



## Our Development as a Profession: *What Will It Take?*



**I**t's been over two years since [literacy.ca](http://www.literacy.ca) first highlighted "professionalizing the field", and while the issue is more crucial than ever, there has been little movement. This lack of progress comes as no surprise in one of the few industrialized countries with no national strategy for adult literacy. Some Canadian jurisdictions have tried to develop broader training systems to establish and recognize literacy

work as a legitimate profession, with varying degrees of success. Literacy workers are hungry for ongoing professional development, yet most lack the time and opportunities to work on their own learning. As we push for a comprehensive Pan-Canadian literacy strategy it is important to stress that the strategy must include a framework for developing and supporting our human resources. ...→

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## *Be part of MCL's Fall Outreach Campaign*



Connect with your political representatives.  
Online resources at [www.literacy.ca](http://www.literacy.ca).

More information on why the time is now on [page 14!](#)



Your responses to the draft National Literacy Action Agenda confirmed the need “to develop the literacy field as a profession, with employment standards, opportunities for professional development for staff and volunteers, standards for certification of literacy workers, ways of sharing new knowledge and best practices, adequate compensation, and increased social recognition”.



*A “one size fits all” professional development system won’t work, as literacy is delivered by many different sectors, through many different approaches, to many distinct client groups.*

However, there are models both inside and outside the country that we can learn from. Within Canada, the Teachers of English as a Second Language (ESL) national certification model includes recognition of prior experience as well as a commitment to ongoing development. Some provinces have explored systems to support and train literacy workers, although most of these have stalled on the way to implementation.



For the sake of reflection, here are some possible elements of a strategy for developing the literacy field as a profession:

- 1 Compile a comprehensive inventory of literacy practitioner education and training opportunities across the country.
- 2 Conduct a sectoral study to develop a current occupational profile (i.e. jobs, workers, working conditions).
- 3 Analyse trends in the environment and learner characteristics to identify training needs for literacy workers in the future, and develop and/or revise training programs (at universities, colleges, and literacy organizations) to ensure that they address ongoing and emerging needs and issues.



- 4 Make available regular opportunities for literacy workers (paid and volunteer) to upgrade their knowledge and skills. Ensure that these opportunities are affordable and in-depth enough to make a real impact on teaching and learning. Create professional development formats that include conferences, workshops, reflection and inquiry groups, and distance learning opportunities.
- 5 Develop ways to make literacy research available and accessible to literacy workers and volunteers.

- 6 Create national standards and provincial mechanisms for certification of literacy workers, which recognize formal and non-formal qualifications including the special expertise of those already working in the field.
- 7 Make literacy workers' salaries and benefits commensurate with credentials, experience and responsibilities and on a par with other education professionals.
- 8 Promote the norm for all literacy workers to have time to read, learn, reflect, network, and engage in advocacy related to their work if they so desire.
- 9 Ensure a strong collective voice for the literacy field (profession!) in the development of

national and provincial government literacy policies and frameworks.



Looking at the action suggestions above, we can see that most are tasks not for government but for our field (although governments may provide funding). In fact, some of this is already being addressed through literacy coalitions and networks.



Others could be taken up by programs, researchers, or national organizations such as MCL.



*Beyond training and accreditation, developing as a profession involves networking and exchange, continually building our knowledge base (individually and collectively), acquiring the tools and resources to demonstrate our results and build broader credibility, seeing ourselves as a profession, and building a strong collective voice. And all this directly affects our effectiveness in advancing our cause.*



Your thoughts on these issues are important. Please discuss them with your colleagues and feel free to write to us at [mcl@literacy.ca](mailto:mcl@literacy.ca).



Photos taken by Judy Murphy at the Institute for Research in Practice in Adult Literacy held in St. John's, NL (June 2003). MCL appreciates permission to reproduce them as photo illustrations. For more information on this event check [www.nald.ca/ripal](http://www.nald.ca/ripal).

## Training in Canada's Non-profit Organizations



Reprinted from the  
Canadian Public Research Networks (CPRN)  
e-digest, March 2003.

Non-profits today deliver services once delivered by governments. Demands on their resources have increased while their funding base has been squeezed by public sector retrenchment. And there is some evidence that the volunteers they count on are not as numerous as they once were. In this context it is critical that workers in the non-profit sector receive the training and develop the skills they need to cope with this changing environment and added responsibilities. But how well is the non-profit sector doing at training its workforce?

A pioneering study from CPRN is the first step in answering that question. *Skills and Training in the Non-profit Sector*, by researchers Kathryn McMullen and Grant Schellenberg, is the third in a series of reports on Canada's non-profit sector drawing on data from Statistics Canada.

Canada's non-profit sector employs almost 900,000 workers. That's about the same as the paid workforce in Newfoundland, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick combined, or that of the country's construction, mining and oil and gas industries. The wages and salaries of non-profits amount to about \$22 billion a year.

More than half the employees in the non-profit sector say the overall skill requirements of their jobs, as well as their technological complexity, have increased. It's not surprising, then, that non-profit employers (70%) regard increasing employee skills as a priority. The authors highlight several encouraging signs of the commitment to training within the sector and find that the non-profit sector compares well with the for-profit sector.

They do however point out that information on the incidence of training is only part of the story. Research is needed to provide a complete picture of training in the sector such as determining the

quality and relevance of the training and whether employees have the opportunity and support they need to put what they learn to use. In particular, they call for more detail on the specialized skill needs and appropriate training responses of different sub-sectors among non-profit organizations.

To access or download a copy of the report, go to [www.cprn.org](http://www.cprn.org).

## Further Learning Opportunities for Literacy Workers: What's Available?

Current training and development opportunities for literacy practitioners are as varied and diverse as the individuals who do literacy work. The following is a listing of some of the learning options which have been useful to some of Canada's literacy workers. It is important to remember that valuable learning resources are always available through the National Adult Literacy Database (NALD) at [www.nald.ca](http://www.nald.ca) and through AlphaPlus Centre at [www.alphaplus.ca](http://www.alphaplus.ca). And your provincial/territorial literacy coalition is always an important starting point for finding out about learning opportunities.

### Within Canada

#### Association Management Education (AME)



program provides management development courses, delivered at a graduate level for those working with a non-profit organization.

Earn your designation as a Certified Association Executive (CAE) by taking five online courses plus 5 years of experience. More information at [www.csae.com](http://www.csae.com) (under Learning programs > AME program).

