Edmonton, AB, T6G 2T5, Tel: 780-413-6491, Fax: 780-413-6582.

Music and Literacy: The Making of a Jug Band

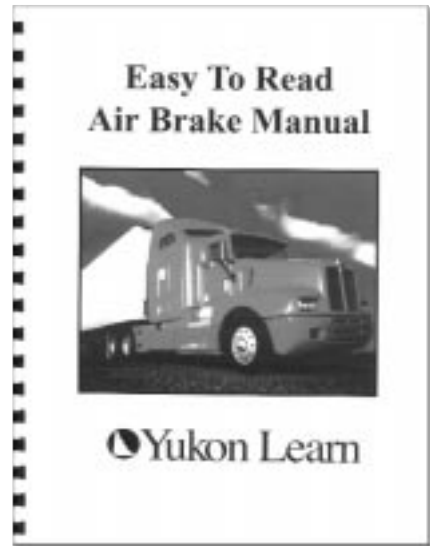


This booklet from Yukon Learn describes “the development of literacy skills through the building of musical instruments.” Through photos, writing and drawings, participants describe

themselves, the musical instruments they built, and what they gained from the experience. For more information, contact Yukon Learn, 308-A Hanson Street, Whitehorse, YK, Y1A 1Y6, Tel: 867-6280, Fax: 867-633-4576, E-mail: learn@yukon.net

Easy To Read Air Brake Manual

Also from Yukon Learn (see last entry), this resource presents the information that must be mastered in order to get a truck-driving license, in clear language. It is meant to supplement the official manuals from Provincial and Territorial Motor Vehicles departments.



Themes from Rural Life: A Resource Book for Adult Literacy and ESL

This resource was developed to provide new Canadians who immigrated to rural Manitoba with a working vocabulary to help them interact with the community. It would also be useful in a rural literacy class. Sections ranging from “The Farmyard” (a picture/vocabulary list) to “Pickles Like Grandmother Made” to “Exotics: The New Agriculture,” in a variety of genres and reading levels, provide a basis for oral and written



language activities. The text is supported by line drawings. An activity book is also being developed. *Themes from Rural Life* is available for \$7.95 plus S & H.

Contact Dan and Ellen Friesen, L.E.A.R.N.,
Box 91, Roblin, MB, R0L 1P0. Tel: 204-937-4646.

Explore Canada

This CD-ROM with teacher's manual is the result of a collaboration among Parks Canada, Heritage



Canada, Citizenship and Immigration, and the NLS. Suitable to be used as a learning tool for literacy and ESL learners, it deals with Canada's history and geography. Each lesson plan is correlated with the Canadian Language Benchmarks, and the "About Canada" quiz is based on the booklet that helps people prepare for the

Canadian citizenship test. The material was tested with learners in BC and Ontario. Copies are available for \$49 from NAS Educational Software Inc., 91 Heatherton Way, Thornhill, ON, L4J 3E7. Tel: 905-764-0695.

Health and Literacy – How Do They Relate?

This information kit from the Saskatchewan Literacy Network provides practical advice for addressing the health service needs of people with lower literacy skills. It contains health communication tips; plain language tips; action strategies, and resources. Cost: \$15. Contact Saskatchewan Literacy Network, 206-220 3rd Avenue S., Saskatoon, SK, S7K 1M1. Tel: 306-653-7368, Fax: 306-653-1704.

Eat Right and Save Money



This 60-page plain language nutrition resource was developed for pregnant and breastfeeding young parents. It is illustrated and very practical. It includes an Aboriginal version of Canada's Food Guide, easy-to-make recipes and tips for feeding children a

healthy diet on a tight budget. Cost \$4.50 plus mailing costs. Contact Lillis Lawrence, Focus on Family Literacy, 1895 Central Avenue, Prince Albert, SK, S6V 4W8.

Tel: 306-922-6736, Fax: 306-763-8165, E-mail: lillisfamilyliteracy@yahoo.com

New Laubach Literacy of Canada materials catalogue

This catalogue lists some great-looking resources, organized into sections including Canadian



Materials; Phonics; TV Tutor; Pleasure Reading; Spelling and Writing; Family Literacy; Health and Life Skills; Workplace Literacy; and more.

