



# FESA News And Views

Home of LAPS

## Message from Ida, Elaine & Sue:

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### Here we Grow!

FESA is pleased to announce the first steps of this year's look at where we've been, and where we want to go from here. Consultant Pam Crosby of Capacity Consulting Inc. has been contracted to facilitate our Community Consultation and our strategic planning process. The first steps are examining our overall operations, what we do well, and where there are opportunities for growth and change. With our outside consultant, community input, and an enthusiastic board, the staff is looking forward to new opportunities and changes that will ensure that FESA is well positioned to serve learners into the future.

We hope you enjoy this issue of FESA News and Views!



FESA Team with Joe Connelly at Raise a Reader Day



Ida, Elaine, Sue and FESA team with MLA Manmeet Bhullar at the Literacy Alberta "Literacy and Learning Symposium"



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### Our Board Members

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Priscilla Turingan	Director

## Welcome to our New Board Members

We were pleased to welcome our three new highly-skilled Directors:

**Priscilla Turingan** has received two university degrees, in Social Work and in Marketing. She has taken LAPS training, is enrolled in the Group Works course, and is pursuing a certificate in Communication. Priscilla has a deep understanding of the complexities of working with at-risk families through her work with Women In Need and now Elizabeth Fry. She also brings direct experience of being a newcomer to Canada, having immigrated from the Philippines many years ago.

**Pamela Swimmer's** degree is from the University of Saskatchewan, where she focused on Native Studies and Psychology. Since then she has gained a wealth of experience in program and community development from her work at Bow Valley College as a Student Advisor, her previous experiences with the Calgary and Saskatoon Public Libraries, and from her extensive volunteer commitments. Pamela brings to us her extensive knowledge of Aboriginal culture and protocols, as well as her project management research skills, use of scholarly and public information resources and her drive and commitment to excellence.

**Jordan Hamilton** brings a wealth of academic and field work experience in economic and social policy research. He has worked with Vibrant Communities Calgary as a Research and Policy Analyst, for the Urban Development Institute, in Kenya, on a World Bank Project in South Africa, for the United Nations in Swaziland, for Cape Breton University's Community Economic Development Institute, and the American Red Cross following Hurricane Katrina and Rita. He has successfully completed a Master's degree in Development Economics and a MBA. He has also been awarded a Queen Elizabeth II Golden Jubilee Medal for making a significant contribution to Canada.

## Events and Celebrations

On July 1st, FESA held their first Stampede Breakfast. It was a great day full of lots of food and fun. The FESA team also took this opportunity to plan a birthday surprise for co-E.D. Sue as she turned 50 on July 17th. The Team arranged for a singing telegram to come sing a very special song to the tune of Patsy Cline's Crazy.

It's your birthday,  
It's your day to shine, yes it's today  
Your birthday,  
It's happening around Stampede time.  
And today,  
Your staff has conspired to surprise you,  
By hiring,  
A cowgirl to sing you this song.

30, is long over and so is 40,  
But 50, is the new 40 so don't despair...just dye your hair,  
And there's Avon,  
Increase your orders and you'll be fine,  
There's always plastic surgery, to make you look 30  
And you can tell'em you're 29.

Oh, it's your birthday,  
And all jokes aside, don't ever change,  
Let's give a yahoo to the birthday girl Sue,  
Oh dear Sue, everybody loves you.  
Yahoo!!



We are delighted to welcome brand new members to our FESA family.

Welcome to the world,  
little Alexander and little Mofei!



Board Member in training



Accountant in training

### Raise-a-Reader

### Loonies for Literacy

FESA is very proud to announce that we were once again selected to participate in the Calgary Herald's Raise-a-Reader fundraiser. Below is a special moment written by Elaine Cairns that we would like to share:

This morning when I was standing on the corner with my three sweet young FESA volunteers I noticed a bottle picker. He looked like he may have been homeless and was unkempt and scruffy. I was a little worried like a mother hen over my little ducklings. He stopped to chat to our young ladies about what they were doing. Teal and Gina told them we were collecting money for family literacy and to help children read. They chatted for a bit and the girls turned away to sell papers to other people.