#### The Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) runs



courses across the country, often in conjunction with provincial federations of labour, for workplace literacy instructors and peer tutors (known as

“guides”). Courses focus on clear language, union-based literacy, worker-centred curriculum and more. For more information, contact the CLC at tel: 613-521-3400 or email:

[clcliteracy@clc-ctc.ca](mailto:clcliteracy@clc-ctc.ca) or visit [www.clc-ctc.ca](http://www.clc-ctc.ca).

**Laubach Literacy of Canada (LLC)** has been



working to enhance its training system for volunteer tutors and the experienced volunteers who train them. There are national guidelines and a full trainer certification process. Find out more by calling 1-888-248-2898 or check [www.laubach.ca](http://www.laubach.ca).

The **National Foundational Training in Family Literacy** has been delivered in several locations across the country to over dozens of practitioners but recently an online version of the course was piloted in Ontario. The intensive training took place from January to June 2003 and the 21 participants from diverse community literacy agencies across the province graduated in June. Community Literacy of Ontario, known for its expertise in delivering online training to literacy workers, partnered with the Centre for Family Literacy in Alberta to bring the nationally-recognized training to Ontario through cyberspace. Each of the six modules was four hours in length and was augmented by rigorous self-study, homework assignments and supplementary readings. The feedback for this type of learning experience was overwhelmingly positive. For more information on the national foundational training, contact the Centre for Family Literacy at [www.familit.ca](http://www.familit.ca) or contact Community Literacy of Ontario at [www.nald.ca/clo.htm](http://www.nald.ca/clo.htm) for information on their online teaching/learning experiences.

Three of **Ontario's Community Colleges** offer the Adult Literacy Educator (ALE) certificate program. Currently a three-year project is under way to revise, update and enhance the modules for a

variety of learning modes, including distance education. While specific to the Ontario context, the online courses are also applicable for practitioners outside the province.

- At **Algonquin College** (Ottawa), contact Judy Bernstein at tel: 613-727-4723 or email: [bernstj@algonquincollege.com](mailto:bernstj@algonquincollege.com) or visit [www.algonquincollege.com](http://www.algonquincollege.com).
- At **Conestoga College** (Waterloo), contact Anne Ramsey at tel: 519-570-3054 or email: [projread@golden.net](mailto:projread@golden.net) or visit [www.conestogac.on.ca](http://www.conestogac.on.ca).
- At **Sault College** (Sault Ste. Marie), contact Pat Gibbons at [pat.gibbons@saultc.on.ca](mailto:pat.gibbons@saultc.on.ca) or check [www.saultc.on.ca](http://www.saultc.on.ca) (click on Programs then on Language & Communications).

**Ontario Institute for Studies in Education**

(OISE) at the University of Toronto now has online literacy courses. Contact Nancy Jackson at tel: 416-923-6641, ext. 2440 or [njackson@oise.utoronto.ca](mailto:njackson@oise.utoronto.ca).

**St. Francis Xavier University** in Nova Scotia offers a self-directed distance education Master of Adult Education program. Students design their program around an area of interest which can include literacy. For more information visit [www.stfx.ca/academic/adulted](http://www.stfx.ca/academic/adulted) or contact Angela or Denise at tel: 902-867-3952.

The **University of Victoria**, Division of Continuing Studies offers a Certificate in Adult and Continuing Education (CACE). Courses can be taken by distance and on site. For information tel: 250-721-8944 or register online at [www.uvcs.uvic.ca/csie/cace](http://www.uvcs.uvic.ca/csie/cace).

Many of the **Volunteer Centres** across Canada offer seminars on volunteer management and custom-made board development workshops. For a complete listing check the directory at [www.volunteer.ca](http://www.volunteer.ca). ...→

## *Share what you know for future newsletters!*

This is not an exhaustive list of training and development opportunities so help us build a more complete listing of what might be of interest and available to other literacy practitioners. Please send your information and experiences to the Editor, Fiona Murray, tel: 613-563-2464 or [fiona@literacy.ca](mailto:fiona@literacy.ca). These will also be posted under the “Links” section on MCL’s website at [www.literacy.ca](http://www.literacy.ca).

## Outside Canada

The award-winning website, **Concept to Classroom** is a Disney learning partnership that offers free online workshops on a range of topics such as multiple intelligences, collaborative learning, using the web for learning. Ideal for educators. Go to [www.thirteen.org/edonline/concept2class/index.html](http://www.thirteen.org/edonline/concept2class/index.html).



The US-based **National Institute for Literacy** (NIFL) has the Literacy Information and Communications System (LINCS) which sometimes offers online professional development opportunities, free of charge. Check the Programs and Activities section of [www.easternlincs.org](http://www.easternlincs.org).

**Penn State's World Campus** (a virtual campus) offers the Masters of Education (M.Ed.) in Adult Education program online. For information contact [www.worldcampus.psu.edu](http://www.worldcampus.psu.edu) (click on Programs, then on Adult Education).

UNESCO's Institute for Education is now in the process of developing a website called the **Literacy Exchange: World Resources on Literacy**. Part of this project is to gather and present materials and resources from different countries (note: Canada's information is not posted yet!). The site also features a new online course for educators and practitioners. The Literacy and Basic Adult Learning course is aimed at those interested in improving their skills in the preparation of strategies and contents for literacy programs and projects. Check it all out at [www.literacyexchange.net](http://www.literacyexchange.net).



## Research

### *Learning from the Swedes: Preliminary Findings*

A University of Saskatchewan research team is studying what contributes to Sweden's success in improving adult literacy and how we can put that information into practice in Canada.

The three-year (2002-04) project was awarded \$145,000 through a federal (SSHRC) grant and research stipend to the team of Keith Walker, Angela Ward and Nayda Veeman. Sweden is of interest to the researchers since it had the highest ranking in literacy scores in the 1994 International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS). Here are some of the preliminary observations that were reported to the Parliamentary Standing Committee for consideration:

- ▶ **Adult education has been a priority** for Sweden's government for a long time. National guidelines and funding for adult education have been provided to all municipalities throughout Sweden since 1957.
- ▶ **\$507 million new funding** was allocated by the national government of Sweden annually for five years (1992-2002), approximately \$56 per Swede. In Canada the National Literacy Secretariat receives approximately \$28 million annually, or less than \$1 per Canadian citizen.
- ▶ **All basic education is provided through the formal system** (no voluntary sector delivery). The staff of municipal adult education programs are unionized and this system has existed since 1967, although it is beginning to change.
- ▶ **A centre for training of adult educators** at Linköping University provides both research and academic training for practitioners. Whereas in Canada there is no comparable post-secondary system for adult educators.