Contact Laubach Literacy of

Canada, 70 Crown Street, Suite 225, Saint John, NB, E2L 2X6, Tel: 506-634-1980, Fax: 506-634-0944, E-mail: laubach@nbnet.nb.ca

"Do you have a lump or change in your breast?"

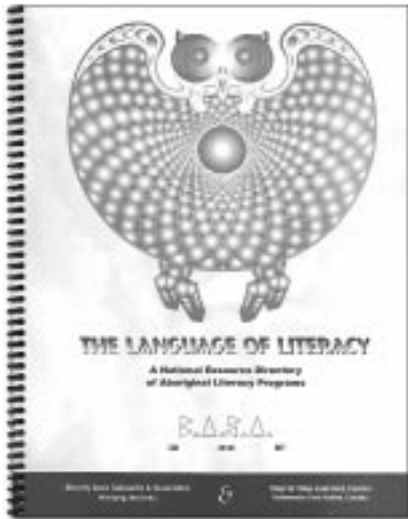
This plain language pamphlet and audio cassette for women with low literacy skills guides the reader through the steps from finding a lump or change to seeking medical advice and treatment. It includes the reassuring note that most women who discover a lump or change in their breasts do not have cancer. It demystifies the examination process and offers women the information to be active participants in their own care. The resource was produced by the Canadian Cancer Society, Newfoundland & Labrador Division, in conjunction with the Atlantic Breast Cancer Information Project. For more information, contact Jacqueline Campbell at 709-753-6703.

Adapting to the Changing Nature of Paid Work

The Society We Want has prepared a new issue guide on the changing world of paid work. As we said in earlier issues of *literacy.ca*, The Society We Want is a public dialogue process in which small groups discuss their values in relation to today's pressing issues. Feedback from the discussions is used to influence decision-makers. For more information, contact The Society We Want, Family Network, CPRN Inc., 2 Carlton St., Suite 1009, Toronto, ON, M5B 1J3. Tel: 416-343-1110, Fax: 416-260-1505. CPRN website: <http://www.cprn.com>

Aboriginal Literacy

The Language of Literacy: A National Resource Directory of Aboriginal Literacy Programs



The first directory of its kind in Canada, this resource profiles almost 100 Aboriginal literacy initiatives, listed alphabetically by province and territory. Each program profile

includes program demographics, contacts, mission, objectives, and special features and concerns. Later chapters provide an analysis of common "Challenges and Opportunities" and "Critical Components," and "Observations on the Path Ahead." The directory is free, and can also

be accessed through the National Adult Literacy Database at www.nald.ca. For more information, contact Beverly Anne Sabourin and Associates, 66 Cuthbertson Avenue, Winnipeg, MN R3P 0N8. Tel: 204-885-0660, Fax: 204-885-0659, E-mail: beaujess@mb.sympatico.ca

Canadian Aboriginal Literacy Strategy

The NLS recently announced that it will fund the preparation of a National Aboriginal Literacy Enhancement Strategy. CODE Inc. and the Native Education Centre in Vancouver is putting together a study team of literacy, strategic planning and program development specialists that will develop a ten-year education and training strategy for Aboriginal people. The study team will be producing a regular newsletter and will solicit feedback at each step of the planning process. To get on the mailing list, please contact the Canadian Aboriginal Literacy Enhancement Strategy, 2255 St. Laurent Blvd., Suite 120, Ottawa, ON, K1G 4K3. Tel: 613-260-3457, Fax: 613-26-3458, E-mail: information@codeinc.com, Website: www.codeinc.com