I kept a protective eye on him. Slowly I saw him reach into his pocket and pull out a old worn wallet and search through every pocket. It was obvious that he was looking to see if he had any money to donate. He looked and looked but could not find anything. Then he smiled and started to go through all of the pockets in his clothes. Finally he found a coin. He proudly walked over to the girls and handed them what was probably his last two dollars. He smiled and pushed his buggy off wishing us well. We were told to make note of the "largest" donation that day. I think that was probably it!!!

Elaine and Sue with  
Alderman Joe Connelly  
at the Raise a Reader event



## Towards a Literate Canada: Linking Essential Skills and Family Literacy in the Workplace

We are really pleased with the enthusiastic response to our program developing Family Literacy in the Workplace. We have gathered together a multi-skilled advisory group who have provided us with a wealth of experience and knowledge. Our outside evaluator is Dr Pat Fahy of Athabasca University. His comprehensive evaluation plan ensures our project reviews and incorporates new learning, so that we continually inform and build on our program. We also have the invaluable guidance of Lorene Anderson as our Essential Skills Consultant. Lorene has enlightened us both through research and through sharing her practical experiences with adult learners in workplace settings.



*FESA Facilitator Gary delivering a pilot session*

We are fortunate to have skilled and effective FESA facilitators developing the workplace curriculum, bringing together their knowledge of our LAPS programs, adult education and industrial and commercial experiences. These facilitators are divided up into three curriculum teams who are developing the sessions we deliver to our partner organisations. Currently, we are extending our Aboriginal program in the workplace with our second partner, a First Nations Casino, and introducing a Learning Circles concept with our third partner, a manufacturing facility. Pilot sessions have begun with another partner and will run for 6 sessions.

We are continuing to work closely with our first partner Walmart who has shown real drive and commitment to this development of family literacy and learning in the workplace. To celebrate this commitment we were thrilled to present Walmart with a certificate of appreciation on October 19th. We were grateful our funders, Stephanie Morin and Mercedes Morin, from the Office of Literacy and Essential Skills (OLES) could join us for the certificate presentation.

As you can imagine, this project demands a deep level of research, bringing together Essential Skills, Adult Learning as well as organizational needs analysis and employee interest and motivation. We are most appreciative of the time that our partners are prepared to give this project and our dedicated, inspirational team. This is one of our most exciting endeavours, as we once again venture into new territory.

### *Presentation of the Certificate of Appreciation to Wal-Mart*

*Dr.. Pat Fahy (back left), Elaine Cairns, OLES Funders Stephanie Morin and Mercedes Morin (middle), Walmart staff and Sue Phillips (far right)*



2009

## Family Literacy Day

### Calgary is a City of Readers! It's Wonderful!

In our annual commitment to Family Literacy Day, FESA was excited to work with The Calgary Stampeders to reach members of the public out shopping in Walmart to promote the fun and enjoyment of reading. Thanks to the tangible support that Walmart gave, we were able to run story-times for shoppers in two areas of the city, and Stampeders offensive linesman Fabio Filice met with families and encouraged them to pledge their time to read with their children.

Each year we encourage people to promise and then record some time spent reading as a family as part of our week-long Reading Challenge. The 2009 challenge beat out the 2008 record of 38,310 minutes by exceeding that number to total of 40,590 minutes read.



*Family Literacy Day 2009*

So now the challenge is really heating up. What can Calgary achieve for Family Literacy Day 2010? We will again host events at Calgary Walmart stores and hope to have a Stampeders available. Other plans are already in the works. Stay tuned to your email in early January for complete details on FESA's plans.

## Library News

Since moving into our new home here on 34th Avenue NE, we have had the opportunity to develop a library collection providing a growing store of resources for our facilitators and learners.