- ▶ **National funding** is provided to voluntary organizations for coordination and delivery of study circles at the local level. Estimates indicate that 50% of the population participates in any given year; with participation greater in rural areas than in major urban centres.
- ▶ **Priority** in allocation of municipal adult education funds **is given to those with least education.**
- ▶ **The Swedish government subsidizes newspapers** and complimentary copies are found on public transportation and are well read by passengers.
- ▶ **Trade unions in Sweden play a major role** in ensuring training for employed (and unemployed) union workers. In 1988, 86% of Swedish workers were unionized compared to 36% of Canadian workers. This helped to ensure retraining for a large percentage of the Swedish workforce through paid leave and labour market training courses.
- ▶ **One year study leave was available to all workers**, starting in 1974; in 1992 this was expanded to include basic education as well as more direct vocational training.

Once the team has found some answers, MCL will help put that information into action. Regional focus groups will be formed to discuss the findings and determine the best way to incorporate the information into Canadian policy. The team will consult with policy-makers across Canada, develop a website to provide ongoing information about the study, organize a virtual conference, present papers at national and international conferences, and prepare a book with findings from the study.

For information contact Kathryn Warden at tel: 306-966-2506 or email: [kathryn.warden@usask.ca](mailto:kathryn.warden@usask.ca).

## ***IALSS Progress Report: Data Collection Now Finished***

The International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey (IALSS) staff at Statistics Canada have been busy in the past year working on the Canadian component of the survey that will update the last IALSS done in 1994.



A national base sample was set however many of the provinces and territories provided funding for supplemental data collection. The team targeted and contacted over 39,000 Canadians for sampling. In August, all data collection was completed with a response rate of 69.2%. Understandably Canada presents huge challenges and costs compared to some of the other countries involved in the survey. Professional interviewers travel great distances to meet with respondents for approximately two hours of individualized testing. The team is optimistic that they will be able to meet the international deadline date of October 15, 2003 for submitting Canadian statistics. The release of the international comparative data is scheduled for Fall 2004 while the Canadian national data and reports are expected in 2005.

To stay up to date with the survey's progress, go to the Education Testing Service website at [www.ets.org/all/](http://www.ets.org/all/) and follow the links. Any inquiries and questions should be directed to Jean Pignall at tel: 613-951-3317 or email: [pignjea@statcan.ca](mailto:pignjea@statcan.ca). He would also like to receive your local and regional press coverage related to the survey.

## **First Steps: Towards a National Literacy Electronic Conferencing System**

*“I think essentially the literacy community wants to be able to talk to each other nationally — we want to be able to find those areas of commonality coast to coast — as well as appreciate the differences.”*

*First Steps Research Participant, 2003*

In September 2002, the First Steps partners began to research the potential for creating a pan-Canadian electronic conferencing system that would meet the literacy community's needs for communication and collaboration from coast to coast. The initial phase of the research is now complete and a preliminary analysis of the findings indicates that a nationwide system would prove useful and enriching for the literacy community and make a significant contribution to the field.

The research, by an independent consulting company, investigated both user and technical requirements. Individual interviews and focus groups took place with 52 people from across the country, including instructors, administrators, learners and government representatives. One focus group was conducted in French among members of the francophone literacy community. In addition, an online survey was posted on the project website and received 192 responses.

Almost all research respondents expressed their belief in the potential of electronic conferencing to help them be better informed and more efficient in their work. Citing “lack of time” as the biggest current barrier to participation, they identified the features they want a national system to include:

- Web access
- a user-friendly interface that is attractive and appealing but not too “fancy”
- fast connection speeds
- content that is well-facilitated, moderated and filtered
- information and services that are well-organized and classified

A full report of the findings will be distributed in Fall 2003. For more information, visit the project website at [www.nald.ca/firststeps/](http://www.nald.ca/firststeps/) or contact a member of the First Steps Steering Committee:

- Linda Mitchell, Executive Director, Literacy BC, [lmitchell@literacy.bc.ca](mailto:lmitchell@literacy.bc.ca)
- Charles Ramsey, Executive Director, National Adult Literacy Database, [ramseyc@nald.ca](mailto:ramseyc@nald.ca)
- Chantal Samuel, Acting Executive Director, Centre AlphaPlus Centre, [csamuel@alphaplus.ca](mailto:csamuel@alphaplus.ca)
- Marnie Schaetti, Executive Leadership Team, Literacy Alberta, [marnie\\_schaetti@eLit.ca](mailto:marnie_schaetti@eLit.ca)

# First Steps

### *The “First Steps” partners:*



Centre AlphaPlus Centre,  
[www.alphaplus.ca](http://www.alphaplus.ca)



eLit.ca,  
[www.eLit.ca](http://www.eLit.ca)



The Hub,  
[www.literacy.bc.ca](http://www.literacy.bc.ca)  
(click on Electronic Conferencing Network)



The National Adult Literacy Database (NALD),  
[www.nald.ca](http://www.nald.ca)



The Northwest Territories Literacy Council,  
[www.nwt.literacy.ca](http://www.nwt.literacy.ca)  
(click on *North of 60* electronic conferencing system)

## Update on Salaries and Benefits in Community-based Literacy Agencies



In January 2003, Community Literacy of Ontario (CLO) conducted a survey of Ontario's community literacy agencies. 63% of all the agencies

responded. Here are the findings from the **Salaries and Benefits** section of the survey:

Position of Executive Director  
or other management position  
Average hourly wage = \$21.44

Position of Program Coordinator  
or Student-Tutor Coordinator  
Average hourly wage = \$17.87

Position of Administrative Assistant or Secretary  
Average hourly wage = \$13.66

Position of Paid Instructor  
Average hourly wage = \$17.08

### Staff Benefits

- 38% of agencies provide health and dental benefits
- 9% of agencies provide employer RSP contributions
- 9% of agencies provide a pension plan
- 31% of agencies provide long-term disability insurance
- 28% of agencies provide life insurance
- 6% of agencies provide their staff with a percentage of their salaries in lieu of benefits
- 57% of agencies do NOT provide ANY health, dental or pension benefits to their staff
- 49% of agencies close with pay during the Christmas holidays
- In 49% of agencies, staff receive additional vacation (beyond the standard 4%/two weeks).