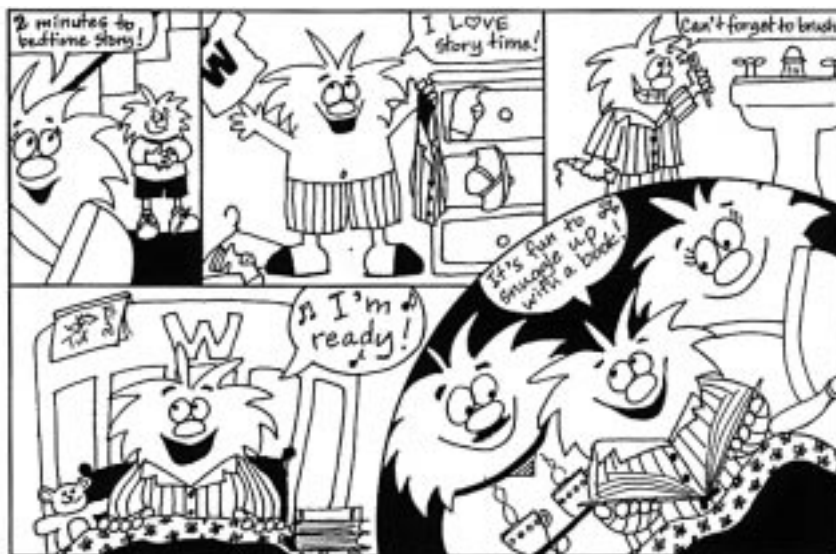


Reaching the Rainbow

The manual and video in this kit will help in planning an Aboriginal literacy program, or when considering adding an Aboriginal literacy component to existing programs. The kit is designed to develop awareness in Aboriginal communities of the impacts of literacy; present program options and opportunities; promote the importance of community involvement in Aboriginal literacy; serve as a resource for other literacy and Native organizations that plan to develop community-based Aboriginal programs; and help recruit learners and tutors. The video complements the manual and showcases different types of Aboriginal literacy programs across Canada. The kit is available for \$55 from Parkdale Regional College, 72 Melrose Avenue, Yorkton, SK, S3N 1Z2. Tel: 306-786-2589, Fax: 306-786-7866.

Family Literacy

Word Monster



On Family Literacy Day, January 27th, 1999, the PEI Literacy Alliance launched the latest Word Monster cartoon strip in the *Charlottetown Guardian*. For more information, see www.nald.ca/peila.htm.

New Literacy and Parenting Skills (LAPS) materials

Literacy and Parenting Skills (LAPS) is a program developed by Bow Valley College in Calgary. LAPS programs are now offered in women's centres, community centres, schools and family drop-in centres across Canada.

Developed in collaboration with Aboriginal specialists and groups, the new **Aboriginal Literacy and Parenting Skills (A-LAPS)** program combines literacy and parenting skills with Aboriginal history, stories and legends. New with A-LAPS are two- or three-day training workshops to prepare community workers to deliver the program. Workshops include strategies for working with low-income Aboriginal parents, how to develop a family literacy program within a community, and how to develop a parent education program. An A-LAPS manual for instructors includes sessions on parenting issues,

Aboriginal history, stories and legends, suggested children's resources, and more.

Also new from Bow Valley College are two new supplementary sessions for the **Literacy and Parenting Skills – ESL (LAPS – ESL) Facilitators Guide**. "Let's Talk About Food" deals with healthy eating on a low budget, "smart shopping," and the Canadian Food Guide. "Is My Home Safe for My Children?" helps parents

identify and avoid dangerous situations in the home. The cost of the supplementary package, including the two new sessions and participants' handouts, is \$5.50. The complete new LAPS – ESL manual, which includes the new supplementary sessions, is available for \$20.

For more information or to order materials, contact LAPS, Bow River College, 332 – 6th Avenue SE, Calgary, AB, T2G 4S6. Tel: 403-297-4778, Fax: 403-297-4949

“Literacy Initiatives in Family Resource Programs” Project

The Canadian Association of Family Resource Programs, in partnership with MCL and with support from the NLS, has just launched a project to increase the capacity of family resource programs to support the development of literacy in the families they serve. The goal of the project is to develop materials to help family resource programs to:

- reduce literacy-related barriers within their organizations
- assess literacy needs of their participants
- incorporate literacy-building activities into their current programs and services
- develop new initiatives related to literacy, in partnership with literacy organizations
- help their participants access existing literacy programs within the community
- find further resources and support.

The information will be packaged in a handbook and on the websites of FRP Canada and MCL.

