



# FESA's News & Views

Home of LAPS

## Message from the Co-Executive Directors



A picture from the Symposium - more on Page 3

Fall finds FESA, as many other non-profits, scrambling to fulfil the many well meant, but ambitious dreams, cooked up during the still moments of a hot summer vacation. In this issue you will get a glimpse of the result of those dreams. Our new pullout "LAPS in Review" section will highlight the symposium held in June involving 17 of our Western Canadian LAPS Trainers, the results of the LAPS Survey conducted by the Society for the Advancement of Excellence in Education. The FESA News & Views will inform readers about our casino held in September, our fundraiser in November, and introduce you to one of our Board members, Jane Stothers.

Exciting new developments include the proposal put forth to the Office of Literacy & Essential Skills (OLES) to expand the important work begun in partnership with Wal-Mart. Small celebrations have also been conducted at the completion of our policies & procedures governing our office and policies guiding our Board of Directors as well as the securing of additional insurance, supporting our Board, Facilitators, Staff and Trainers—minor victories, but important to an overworked small non-profit charity.

We wish you well in your work and look forward to your comments about anything you read in this issue.

Laureen MacKenzie & Elaine Cairns

### Rotary - A Friend of Literacy Indeed!

Rotary, Downtown Calgary Chapter, has been a consistent supporter of our work with marginalized learners since FESA's founding. Encouragement, dollars, consultations, and yes, even performance roles in our LAPS video have all been part of their generosity and concern for our welfare. Now a new chapter, Calgary West, has contributed to our outreach program, to attract isolated learners to several new initiatives. On July 20th, 2007, Mike Carlin, a very committed Rotary member invited Laureen MacKenzie of FESA to accept a cheque of \$3000 to further our work. Thank you to Mike and Rotary Board of Directors for this generous support. Thank you also to Marg Henschel for her recognition of our work and efforts to put our proposal forward for consideration.

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\* Toutes nos excuses à nos amis Francophones mais le manque de subvention ne nous permet pas de traduire ce bulletin.



## ***New Members to the FESA Team***

As of July 2007, Group Works and the PACT program became programs of FESA.

### **What is PACT?**

Parents and Children Together is a unique, family oriented health promotion program that offers education and support to stay at home parents of pre-school children birth to five years. Parents participate in two program components, a parent education/discussion group and the children's program. Our Parent Educators (P.E.s) offer information, support, and encouragement to parents on a variety of topics dealing with the challenges and delights of living with pre-school children.

*While half the parents meet in the discussion groups, the children are involved in a child-directed play program, supervised by a qualified children's play coordinator (CPC) and other parents. This also gives parents a chance to observe their preschooler at play and begin to test the skills learned in the parent discussion group.*

Nichola, a participant in the Scenic Acres location is a great advocate for watching pre-school children interact with their peers "this was a great opportunity for me to consider that there might be some developmental delays in my 2 year old's behaviour. It provided me with the opportunity to seek professional help early"

Jennifer, another participant and mother of a 4 year old said "I joined a PACT group to understand the different stages with a pre-school child but I found that over time I received far more than this. I learnt skills that helped me deal with relationships, grief and so much more."

*We are currently operating five programs at a variety of Calgary locations on weekday mornings, eleven weeks per session. Our programs run three times per year, Fall, Winter and Spring.*

This fall over 90 families have been involved with one or more of the programs and each week we have new families visiting. The often heard comment from participants is "This is such a wonderful program that offers something for everyone in the family."

### **What is Group Works?**

**GROUP WORKS** is a course for prospective and/or practicing facilitators of educational/support groups. The primary objective is to enable participants to **GAIN KNOWLEDGE** and **HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE** in the art of helping people learn in small groups. We hope to be offering the next course in the spring of 2008.

### **Meet the Board!**



My interest in literacy was first peaked when my daughter was in French immersion school and was virtually at the top of her class with the oral skills but was experiencing extreme difficulty in the reading skills. At that time, she was in grade 3 and we made the decision to take her out of French immersion to give her a strong start in English. This was successful but, by then, reading had become a big part of our lives. As a member of the Board of FESA it is encouraging to see how this group has empowered learners to embrace reading, where, for many, it was a chore and now it is just a choice for the sheer adventure and fun of it.

#### **How you can help**

It takes time, money and dedication in order to provide programs that help those parents most in need..

If you would like to find out more about our programs or how you can help support our work, please call

**(403) 410-1501**

If you would like to donate simply send a cheque made out to:

**Further Education Society  
228 Gleneagles View, Cochrane,  
AB, T4C-2H5**

We will be happy to issue a tax receipt.