This CLO study follows the 2001 report, *The Level of Pay, Benefits, and Working Conditions of Literacy*



Employees of the Anglophone Community in Ontario, by the Ontario Literacy Coalition (OLC).

Details of that survey are online at [www.on.literacy.ca](http://www.on.literacy.ca). The findings highlighted poor working conditions among the literacy workers sampled. The OLC study showed a wide disparity in wages, benefits and working conditions among the various literacy sectors (colleges, school boards, community-based programs, etc.). The report also indicated that when asked, over half the respondents stated that they were not satisfied with their wage, feeling that they were overworked and lacking adequate compensation for their efforts.

### Input Needed for e-Learning Project

The ABC CANADA Foundation has initiated a research project called *Linking Literacy and e-Learning*. It will be carried out by FuturEd Inc. over the next 1.5 years. The overall purpose is to explore the application of e-learning in literacy programs with a view to continuously improving e-learning and literacy practices and policies. The research will balance the perspectives of learners/clients and programs and will result in e-learning tools and suggestions for use by literacy practitioners, learners and leaders.

### e-Learning: using a computer and the Internet for teaching and learning

In the first part of the project, data is being gathered to create an inventory of existing e-learning applications within adult literacy programming in family, workplace, institutional, community and First Nations contexts in Canada. Both assisted instruction and independent learning apply. Researchers are requesting information on any literacy programs that use computers and the internet for teaching and learning.

Please send information to [maxine.adam@futuresd.com](mailto:maxine.adam@futuresd.com).



## Resources

### From Grass Roots Press



Grass Roots Press

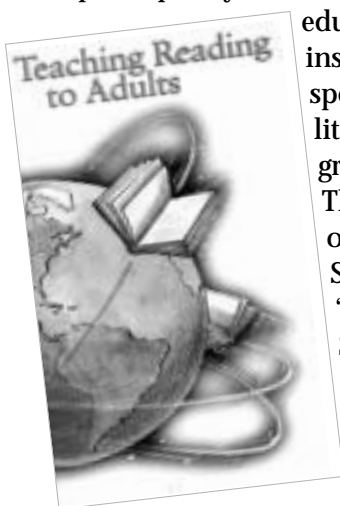
"The roots of adult literacy practitioners and students"

The following materials are available from

Grass Roots Press. Call 1-888-303-3213 or visit [www.literacyservices.com](http://www.literacyservices.com) to find out about other great training resources for literacy tutors and practitioners.

### Teaching Reading to Adults

Described by practitioners as "essential," "valuable" and "a must-read, must-buy, must-use reference," this is a professional development package for educators who want to deepen their theoretical and practical knowledge about reading assessment and instruction. The book's chapters on reading theory, assessment, word recognition strategies, comprehension strategies and teaching in a participatory context will benefit adult basic education and ESL



instructors, reading specialists, administrators, literacy coordinators and graduate students alike. The accompanying videos on "Word Recognition Strategies" and "Comprehension Strategies" are ideal tutor training resources. The entire package costs \$225 but materials can be purchased separately.

### Literacy Volunteer Resources

This comprehensive training package for trainers working with volunteer tutors is described as the "crème de la crème of training resources." In the trainer's manual, you'll find everything you need to customize a training program for literacy tutors. *Literacy Volunteer Resources* (cost \$64.95) is an excellent accompaniment to *Handbook for Literacy Tutors* (cost \$39.95).

### Supplemental Training for Practitioners in Literacy Education (STAPLE)

STAPLE is a comprehensive, flexible, professional development program that can be used to supplement tutor training. Practitioners can work through STAPLE independently using this multimedia program which has received an award for excellence in instructional design. Tests are available for each module and certificates of completion are awarded to those who successfully complete each test. Volume One costs \$99.95 and Volume Two costs \$79.95 with additional costs for each test.

### Frontier College Tutor's Handbook

Frontier College's newest guide for literacy tutors working one-to-one with adults. Full of practical suggestions including information for working with specific needs such as prison inmates, street youth and people with disabilities. Cost \$19.95.

### Roadmap on Learning Disabilities for Employers



The Learning Disabilities Association of Canada (LDAC) is pleased to announce the publication of a new book and accompanying video called *Roadmap on Learning Disabilities for Employers*. This

resource includes best practices and approaches for assessment, disclosure and accommodation that employers have found helpful and also provides ways for employers to enhance the productivity of their employees with LD. The package includes the book, video and a CD audio recording of the book for \$60.00. For ordering details, contact LDAC at tel: 613-238-5721 or online at [www.ldac-taac.ca](http://www.ldac-taac.ca).

## The Learning Centre

The Learning Centre is a small program-based press specializing in: research in practice, participatory approaches, women learning, and writing by and for people in literacy programs. To view some of their research in practice publications, go to: [www.nald.ca/ripal/online.htm](http://www.nald.ca/ripal/online.htm) or to request a catalogue with all their current listings, contact [learningcentre@shawcable.com](mailto:learningcentre@shawcable.com) or tel: 780-429-0675.

## Clear Communications



The Government of Canada's Communication Department has just released a useful clear language tool kit, available in both English and French. Originally designed to assist government communicators and managers to better communicate, it will also be helpful for anyone wishing to be more clear, accessible and inclusive in their messages. The kit, *Successful Communication: Literacy and You* contains a good overview as well as principles, practical techniques, and case studies, in both print and CD-ROM. In response to the research done by the Canada Information Office in 2000, the federal government has been concerned about better communicating with the almost half of all Canadians who have low literacy skills. The kit is intended as an evolving first step and will be updated as required.

To order your copy or to share comments and suggestions, contact Communication Canada at tel: 613-992-6906 or email: [info@communication.gc.ca](mailto:info@communication.gc.ca).

And don't forget to check out NALD's new online Directory of Plain/Clear communications service providers at [www.nald.ca](http://www.nald.ca).

## CONNECT Publication Launches a New Website



Connect is Canada's resource publication on technology and adult literacy. They are happy to announce the launch of their new and updated website at [www.nald.ca/connect.htm](http://www.nald.ca/connect.htm). Here you can access free online issues of past and current CONNECT volumes. The newest feature is a search tool that allows you to quickly select articles of interest to you based on title, dates, author, keyword or subject. If you have questions about recommended software, you can now find a list of what's been reviewed by doing a search on the subject of "software reviews." This feature also works for the archived articles on website reviews, lesson plans and technical tips.