Consultants Lee Weinstein and Suzanne Smythe will carry out the project with guidance from an Advisory Committee drawn from the literacy and family resource communities. For more information, contact the Executive Director, FRP Canada, Tel: 613-728-3307, aivask@frp.ca or Wendy DesBrisay, MCL, Tel: 613-563-2464, wdesbrisay@literacy.ca

As noted in *literacy.ca* Vol. 1, No. 2, the newsletter of FRP Canada, *Play and Parenting Connections*, contains information that would be useful and interesting to the family literacy



community. The Spring 1999 issue describes two other new FRP Canada projects, both funded by Health Canada's Population Health Fund. One project will focus on working successfully

with fathers of young children. The other will look at how family resource centre staff work with families under stress and with other service providers in cases where issues of child protection may arise. The issue also mentions the Provincial Parenting Education Network in Saskatchewan (contact Linda Selin at 306-787-8657) and the Family Educator Certification Program through Family Service Canada (contact FSC, 383 Parkdale Avenue, Suite 404, Ottawa, ON, K1Y 4R4, Tel: 613-722-9006, Fax: 613-722-8610, E-mail: fsc@igs.net, Website: www.cfc-efc.ca/fsc/). To subscribe to *Play and Parenting Connections*, contact CAFRP, 101-30 Rosemount Avenue, Ottawa, ON, K1N 1P4. Tel: 613-728-3307, Fax: 613-729-5421, E-mail: info@frp.ca

Family Literacy annotated bibliographies on-line

Literacy BC:
www.nald.ca/PROVINCE/BC/LBC/annotate/Introduction.htm

Literacy Partners of Manitoba:
www.nald.ca/CLR/family.htm

Literacy Research

Wanted: research documents for a Directory of Canadian Literacy Research

The University of Alberta's Centre for Research on Literacy has received NLS funding to develop a comprehensive directory of adult literacy research. The directory will contain annotations of research that has been completed in the past five years as well as research in progress. In some cases, full length research documents will be included. The finished directory will be accessible on the NALD website (www.nald.ca).

The term "research" is used to refer to the systematic, purposeful process of creating knowledge. The directory will include research that has the following components: problem or purpose, background or context, methods for data collection and analysis, and discussion of results and implications. It will not include opinion pieces, testimonials or program descriptions.

This directory will help disseminate information on research that is not published in mainstream sources. An increased awareness of current research may facilitate collaboration among researchers. If you are currently working on a literacy research project, please e-mail Patty.Campbell@ualberta.ca or phone 780-492-2984. If you completed a literacy research project in the past five years, please send a copy of the document to Pat Campbell, Centre for Research on Literacy, Faculty of Education, 653 Education South, University of Alberta, Edmonton, AB, T6G 2G5.

The Literacy, Welfare and Work Longitudinal Research Project

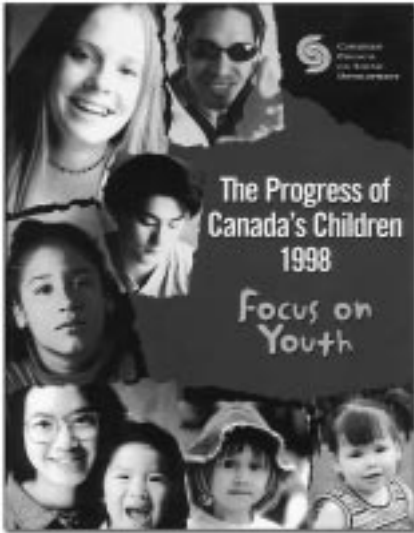
As noted in *literacy.ca* Vol. 1, No. 2, the Literacy, Welfare & Work study is investigating the relationship between literacy and employment, in the context of welfare reform. Sponsored by the Coalition for Brandon Literacy Services and funded by the NLS, it has published two reports

so far. *Literacy, Welfare & Work: A Preliminary Study* examines trends in current welfare legislation and the labour market, and explores their effect on adult learners and instructors. This phase uncovered some key issues, such as the personal and structural barriers to students' efforts to find and keep a job. *Literacy, Welfare & Work Year II: A Case Study of the Lives of Seven Adult Learners* "offers a glimpse into the subtle and often complex connections between literacy and poverty, abuse, poor health, etc., and how these issues have affected these students' lives, as well as their education and employment history." Both reports are available on the NALD website. Hard copies are available for \$5 each from Literacy Service of Canada Ltd., Box 52192, Edmonton, AB, T6G 2T5. Tel: 780-413-6491, Fax: 780-413-6582, E-mail: brokop@telusplanet.net. For more information about the Literacy, Welfare & Work project, contact Janet Smith, Common Ground Consulting, 336 4th Street, Brandon, Manitoba, R7A 3G9, Tel/Fax: 204-726-8090, E-mail: commonground@mb.sympatico.ca.