It has been so valuable to establish shelves of children's books, reference texts, adult learner materials and to see them being used. This year we have been particularly delighted to work with Self Connections Book Store and Calgary Viewpoint Foundation, which funded a considerable number of resources at a third of the regular cost. We have a wonderful volunteer intern, Rachel Clulee, who has done a great job of taking stock and organizing the library so it is easy to use. We and our learners are very grateful.

## Working With Dads – Aboriginal Pride Parents

As parents we all appreciate the opportunity to have our voice heard in our children's schools. A-LAPS program fathers were wishing to become more involved with a local school's development of an Aboriginal Pride program. Their children were taking part and as parents they knew they had important views and perspectives. Through the A-LAPS program, and the local school, a meeting was facilitated. Parents put forward their ideas on more involvement of Aboriginal families with the wider community in planning programs for their children.

Key ideas they wanted to express included the need to cooperate and help each other, work in a supportive relationship with schools, and to bring in their own knowledge as well as that of the Elders to enrich the program. These Dads enjoyed helping students and teachers learn about Aboriginal cultures. A-LAPS and the Aboriginal Pride program reinforce celebration and sharing of cultures, and are a positive contribution to the school. It is a learning opportunity for all.

## Stepping Stones Luncheon

Joanne Three Suns, Sue and Melanie at the luncheon.



FESA was thrilled to attend the Literacy Alberta “Stepping Stones” luncheon on June 3rd. At this luncheon we were treated to a special presentation from noted author and educator, Dr. Max Foran of the University of Calgary. A highlight of the luncheon was the presentation of a scholarship to an adult literacy learner.

FESA was proud to nominate Joanne Three Suns for an award. Joanne is one of our star A-LAPS participants at Awo Taan. Joanne’s participation in our program has enriched the content of our delivery. Joanne shares stories of parenting experience and offers us her perspective of Aboriginal culture relative to raising children. She is an avid supporter of her First Nations People through her current work as a writer for the Siksika News. Her other business experience also spans a career as Business Planner / Consultant for the Siksika Chief and Council and as a Fundraiser / Conference Coordinator for Aboriginal Friendship Centre. On top of her career she is a tireless volunteer in giving her time to the U of C Native Centre, the Aboriginal Friendship Centre, the Glenbow Museum and the former Calgary Board of Education’s Plains Indian Cultural Survival School.

## Family Fun Kits



This little boy isn't about to put his kit down for anything!

What can give more pleasure, satisfaction and relaxation to a parent than seeing their young children happily involved in projects using crayons, paints and other craft supplies? Children delight in making meaningful scribbles, reading, writing and having fun with learning opportunities that will instill a life-long love of literacy. But how often are parents stretched to buy the basic resources to supply their children with the necessary materials?

We are enormously grateful to the Burns Memorial Fund for their donation which enabled us to purchase 400 creative kits for families in our programs. We were able to provide 400 families with a bright and attractive bag of goodies, including paper, scissors, felts, color pencils, paints, stickers, glue and many craft supplies. These bags would have excited any of us, young or old!

This was an exhilarating project from start to finish, from the joy of choosing and shopping, to the collation and distribution of the bags to our families. We were very grateful to Into The Streets, a volunteer group of students from the University of Calgary who gave up a Sunday in April for the mammoth task of sorting out the goods and packing them into the bright yellow bags. Imagine counting out an equal number of craft pompoms for each pack!

Families were completely thrilled to receive the bags, and give their children an opportunity to explore the creative side of literacy without the financial burden of purchasing these resources.

Thank you very much Burns Memorial Fund and Into the Streets.

*The FESA office overflowing with craft supplies and the bright yellow fun kits*





## No Lapse in our LAPS Activities - Western Canada -

Can you imagine a web of communities, all working within a region with one goal in mind – to strengthen parents' relationships with their children, which then allows them to positively influence their children's language and literacy development? While achieving this, picture the parent examining his/her own literacy skills and embracing activities that strengthen them. A pipe dream? Most assuredly not!