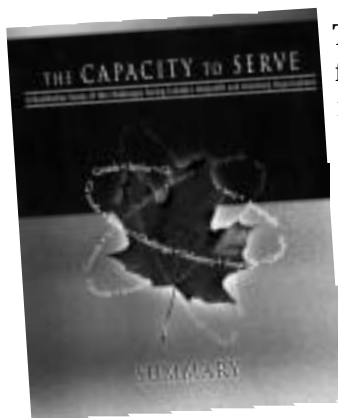
## Literacy for Independent Living

Literacy for Independent Living (LIL) is the first bilingual and centralized online library that houses useful literacy information and resources for people working with adult learners with disabilities. It includes information on assistive devices and disability awareness.

LIL is a project of the Canadian Association of Independent Living Centres (CAILC). Their goal is to continue developing the website as they encourage and support better networking between the literacy and disability communities. Check it out at [www.cailc.ca/lil/](http://www.cailc.ca/lil/).

## Non-Profit Sector Issues and Resources

### *The Capacity to Serve*



The results are in! The first phase of a two-year research initiative called the National Survey of Nonprofit and Voluntary Organizations is a new report entitled *The Capacity to Serve: A Qualitative Study of the Challenges Facing Canada's Nonprofit and Voluntary Organizations*.

It is a first step in documenting the strengths and challenges faced by these organizations. The findings will come as little surprise to those in the literacy field. The report suggests ways to strengthen and build capacity among non-profit and voluntary organizations. These include developing:

- improved funding models
- more appropriate models of financial accountability
- improved approaches to recruit and manage today's volunteers
- new strategies to reduce competition and increase cooperation among organizations
- better strategies for organizations to provide training for staff and volunteers
- improved public and media awareness of the value of nonprofit and voluntary organizations.

Statistics Canada was commissioned to do this qualitative research by the Voluntary Sector Initiative (a joint effort of the federal government and the voluntary sector). The next phase will be a quantitative assessment of the size and scope of the sector, due in Spring 2004. Both the report and the Summary are available free of charge at [www.nonprofitscan.ca](http://www.nonprofitscan.ca).

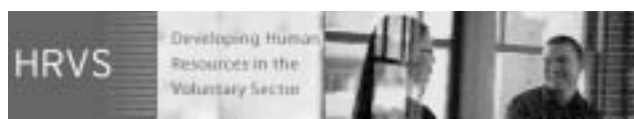
### *Developing Human Resources in the Voluntary Sector (HRVS)*

The goal of the HRVS project is to strengthen the capacity of organizations in the voluntary sector to attract, support and keep skilled and

committed employees through the development of human resources. Practical tools are now available at the new website: [www.hrvs.ca](http://www.hrvs.ca).

As a work-in-progress, this is the kind of website you will want to bookmark and check regularly for new resources and features. You are also encouraged to contribute any relevant information. You'll find information about:

- good practices in human resources in the voluntary sector
- sample HR policies & procedures
- information about employment legislation, benefits and retirement
- hiring and managing competent staff
- current courses and training opportunities
- communications materials to help you promote the importance of good human resources practices to Boards of Directors.



For more information on this project, check out the website at [www.hrvs.ca](http://www.hrvs.ca) or contact: Kirstin Beardsley, Project Assistant, Developing Human Resources in the Voluntary Sector (HRVS), Community Foundations of Canada, at tel: 613-236-2664.

### *National Directors' and Officers' Liability Insurance Program*

In order to assist organizations and protect volunteer board members, Volunteer Canada is pleased to announce a national Directors' and Officers' Liability Insurance Program (DOLI) available to all non-profit organizations and particularly targeted at those with budgets under \$100,000. In partnership with Aon Reed Stenhouse and Encon, the national DOLI program offers two distinct liability insurance packages, depending on whether your organization's annual operating budget is under or over \$50,000. For more information, contact Volunteer Canada at [www.volunteer.ca](http://www.volunteer.ca).

## Leadership in the Voluntary Sector



Many literacy organizations are part of the voluntary sector. They are governed by a volunteer Board of Directors and use volunteers to help deliver programs. Working in the voluntary sector presents lots of challenges. Workers are dedicated to making a positive difference in the world, but are also challenged because of the complexity of their jobs, and because of quick changes in the funding and regulatory environments.

The National Learning Initiative (NLI), is working to help the voluntary sector to meet those challenges by enhancing the quality of education and training available for the voluntary sector. The NLI project is a joint project of the Coalition of National Voluntary Organizations and the Association of Canadian Community Colleges and is sponsored by the Voluntary Sector Initiative (VSI) Joint Capacity Table and funded through HRDC's Social Development Directorate. The first focus of the initiative is on leadership, particularly for senior staff of an organization. The central question for the project was: What makes leadership of a voluntary sector organization different from private or public sector leadership?

Through a series of five regional meetings with over 100 participants including leaders from the literacy sector, the project has identified the core competencies of today's voluntary sector leaders. The leaders who participated said that many things had changed in their operating environments over the past 10 years, and their jobs were much more complex now. Today's voluntary sector leaders must collaborate more, develop and nurture increasingly complex relationships and deal with multiple funding sources and diverse program partners. Their integrity and values are the bedrock for their actions as leaders.

Participants agreed that a good voluntary sector leader:

- ▶ helps effect social change
- ▶ collaborates well with others
- ▶ stays informed about relevant issues
- ▶ remains focussed on the organization's mission
- ▶ uses the skills of creativity, innovation and strategic thinking
- ▶ works toward change with care and ethical consideration
- ▶ manages effectively with tenacity and determination
- ▶ cares for self, is aware of limits, remains flexible and open-minded, and
- ▶ mentors, cares for, trusts and delegates to staff

Other core competencies can be grouped into four areas: complexity, vision & alliances, strategies & resource management, and relationships. These come in addition to the specific expertise and skills required for their field (i.e. literacy) and geographic context (i.e. provincial legislation and funding). For a full listing of the core competencies, please check the website at [www.nvo-onb.ca](http://www.nvo-onb.ca).