Welfare-to-Work Programs: A National Inventory Welfare-to-Work Programs: A Discussion Paper

These documents from the Canadian Council on Social Development (CCSD) contain the most comprehensive and current information about welfare-to-work programs across Canada. Some of the concerns raised are that the programs appear to be contributing to worsening poverty by lowering benefits and forcing some people into uncertain employment; that most programs do not pay enough attention to the needs of recipients and their children for supports such as training and child care; and that evaluation of the programs is usually based on cost savings, not on outcomes for recipients. "If the programs are simply reducing the number of people on welfare, without increasing the number who have jobs, they should be considered as a failure, not as a success" according to the CCSD's Associate Director. (Source: *Community Action, Canada's Community Service Newspaper*, March 15, 1999)

The Progress of Canada's Children 1998 – Focus on Youth



“For the third year, *The Progress of Canada's Children* reports on emerging issues and trends in young people's health and well-being. ... This year, *Progress* has a special focus

on youth, and to bring the data to life, the Canadian Council on Social Development (CCSD) has incorporated the voices of youth in a number of ways. Members of our Youth Advisory Council contributed their commentary, stories and personal reflections, which you will see throughout the report.”

The report describes a number of trends, such as growing numbers of immigrant children, more homeless youth, growing youth poverty, declining youth crime rates (but more “bullying” in schools), rising university costs, restricted access to recreational activities for low-income families, more youth volunteering, high youth unemployment as well as low youth wages, and a large proportion of youth at the highest literacy level as well as a large proportion with poor literacy skills. Short articles on these trends and more are illustrated by charts and graphs and grounded with the voices of young Canadians.

The National Crime Prevention Centre (NCPC) is helping distribute this publication as part of its efforts to promote better awareness of the links between social development and crime prevention. NCPC, a part of the Department of Justice, is implementing Phase II of the National Strategy on Community Safety and Crime Prevention in partnership with Solicitor General Canada. The purpose of the National Strategy is

to develop community-based response to crime and help Canadians create safer communities, with a particular emphasis on children and youth, Aboriginal people and women's personal safety. The initiative promotes social development by addressing the root causes of crime.

The Progress of Canada's Children 1998 can be ordered for \$10 plus \$3.50 for mailing from CCSD, 441 Maclaren, 4th Floor, Ottawa, On, K2P 2H3. Tel: 613-236-8977, Fax: 613-236-27500, E-mail: publications@ccsd.ca, Website: www.ccsd.ca

Child Poverty in Canada National Report Card 1998



This pamphlet from Campaign 2000, a non-partisan, cross-Canada coalition of over 700 national, provincial and community partner organizations, describes changes in child poverty trends and statistics since 1989—most of them bad. For example, in terms of education and community services, “children in poor families are twice as likely to repeat a grade before the age of 11; more likely to have above average

hyperactivity scores; more likely to drop out of school and to face poor employment prospects; twice as likely to have delayed vocabulary scores; more likely to have low math scores, and more likely to have friends who are frequently in trouble.”