FESA's efforts to create and nurture partnerships in all 4 western provinces to animate the well known award winning LAPS program are inspired by this very vision. Organizations in all 4 provinces have shown great interest in encouraging a more regional approach to offering LAPS. Our hope is that this collaboration will embrace the rich, cultural and diverse needs of each community, a strategy that will promote deeper learning for both generations.

Highlights of the Western Canadian Training Initiative, supported generously by an anonymous donor, throughout the last 6 – 8 months, include:

- 👉 A 5 day Train-the-Trainer session in Calgary, held in late September, which welcomed 9 trainers from Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and British Columbia. An emphasis on the arts and the role they can play in enhancing literacy skills culminated in a rousing and exhilarating session featuring Brent Van Dusen of Calgary, on the last night of the training. All 9 are working on certification requirements at the moment. Congratulations to Nancy Hetherington Peirce and Barb Ferguson, our two new LAPS trainers, who completed their certification this fall.
- 👉 Regional trainers have tweaked the interests of community leaders across the west, through orientations, consultations, mentoring, and facilitation training sessions. These have led to numerous new LAPS programs and all have been well received. Programs in the communities surrounding La Ronge Saskatchewan, Swan River Manitoba, Prince Albert Saskatchewan, Fort McMurray Alberta, Quesmeh B.C. and Regina Saskatchewan, are up and running under the watchful eye of our trainers and local community leaders. Numerous training, mentoring and programming events are already in the works for the spring of 2010.

Our hope is that the conclusion of 2010 will see new host agencies in B.C., Manitoba, and Saskatchewan, involved in the co-ordination of activities in each of the provinces.

Pipe dreams become reality with perseverance and the good will of dedicated organizations!

## Calgary Programs - Leading the Way

This year FESA created four new “Lead Facilitator” positions. We congratulate Wendy Anderson, Barb Ferguson, Melanie Reinboldt, and Gary Yip. The lead facilitators will be providing more direct assistance to facilitators, doing more community outreach, and working to strengthen and organize our resource collection.

Along with changes to the facilitator team, we wish to extend a warm welcome to Teal Dratowany who takes the newly created position of Calgary Programs Administrator, while congratulations go to Calgary facilitator, Lynn Nickel, who is now FESA’s Lead Special Projects Facilitator, working on projects inside and outside of the Calgary program scope.

### What else is happening in Calgary?

Barb Ferguson and Wendy Anderson, two of our LAPS trainers, have just completed a very successful LAPS training in partnership with the Calgary Learning Centre and the Centre for Family Literacy’s regional training network. We look forward to encouraging the newest LAPS facilitators and wish them well in their work.

As we deepen our work in Calgary we look forward to sharing inspiring examples of the wonderful progress learners are making at programs. This month we reprint an article from the Run, Jump and Play program newsletter (partnered by Neighbourlink) written by lead facilitator, Barb Ferguson.

### Parents That Love To Learn

We are gathered in a circle, discussing how unstructured play helps kids to learn. Participants share fond childhood memories of riding bikes, making clay dolls and playing endless games of hide-and-seek. Sabria speaks softly, “I was only 10 or 11 when my family ran from Afghanistan to Pakistan to escape the Taliban. In Pakistan I go to school and after school I go straight to work. I didn’t play.” She hugs her 18 month old boy closer, her expression determined. Many in the room nod in sympathy, understanding that she means things will be different for her child.