Specific resource materials are now being developed, based on the research. These include:

- brochure outlining the competencies, available in English and French
- plain language versions of the competencies, written at Grade 9 reading level, in both English and French
- learning objectives as a basis for curriculum development, based on the competencies
- sample position descriptions for senior staff positions
- sample performance evaluation tools for Boards to use in evaluating the work of their Executive Director or other senior staff person
- sample self-assessment tool for individuals interested in becoming an Executive Director.

For more information, or to be added to the electronic communications list, please contact Bev Suderman at [bsuderman@nvo-onb.ca](mailto:bsuderman@nvo-onb.ca).

## MCL Updates

### Literacy Action Fall Campaign



Plan to be involved as MCL continues to move the literacy agenda forward in Canada. The fall is always an important time to communicate literacy messages to political decision-makers with special dates like International Literacy Day (September 8), International Adult Learners' Week (September 7 – 13), and Literacy Action Day (October 23). This fall will also be critical as the bureaucrats and politicians alike focus on the recently

released Report of the Parliamentary Standing Committee, *Raising Adult Literacy Skills: The Need for a Pan-Canadian Response*, with its 21 strong recommendations. And with recent and upcoming elections at many levels in many jurisdictions, there are opportunities for us all to communicate with our elected representatives. To help you in your efforts MCL has developed online tools and resources for you to use and adapt at [www.literacy.ca](http://www.literacy.ca) (click on Literacy Action Campaign).

### Literacies Journal is Launched!

The long awaited literacy journal, *Literacies*, was officially launched in St. John's, NL in June, at the national gathering on Research in Practice. The publication, to be produced twice per year (spring and fall), is a forum for people to share ideas and experiences about how research and practice connect, and how each can inform the other.

MCL would like to extend deepest appreciation to Editor Tannis Atkinson, Editorial Assistant, Tracey Mollins as well as Tracy Westell and Jenny Horsman who were all critical in guiding the journal to becoming the promising publication

that it is. Thanks also to the National Literacy Secretariat (NLS) of Human Resources Development Canada for financial support.

In 2003, *Literacies* is free. Starting in Spring 2004, the journal will be available by subscription only. If you subscribe by October 1<sup>st</sup>, you can take advantage of the special introductory price.

If you haven't received your complimentary first issue and would like to be added to the mailing list please send an email to [journal@literacy.ca](mailto:journal@literacy.ca). For more information on the journal and how you can write articles, interview people, sit on editorial committees, contact Tannis Atkinson at [editor@literacyjournal.ca](mailto:editor@literacyjournal.ca) or visit [www.literacyjournal.ca](http://www.literacyjournal.ca).



### Adult Learners' Week

The Movement for Canadian Literacy has been a partner on UNESCO's committee for International Adult Learners' Week (ALW) which is held during the second week in September. This usually includes the September 8<sup>th</sup> International Literacy Day. Although in its second year and still evolving, ALW events have the potential to offer our field a great opportunity to showcase some of the good things happening in the literacy sector. ALW is the ideal time to promote lifelong learning and to include literacy on the continuum of adult learning. To ensure this happens we can all work with the provincial and territorial Ministers of Education who have pledged their support for the event, along with other learning partners such as libraries, learning centres, museums, employment and training agencies. To view UNESCO materials and get on the mailing list to receive next year's toolkit, go to [www.adultlearning.unesco.ca](http://www.adultlearning.unesco.ca).

## Tribute to Paul Gallagher



MCL's Executive Director Wendy DesBrisay with Paul Gallagher

The MCL Board and Staff are saddened to report that the BC representative to MCL's Board, Paul Gallagher, 73, passed away this spring. A well-known educator and advocate for educational reform, political change and lifelong learning, Paul had been involved with Literacy BC and MCL for several years. Paul is and will continue to be missed although we are fortunate to have benefited from his leadership and inspiration.

## Goodbye to Arlene



Learners Joel Maniapik, NU and Raymond Roy, MB with Arlene MacLowick

The MCL Staff and Board as well as the Learners Advisory Network (LAN) are sad to say good-bye to Arlene MacLowick who has worked part-time for MCL for the last three years (with full-time heart!) as the Coordinator of the Learners Advisory Network (LAN). Arlene has been responsible for providing support to the provincial learner reps who sit on the LAN and the MCL Board, as well as editing the Learners in Action newsletter. She also assisted learner representatives in preparing for events such as Literacy Action Day, Adult Learners Week, conferences and other public events. During

Arlene's time at MCL, she produced the Book of Changes (stories from learners across Canada), and numerous resources to support greater learner involvement at the provincial/territorial level. For more information on the work of the Learners Advisory Network, check out MCL's website at [www.literacy.ca](http://www.literacy.ca). Arlene has forged lasting relationships with and among Canadian learner leaders. Best of luck in your move to the West!

## Next issue

The deadline for the Fall issue of *literacy.ca* is November 3rd. Please submit your articles and ideas to the Editor, Fiona Murray, at [fiona@literacy.ca](mailto:fiona@literacy.ca).

## MCL Salutes

The 11<sup>th</sup> Edition of the Canada Post Literacy Awards has just announced the 2003 winners. MCL is proud to salute member coalition, PEI Literacy Alliance for winning in the category of Community Leadership. MCL also congratulates the many other inspiring winners and nominees. Watch for announcements in your community this fall or check [www.canadapost.ca](http://www.canadapost.ca) (under Newsroom).

## Members!



If you are an MCL member and are not receiving *Federal Literacy Facts* bulletins, please send an e-mail to [mcl@literacy.ca](mailto:mcl@literacy.ca) to let us know your e-mail address.

## New and Noteworthy

### **National Indigenous Literacy Association at Last!**

By Ningwakwe (*Rainbow Woman*)

In March 2003, the former National Aboriginal Design Committee (NADC) became incorporated as the National Indigenous Literacy Association (NILA). NILA had its first official Board Meeting at the Aboriginal Centre, Winnipeg, at which they elected their executive.