Some provincial and community partners in Campaign 2000 produce provincial and local report cards on child poverty. For more information, contact Liyu Guo at Campaign 2000, c/o Family Service Association, 355 Church Street, Toronto, ON, M5B 1Z8. Tel: 416-595-9230, x 244, Fax: 416-595-0242, E-mail: liyuguo@web.net, Website: www.campaign2000.ca

Organizational Resources

Fundraising Ideas that Work for Grassroots Groups

Here's what you will learn in this full-text on-line guidebook:

- solid advice on fundraising and on how to avoid major errors
- sources to help you do additional research if you need to
- techniques adapted with grass-roots groups in mind
- advice from professional fundraisers (and professional fundgivers) who work regularly with grass-roots and social change organizations

Check it out at
www.nald.ca/FULLTEXT/heritage/ComPartnE/Fr4gras1.htm

Tips and Tools for Developing and Delivering an Online Workshop – Report on the Online Workshop on Board-Staff Relations



Community Literacy of Ontario (CLO) planned and delivered this electronic workshop in cooperation with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs,

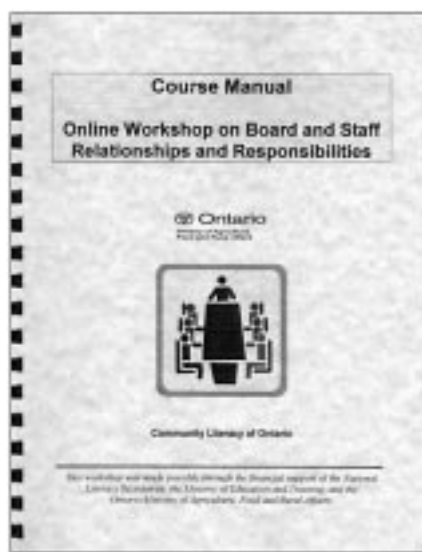
using the AlphaPlus conferencing system. It was delivered over a two month period last winter. 75 people participated, taking an average of 8 hours

to complete the workshop. All 30 of those who completed the workshop evaluation said that they would take another online workshop!

This report will be very useful for others who want to try delivering training in this way. It is full of tips—for creating a welcoming environment, for effective facilitation, for encouraging

discussion, and for technical matters.

CLO also produced the course manual for the workshop in hard copy. There are modules covering board/staff relationships and roles, legal issues



for organizations, policy and management, models of board governance, building a shared vision, effective communications, and staff reporting / board monitoring.

For more information on this workshop and the printed materials, contact Community Literacy of Ontario, 80 Bradford Street, Suite 508, Barrie, ON, L4N 6S7. Tel: 7005-733-2312, Fax: 705-733-6197, E-mail: kaattari@bconnex.net, website: www.nald.ca/volman.htm

New Draft Guide on Community Economic Development from Revenue Canada

This guide deals with the evolving field of community economics and has implications for registered charities engaged in business that serves to provide employment or training opportunities. According to the draft, CED is a

mix of economic and social purposes. Economic development and commercial activities are undertaken to achieve social goals such as the relief of poverty and the empowerment of the community, while social goals, such as the advancement of education, are undertaken to develop the local economy. Revenue Canada defines a community economic development program as charitable if it deals with the needs of the hard-to-employ or the employment needs of any other group whose members are living below the poverty line.

"Many CED activities qualify as charitable programs and many fall into a grey area. Charitable purposes are determined by who benefits and the nature of the benefit provided. Relieving and preventing unemployment is a charitable purpose under the concept of relieving poverty and being beneficial to the community, however, providing employment is not a charitable purpose in its own right"

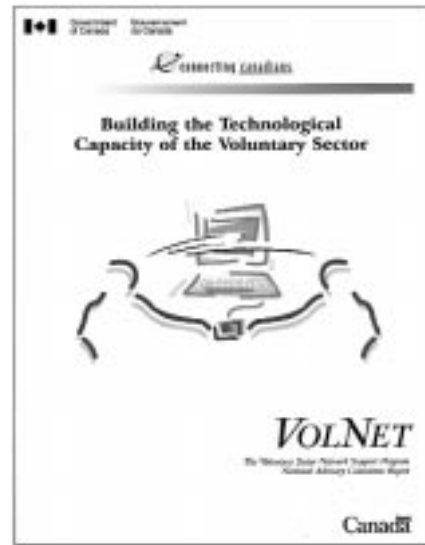
Revenue Canada is looking for feedback on the draft and will accept comments until June 30. The draft document is on the internet at www.rc.gc.ca/charities under "draft publications for public comment". If you do not have internet access you can telephone the Charities Division at 613-954-0410. (Source: *Community Action, Canada's Community Service Newspaper*, March 15, 1999.)