## *Symposium & New LAPS Initiatives*

### **Western Canadian LAPS Trainers Symposium June 2007**



What happens when you bring 17 LAPS Trainers representing the four western provinces together? Pizzazz, collaboration, hilarity, synergy, electricity, revitalization, inspiration, hilarity, reflection! Two days were devoted to sharing successes and challenges, and exploring new ways to work in our provincial groups to deliver regional strategies. This team building strategic planning was facilitated by Pam Crosby, a Calgary consultant, to develop a Western Canadian strategy. Celia Osenton and our own Elsie Paul rounded out the two days with lively workshops on the impact of personality on facilitation and First Nations traditional parenting. Add wine and cheese with our Board and Community partners and you have a very full two days. Thank you to all who participated. It is little wonder that our LAPS work is successful with such a committed team of trainers as leaders and ambassadors!



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### ***Paving the Way***

In our mission to “Pave the Way to Lifelong Learning Opportunities for all Canadians”, the Further Education Society has helped thousands of at-risk learners build their literacy and parenting skills. Fulfilling our vision requires that we work toward helping even more learners access our programs.

### **Programs Aimed at Men**

We are ready to launch the first real test of our newly developed curriculum, “So, Where are the Males?” This literacy program has been designed based on extensive research around the interests and needs of men. Our aim is to help fathers build literacy and parenting skills while learning to promote their children’s literacy and healthy development. Thanks to Calgary Learns for their support of this exciting project.

### **Programs Aimed at Men and Women in the Workplace**

We are also beginning to offer programs in the workplace, adapting LAPS to include workplace literacy concerns in addition to regular literacy and parenting skills. Our first program took place at Calgary’s Westbrook Plaza Wal-Mart, where managers showed genuine support for their employees by providing time from work to attend the program, space in the Boardroom, snacks, writing supplies and books. This program was a real success, and we realized the potential for reaching participants in a whole new way. We have now been encouraged by funders to seek dollars to support research and development of a whole new program specifically designed for the workplace. Proposals have already been submitted, and Wal-Mart has again offered to support this work, along with other potential workplace partners. Let’s hope that we can include these hardworking employees in our programming. Their long hours limit their participation in educational opportunities.

Stay tuned as we report on the progress of these initiatives; as we continue to “pave the way to lifelong learning for all Canadians!” Thanks to all of our community partners who are supporting these ventures. More on them next issue.

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## ***National LAPS Survey***

### ***Building Local Capacity & Forging Networks: The LAPS Facilitator Training Program***

Are people still using their LAPS facilitator training in their daily practice? The answer is resounding—YES!—according to recent research completed by the Society for the Advancement of Excellence in Education. This exciting project measured the subsequent use of LAPS facilitator training by participants who took the training. It investigated the challenges faced by front-line administrators of the LAPS program and did a return on investment analysis.

The full report is available at:

[http://www.saeed.ca/publications/A\\_039\\_EHG\\_MID.php](http://www.saeed.ca/publications/A_039_EHG_MID.php)

#### **Summary of key findings** (adapted from the National LAPS Survey)

- 📖 Facilitator training costs have remained low yet have resulted in a 90% or greater use of training in the delivery of new or enhanced family literacy programs.
- 📖 The most common places where LAPS training is used are in schools, (34.9%) family resource centres (33.9%) and community centres (27%).
- 📖 Most facilitators are delivering the LAPS program in a paid position (79.9%).
- 📖 60% of respondents received funding or worked in partnership to deliver the most recent LAPS-based program.
- 📖 Some of the challenges of program delivery include meeting specific learning needs, attracting participants, the diverse background of parents, and inconsistent attendance.
- 📖 Return on Investment analysis: the cost of reaching one family through this program is between \$8 and \$16 on average. This is a relatively small investment considering the value that facilitators perceive in the services that the LAPS program enable them to provide.

#### **The Great Effectiveness of LAPS**

The majority of facilitators strongly agree that LAPS:

- 📖 Encourages parents' involvement in their children's language and literacy development (73 % agree).
- 📖 Assists participants to become more effective parents.
- 📖 Boosts participants' confidence to move into other learning opportunities.
- 📖 Encourages development of parents' own literacy skills.