*Aboriginal Literacy team with Senator Fairbairn at Literacy Action Day 2003*

The NILA Board is as follows:

- President — Elder **Irene Jacques**, Dakota, Member, Standing Buffalo First Nation, now a resident of Fort Qu'Appelle, Saskatchewan, Vice-President, Saskatchewan Aboriginal Literacy Network;
- Vice-President — Learner Representative, **Rita Buffalo**, Anishnawbe, Literacy Program Coordinator, Thunder Bay Indian Friendship Centre, Member, Ontario Native Literacy Coalition;
- Secretary — **Rhonda McCorriston**, Metis, former Director of Education, Aboriginal People's College, currently Organization and Staff Development, Civil Service Commission, Winnipeg, Manitoba;
- Treasurer — **Nancy Cooper**, Metis, of Anishnawbe and Irish ancestry, Student, Masters Program, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education;
- Member — **Mary Koyina Richardson**, Dogrib,

Dogrib Language Curriculum Developer, Aurora College, Mowhi Community Learning Centre, Rae Edzo, Northwest Territories;

- Member — **Darrell Gerritts**, Cree, Manager, Curriculum Resource, Research and Development Centre, Bigstone Cree Education Authority, Bigstone Cree First Nation, Alberta;
- Member — **Edwina Wetzel**, Mi'kmaq, Director of Education, Conne River First Nation, Newfoundland.

What a beautiful message to send to the world that the Elder is the President, and that the Learner Representative is the Vice-President. As an organization based in the Aboriginal spiritual traditions, we continually seek guidance and direction from our Elders. We firmly believe that the Learner is the most important person in the program.

NILA incorporates as much of the Aboriginal spiritual traditions into its operations as possible, including Committee meetings. Each meeting begins with a prayer, usually done by a person from the area where the meeting was held. Often, the NADC Coordinator or one of the Committee Members sings a traditional song, in the language wherever possible, and using either a shaker or a drum. At times, we do an Aboriginal traditional dance to renew our energies after a discussion.

When NILA discusses an item of business, everyone is given an opportunity to speak, or to pass if that is their wish. In most cases, this is done in the Talking Circle manner; however, sometimes members speak up whenever they have something they want to share. The Coordinator keeps track of who has spoken, and gently reminds people who have already spoken several times that we need to hear from those who have not yet made their contribution.

**NILA's major accomplishments to date include:**

1. Hosting the first ever in Canada National Aboriginal Literacy Gathering (NALG), Nakoda Lodge, Morley, Alberta, April 2000.

2. Producing the “Position Paper on Aboriginal Literacy”, and presenting it to the federal government at Literacy Action Day, October 2002. This paper can be accessed in PDF at [www.nald.ca/fulltext/position/position/pdf](http://www.nald.ca/fulltext/position/position/pdf).

3. Ratifying a five-year Business Plan, March 2003. It is available in PDF from [douganderson@sympatico.ca](mailto:douganderson@sympatico.ca).

4. Making a presentation to the Standing Committee on Human Resource Development and Persons with Disabilities, February 2003. This presentation and the Position Paper resulted in a Roundtable on Aboriginal Literacy, March 2003. There is now an Aboriginal-specific section in the Standing Committee’s report entitled, *Raising Adult Literacy Skills: The Need for a Pan-Canadian Response*. This report is available through MCL’s website at [www.literacy.ca](http://www.literacy.ca).

5. Being asked to present at provincial/territorial, national and international conferences, the most recent of which is the International Conference on Language, Education and Diversity, November 26-29, 2003, University of Waikato, School of Education, Hamilton, New Zealand. This conference focuses on the impact of increased cultural and linguistic diversity at both national and supranational levels, and its consequences for the theory, policy and practices of language education. As such, the conference will provide an international forum that brings together the latest academic and policy discussions, and promotes critical debate, on the often complex interconnection between diversity and language education. For more information go to <http://www.led2003.ac.nz/>.

6. Entering into a strategic partnership with CESO Aboriginal Services (Canadian Executive Services Organization) around Aboriginal literacy curriculum development. Based on the Position Paper on Aboriginal Literacy, NILA will provide guidance and direction to CESO volunteers on this project. In turn, NILA has asked CESO to provide NILA with volunteers who will assist with organizational development.

NILA thanks the National Literacy Secretariat, the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and

Universities (MTCU) for their financial support of our initiatives. We thank the First Nations Technical Institute, Mohawks of Tyendinaga Territory, Ontario, and the Ontario Native Literacy Coalition, Owen Sound, Ontario, for being our financial sponsors during a crucial phase when we were laying the groundwork for the national organization. This was the consensus of participants in the NALG 2000. Most importantly, we thank the Creator whom we consciously and consistently involve in our endeavours.

## ***Literacy Alberta is Up and Running!***

*By Bonnie Hutchinson, Literacy Alberta Project Consultant*



Two Alberta literacy organizations have joined together to launch a new provincial literacy organization called Literacy Alberta. On April 1, 2003, the Alberta Association for Adult Literacy (AAAL) and Literacy Coordinators of Alberta (LCA) were officially amalgamated as one unified provincial literacy organization.

“Our members wanted to keep the services provided by both founding organizations, and add new initiatives which neither organization was doing,” comments Marnie Schaetti, a member of Literacy Alberta’s 2-person Executive Leadership Team. “When it came time for votes at the annual general meetings, the members voted overwhelmingly in favour of joining together to create a new organization.”

Candice Jackson, the other member of the Executive Leadership team adds, “Our members want Literacy Alberta to be a strong voice for literacy. They want a higher profile for literacy, and greater influence and support for literacy students and practitioners.”

The new Literacy Alberta board was elected by the first-ever mail-in vote. President Lois Polege says, “It’s exciting to be in at the beginning of an organization whose goal is to create a culture of learning and literacy. Our new logo reflects the vision that literacy soars.” ...→

The Literacy Alberta office has moved to a new address in Calgary, staffed by people from the two previous organizations. Literacy Alberta will continue core services such as the literacy coalition, Help Line, professional development, student support, regional literacy resource people, eLit (electronic communication network for literacy people) and provincial literacy conference. There will be new work to strengthen regional networks for students and practitioners, and to begin more systematic initiatives to increase the profile and influence of literacy and those involved with literacy. For more information, check out [www.literacy-alberta.ca](http://www.literacy-alberta.ca) or call 403-410-6990.

### ***Conference Board Provides Awards for Excellence in Workplace Literacy***



The Awards for Excellence in Workplace Literacy are designed to recognize and reward innovative and effective workplace education programs. "The goal is to find organizations that believe in offering their employees a chance to improve their skills in the workplace, as well as at home, to improve one's quality of life. We know that many Canadian companies excel in this area; we're here to recognize their achievements", says Michael Bloom, Director of Education and Learning, The Conference Board of Canada.