Coalition of Neighbourhood Centres Outcome Evaluation Initiative Summary Report

The CNC, a network of over 50 neighbourhood centres across Ontario, has been searching out and developing evaluation models and instruments to help community-based non-profit service organizations specify and measure the outcomes of their work. "The materials presented should help agencies focus more precisely on how, and in what circumstances, outcome-based evaluation might be used to support their evaluation goals. We hope as well that the report will further the efforts of staff, community members, supporters, and funding partners as they work together to develop practical and

effective methods for evaluating the impact of community services in people's lives." We found this online at www.interlog.com/~cnc/ but printed copies are available at cost from Davenport-Perth Neighbourhood Centre in Toronto, Tel: 416-656-1264, E-mail: rhowarth@interlog.com

Building the Technological Capacity of the Voluntary Sector



The Voluntary Sector Support Network Program (VolNet) is a new federal government program which aims to help 100,000 voluntary organizations get

online by March 2001. It is part of the government's "Connecting Canadians" initiative, which aims to make the information highway accessible to all Canadians in the new millennium. A network of up to 30 community-based VolNet delivery agencies will be set up to provide Internet connectivity, computer equipment, support and skills development to organizations that don't yet have these tools. To obtain *Building the Technological Capacity of the Voluntary Sector* or the *VolNet Delivery Agency Proposal Guide*, or to get more information, contact VolNet at Tel: 1-800-575-9200, E-mail: volnet@ic.gc.ca, Website: www.volnet.org

CharityVillage

"Canada's supersite for the non-profit sector—more than 2000 pages of news, jobs, information and resources for executives, staffers, donors and volunteers." www.charityvillage.com

Summer Literacy Training Institutes

Literacy and Technology: Can less be more?

June 27–30, 1999, Montreal, Quebec.

“Over three and a half days, participants will listen and respond to Canadian, American and British example of technology use in ABE and literacy. We will look at state-of-the-art systems and locally-cobbled models of technology use, and reflect on the possibilities or problems associated with them. The Institute is highly collaborative. Those who register become presenters if they wish. ... The Institute’s program is built around participants’ interests / problems. Part of each day is set aside to discuss and reflect on these interests or problems and to receive feedback from colleagues. ... Research can be done after 3 pm ... in the resource centre which houses one of the most extensive collections of documents and materials in the country (including) ... a preview service for software.” A participants’ listserv is being set up to identify issues and initiate discussions that can continue face-to-face at the institute.

Fees: \$350.00 includes materials, continental breakfast, refreshments, lunches. For more information, contact The Centre for Literacy, Tel: 514-931-8731 X1415, Fax: 514-931-5181, E-mail: literacycntr@dawsoncollege.qc.ca, website: www.nald.ca/litcent.htm

Family Literacy Summer Institute

July 18–24, Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, BC.

Workshops planned include:


- “Investing in Our Future”
(a ‘train the trainer’ workshop)
- “Early Childhood Program Development—
Hand, Mind and Heart”
- “Research and Documentation Strategies for
Family Literacy Practitioners”
- “Best Practices in Family Literacy in BC”
- “Creating a Strategic Plan for Family Literacy”
- “Facilitating Adult Learning”
- “Brain Mapping and Its Implications for People
with Dyslexia and Other Learning Disabilities”

For more information, contact Jean Rasmussen, Literacy BC, 622-5510 West Hastings Street, Vancouver, BC, V6B 1L8.

Tel: 604-684-0624, Fax: 604-684-8520,
E-mail: jrasmussen@hubcap.mlnet.com

Remember to visit the other
side of literacy.ca on the
World Wide Web at:

www.literacy.ca

Movement for Canadian Literacy  **WHAT'S NEW!**

Let updated on April 26, 1999

Movement for Canadian Literacy (MCL) is a national non-profit organization representing literacy associations, organizations, and individuals from every province and territory.

MCL Discussion Page (AlphaPlus)

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E-mail: nald@literacy.ca

Guestbook

- About MCL
- Membership
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- Literacy and ...
- Learners Advisory Network
- Literacy Action Day

Phone # 002847