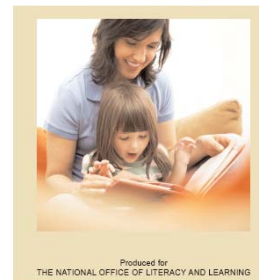
#### **Recommendations for Training**

Recommendations in the report were also identified at our Trainers' Symposium as important. They include:

- 📖 The need for mentoring
- 📖 Refresher/in-service workshops
- 📖 Follow-up support

#### **Building Local Capacity and Forging Networks:**

The Literacy and Parenting Skills Facilitator Training Program



SOCIETY FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF Excellence in Education

## ***Tried & True Tips for Facilitators***

### ***Cross Cultural Sensitivity***

By Sue Phillips

- 📖 Find ways for participants of different backgrounds to mix with each other. Learners will participate better and use more English.
- 📖 Some participants will be unfamiliar with working in groups, or with informal, interactive styles of learning.
- 📖 Accept that people will choose and demonstrate their own level of ethnic identification.
- 📖 Ask learners for their own ideas and experiences, related to your topic. Honour the wisdom and knowledge they bring to class.
- 📖 Find out how much formal education each learner in the class has and adjust expectations and program delivery accordingly.
- 📖 At times, what you say or do may be misunderstood. Humour helps, as long as it does not target the learners.
- 📖 Don't assume you know what they want or need. Ask them. You may need to adjust content or delivery.
- 📖 Learn about the cultures you are working with, particularly historical and social information, but don't make general assumptions about individuals based on this knowledge.
- 📖 Open, non-judgmental discussion of similarities and differences will build acceptance and understanding of each other. Don't focus on trivial or bizarre differences.
- 📖 Some immigrants, particularly refugees, may have experienced extreme trauma or violence. Be cautious when discussing certain topics to avoid upsetting learners. Provide a safe place in the room for individuals to retreat if needed.
- 📖 New Canadians often struggle with finances, employment, housing & transportation. This affects attendance and punctuality. Learners may be exhausted. Programs should be flexible.
- 📖 Immigration may result in loss of social status or wealth. This may lower self-esteem. Take time to discover talents, past experiences and accomplishments they are proud of.
- 📖 Fathers may feel they are no longer important as their wives perhaps find employment before they do, and children become more familiar with language and culture than their parents. Male learners will appreciate practical opportunities to lead, accomplish and be recognized.
- 📖 Ensure parenting classes are welcoming for fathers, through classroom environment and program structure, so as not to diminish their equally important role in parenting.
- 📖 Some children will reject family traditions and practices. Families will want help having important family traditions respected as their children become comfortable with Canadian peers and activities.
- 📖 Provide cognitive and emotional levels of learning, and experiential learning opportunities.
- 📖 Explore personal values and link this increased awareness to respect for the values of others.
- 📖 ESL learners need encouragement. They need help to become comfortable asking questions, making phone calls, getting information and self-advocating. Helping learners begin to function independently should be the underlying goal of any program.



## *Welcomes & Goodbyes*

### *A Tribute to Two Long-Timers*

We have had to say goodbye to two of our most valued colleagues and supporters. Yvette Souque and Charles Ramsay have been valued ambassadors for the field of family literacy and solid supporters of LAPS over the years. Their voices will be missed.

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Issue I

#### **For Charles~**

- C** Calm, collaborative champion –
- H** Helper - Where would literacy workers be without Charles' technology support? Kicking and screaming in the Dark Ages!
- A** Asset - Our field has been blessed to have such an advocate for literacy
- R** Respectful - Charles' patience honours all levels of expertise. Some of us need more patience when working with computers than others.
- L** Literacy - Learners' supporters come in many shapes and sizes. Noone is taller than Charles.
- E** Encouragement - Anyone who weathers the vagaries of a cause which is not a popular one and still cares about those serving in the field at the end of a distinguished career—
- S** Soooooo cool! NALD's tentacles have reached out and promoted literacy both nationally and internationally!!!!

#### **For Yvette~**

- L** Literate, loquacious, loving, liberal, loves a glass of wine
- I** Insightful, ignited, intelligent, even irreverent
- T** Tenacious, temperate, occasionally testy, taskmaster
- E** Energetic, empathic, ebullient
- R** Responsible, right on the money, ridiculously funny
- A** Accurate, accommodating
- C** Caring, compassionate, courageous, change agent
- Y** Young at heart

### *Welcome to the Family...*

We are pleased to introduce our three newest trainers...

**Mavis McPhee** comes to us with over 30 years of experience with children and families in various capacities. She believes that “family literacy and parenting education are closely linked and can compliment each other. Programs like the ALAPS program support families and encourage the best for children. Strong families build strong communities, and that is good for everyone”.

**Leona Harasym** was honoured for her many years of dedication and hard work to promote ALAPS and to train facilitators, in partnership with Lynne Mouroit in Saskatchewan, at our June Symposium. Welcome, Leona, to the ranks of Certified ALAPS trainers. Such consistent leadership will be an inspiration to us all!

**Julia Dodge** has been providing training and support to parents and practitioners wishing to enhance emergent literacy skills in adults and children for over 10 years and is presently the Regional Literacy Coordinator for Fraser Valley, based at the University College of Fraser Valley.