**Workplace literacy skills enable people to speak, write prose, and make better use of numbers and documents, so that they can work responsibly, alone or in teams.**

**Workplace literacy initiatives improve the abilities of organizations to provide high-quality goods and services, while they improve worker employability and, ultimately, the economic welfare of Canada.**

For the past six years The Conference Board of Canada has been honouring organizations that take their workplace learning programs above and beyond the call of duty. Award-winning organizations have consistently had outstanding

initiatives that enrich the lives of their employees. The 2003 Award winners are no exception:

#### ***Small Business Initiative***

##### **La Ronge Motor Hotel (La Ronge, SK)**

Located in a small northern Saskatchewan town, the hotel employs mostly First Nations people. In an effort to bring the level of customer service up to industry standards, the hotel first designed and produced a training video in First Nations languages and English. It then established an on site learning resource room for basic skills training and hired a First Nations literacy tutor.

#### ***Medium Business Initiative***

##### **J.D. Irving, Limited (Saint John, NB)**

In the fall of 1999, Administrative assistants at J.D. Irving, recognized that traditional secretarial skills did not match the information technology literacy requirements of contemporary business practices. To this end, the assistants designed a series of programs that would provide continuous in-house training and accreditation in current I.T. and e-business skills resulting in dramatic cost saving for the company.

#### ***Large Business Initiative***

##### **BHP Billiton Diamonds Inc. (Yellowknife, NT)**

Committed to building a sustainable Aboriginal and Northern workforce, the company chose not to screen for education for its entry-level positions. As a result, low literacy is prevalent in this section of its workforce. However, investing in the needs of its employees has proven to be a win-win situation for both employer and employee. Providing the opportunity to learn and enhance literacy skills has ensured a safer work environment and improved employability skills.

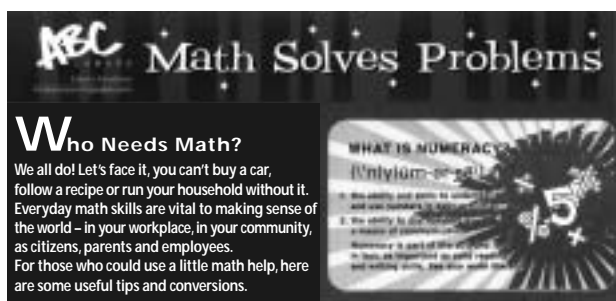
Sponsored by the National Literacy Secretariat, HRDC, the Conference Board is now accepting applications for the 2003-2004 competition. Winners will be honoured at the 2004 Workplace Education and Learning Symposium and will receive recognition in the 2004 Business and Education IdeaBook as well as acknowledgement on the Conference Board's website. To learn more about the Awards and to access free research reports about workplace literacy, please visit the website at: <http://www.conferenceboard.ca/education/default.htm>.

## Legal Website Designed to Answer Growing Needs



As the money coffers are decreasing in the educational system, services for students with learning disabilities are being drastically affected at a time when demand to meet those needs is at an all time high. Because of the growing number of legal challenges, the Learning Disabilities Association of Canada (LDAC) has developed a LD and the Law website. Educators, parents, advocates and attorneys can refer to the site for accurate and up-to-date advocacy information to understand and access the rights of people with learning disabilities. Check it out at [www.ldac-taac.ca](http://www.ldac-taac.ca).

## Help for the Math Challenged



Need to calculate pounds to kilograms or litres to gallons in a hurry? Can't remember how to convert temperature from Celsius to Fahrenheit? As a follow-up to its successful *Math Solves Problems* print ad campaign, ABC CANADA introduced a set of wallet cards and a brochure with useful math tips and conversions for Canadians who could use a little help with this kind of everyday math. A math literacy website has also been developed at [www.mathliteracy.ca](http://www.mathliteracy.ca). Contact ABC CANADA for free samples or to order bulk quantities of tip sheets, brochures or wallet cards at tel: 1-800-303-1004 or [www.abc-canada.org](http://www.abc-canada.org).



# IMAGINE...



Imagine a Canada where everyone reads.

Imagine a Canada where everyone writes.

Imagine a Canada where all children have people who read to them every day.

Imagine a Canada where people who have difficulty reading and writing feel valued and supported.

Imagine a Canada where language is plain.

Imagine a Canada where literacy organizations have the resources to serve the literacy needs of their communities.

Imagine a Canada that celebrates and supports literacy in all its forms.

Imagine a pan-Canadian literacy strategy that allows us to accomplish all of this.

This is our dream for Canada.



*Elaine Cairns and her Alberta literacy friends originally developed this poem for their province. We are very grateful to share Elaine's adaptation for the pan-Canadian context.*

## Coming events

**September 25 – 27, 2003**

### **The Changing Face of Work and Learning** Edmonton, Alberta

For more information on this Work and Learning Network Conference, go to <http://www.wln.ualberta.ca>.

**October 2 – 4, 2003**

### **Light the Spirit Within: 14<sup>th</sup> National Conference on Learning Disabilities** Calgary, AB

Share and learn with leading national and international experts through a wide variety of sessions. For more information, contact the Learning Disabilities Association of Alberta at tel: 780-448-0360 or email: [ldaa@telusplanet.net](mailto:ldaa@telusplanet.net) or check online at <http://www.telusplanet.net/public/ldaa>.

**October 19 – 22, 2003**

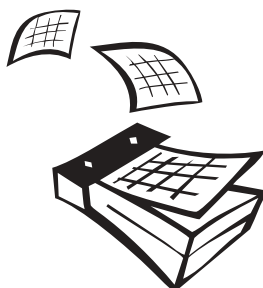
### **Recognizing Learning: Building Capacity in a Knowledge Economy** Winnipeg, MB

The fifth international forum on Prior Learning Assessment and Qualification Recognition. For more information, visit the website at [www.capla.ca](http://www.capla.ca) or tel: 1-877-731-1333.

**October 23, 2003**

### **Literacy Action Day** Ottawa, ON

Contact MCL for details at 613-563-2464 or go to [www.literacy.ca](http://www.literacy.ca).



# literacy.ca

#### **Movement for Canadian Literacy**

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The Movement for Canadian Literacy (MCL) is a national non-profit organization representing literacy coalitions, organizations and individuals from every province and territory. Our mission is to be a national voice for literacy for every Canadian.

The *literacy.ca* newsletter is a vehicle for literacy workers and supporters to share information, ideas, resources and research on emerging literacy issues. We welcome letters to the editor, articles, photos and suggestions for future issues as well as feedback on what you find in these pages. 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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*Literacy is for life!*