## *Milestones & Memories*

### September

#### **Fundraising Casino**

FESA hosted its second casino on International Literacy Day, September 8th and Sunday, September 9th at the Deerfoot Casino in Calgary. Staff and Board wish to thank all of the wonderful volunteers who gave up their weekend to work at our casino. We are grateful for their support. We look forward to utilizing the proceeds from the casino to continue our work with low-literate families.

### October

#### **The Calgary Foundation ~ Friends of the Foundation Annual Celebration**



#### **Three cheers for the Prez!**

Special thanks to Ida Stanley-Tober for helping to organize our September casino. FESA staff would also like to thank her for her assistance with the fundraiser. We are pleased that Ida has declared FESA as her charity of choice for her United Way contributions made through her work. What a gal!!

Ida, FESA's president (second from the right) at the Calgary Foundation's 2007 Friends of the Foundation Annual Celebration.

### November

#### **New Delivery in the Caro Family!**



Our sincere best wishes to Magdalena, our former Administrative Assistant on the birth of her lovely baby boy, Pascal. As you can see, big brother is pleased as well. Congratulations!

#### **An Evening at La Brezza — A Celebration of Learning & Community Spirit**

“What goes around comes around” is a favourite saying of Marco Abdi, the man who had a dream that became a reality—La Brezza Restaurant. After twenty years of the successful operation of his restaurant in Calgary, Marco wished to give back to the community all the warmth and support that he had received. On the 15th of November, in partnership with the Further Education Society (FESA), La Brezza hosted a special fundraising dinner commemorating its 20th anniversary and expressed both La Brezza and FESA's thanks to the community that has given so much support. Guests were treated to an evening of fine dining including a 7 course Italian gourmet dinner, music by flutist Sean Clarke and tidbits of information about FESA's work. Special thanks to Paul Dunphy of Global TV for emceeing the event. Our sincerest thanks to all the supporters: *nex2new FINE CARS, HomeLife Cityscape Real Estate, Robert Amantea, World Gym, Shafiq Jinnah, Natasha Lee, Martha Lombardo-Grant, Patricia Dam, Henry Tremayne Dam, Double EE Enterprises, Tim & Bernie Cloughton, Gunner Eng. Consulting Inc., Richard Cairns & JV MacKenzie Prof Corp.*



Thanks to Marco and Filomena Abdi's generosity, 100% of the proceeds will go towards FESA's work assisting at-risk families struggling with literacy.

## *Past Winners & A New Challenge*

### **Calgary's Spring Photo Contest**



Congratulations to the winners of Calgary's Spring Photo Contest. Parents and children of the Parent Child Mother Goose group at Blessed Damien School had a wonderful time together learning fun, interactive stories, rhymes and songs. Thanks to Aspen Family and Community Network Society and Blessed Damien School for hosting! This photo was taken with the joint effort of Nancy Bilodeau Cogger, our Aspen agency partner, and our facilitator Georgia Blum.

### **Make Reading Count! Join FESA's January 21 - 27 Reading Challenge!**

FESA will be celebrating **Family Literacy Day** with its annual week-long Reading Challenge. During the week leading up to Family Literacy Day, for every 15 minutes that a book is read or a story shared, we ask the public to press the website ([www.nald.ca/fesa](http://www.nald.ca/fesa)) "button" to add minutes to our reading tally. Last year, caring Calgarians such as Mayor Dave Bronconnier, Bruce Dowbiggin, Vance Rodewalt, Angela Kokott and Tony Tighe participated.

We also invite businesses to join our **Corporate Reading Challenge**. Companies encourage employees by matching minutes read with company dollars. All funds go towards FESA's work towards offering free family literacy programs to families needing help. Participating companies will receive Certificates of Appreciation, and be featured in our press release, newsletter and website as supporters of family literacy. Special mention will be given to companies with exceptional employee participation. To register your company for this challenge, please call (403) 410-1501.

**Help us exceed last year's 38, 310 minutes of reading!**

If you do not wish to receive this newsletter—please contact us at (403) 410-1501 or [ecairns@bowvalleycollege.ca](mailto:ecairns@bowvalleycollege.ca)

### **FESA News & Views**

FESA News & Views is published semi-annually and is a publication of Further Education Society

We welcome contributions of interest to LAPS Trainers and facilitators in addition to other practitioners within the family literacy community.

Contributions may be sent directly to the LAPS main office via e-mail c/o [ecairns@bowvalleycollege.ca](mailto:ecairns@bowvalleycollege.ca), or faxed to the attention of LAPS Program, Room 541, Bow Valley College, (403) 297-4949.

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