This is the Run, Jump and Play (RJP) Parenting Program. Every Tuesday morning Penny Worden and I (Barb Ferguson) host 15 to 25 parents like Sabria, who come to learn and share. While some parents are Canadian born, many have immigrated here from other countries such as Ethiopia, India, the Sudan, and Colombia, to name a few. Parents come with their young toddlers and babies while the older children are busy in the RJP Pre-school Program. Penny and I are trained facilitators provided by the Further Education Society of Alberta (FESA), which is one of RJP’s strategic partners. FESA’s mandate is to pave the way for lifelong learning for all Canadians, even those who face significant barriers. Most of the parents we see are isolated by poverty, language or both. The parenting program we offer is based on FESA’s well regarded Literacy and Parenting Skills (LAPS) training program which provides a supportive environment where moms and dads can improve their own reading, writing and English language skills while they are exploring parenting issues. The goals of the group are generated by the needs of the participants, thus encouraging active engagement and learning. We have an incredibly diverse population of participants, from those with a low level of literacy to university educated women who are struggling to adapt to Canadian culture. Yet, within RJP there is an established atmosphere of trust. Parents come eager to share both the joys and frustrations of the early years, and to learn strategies to tackle common issues.

Topics in the class range widely. We pour over children’s books to demonstrate the power they have to engage and to enlighten. We look at low cost alternatives to TV watching such as simple indoor and outdoor games or making crafts from everyday items. Parents learn they are their child’s first and best teacher, and they can do much in the early years to make learning and discovery part of their child’s daily routine. We share resource information about libraries, pools, community centres, help lines and support services. We discuss positive discipline methods, and how to acknowledge and manage emotions. Every class, we laugh and commiserate over times our kids drive us crazy and times they make us melt with joy. Above all, we discover that we have more similarities than differences. At the end of program we hope these parents will feel more confident in their parenting and literacy skills. Our main goal is that they see themselves as lifelong learners who will then pass on this love of learning to their children.”



Barb Ferguson instructs a parenting class.  
Photo provided by RJP

Stay tuned to hear about the fantastic work of our other facilitators and the new programs that will be happening in the New Year!

## PACT News



### PACT and LAPS are now together!

Parents and Children Together (PACT) with LAPS interactive program is being run for the first time at the G.W. Skene School, hosted by the Calgary Learning Village Collaborative. This program provides an opportunity for parents to meet and share ideas about parenting while kids have fun learning new games and songs.

### Congratulations!

to Donna Joy, our first PACT facilitator to take the LAPS training. We are looking forward to working with you, and having you as part of the LAPS team.

## A Must for Facilitators: Group Works

- Like the tidbits/tips for facilitating
- Great for self introspection
- Great facilitators – skilled, organized, efficient, and fun!

Don't we all wish for comments like these on our program evaluations! These accolades, recently scribed on the Group Works midterm evaluations, are old hat to facilitators of this program. Barb Elder, and our newest Group Works trainer, Brenda Henley, share their wisdom, model excellent facilitation strategies, and demonstrate new facilitation skills weekly in a program which offer new facilitators an opportunity to learn about facilitation, and practice the skills that are requisites for success. Topics such as personal leadership styles, learning styles, group dynamics, and program planning round out a program rich in content and varied in process.

The response to this new initiative has been very enthusiastic as organizations increasingly recognize the significant role that an effective, well prepared facilitator plays in building skills and sharing knowledge in a given populations.

FESA is complementing the original introductory level group works program with tailor made sessions designed to meet the needs of specific organizations, both in content and in timeframes. For more information about our facilitation training sessions, contact Laureen MacKenzie at [lmackenzie@furthered.ca](mailto:lmackenzie@furthered.ca).



Some FESA facilitators and Sylla, an African drummer on the Djembe drums, during a facilitator in-service where they learned about the strengths and rich culture within African families and communities.



Mom and daughter reading together at a FESA program

## Fundraising Casino News

FESA was delighted with the fantastic efforts of their volunteers at their fundraising casino at Elbow River Casino in January this year. This event provides us with crucial financial support. To thank everyone who helped, we were delighted to donate a book in each volunteer's name to families in Calgary who have very few books and a keen interest in beginning home collections.

We would also like to send a BIG thank you to Rotary West for helping us with this casino by organizing and providing volunteers.

We look forward to your help in our next casino which will be held in either July, August or September 2010. Interested volunteers can contact Jessica Spicer at [jspicer@furthered.ca](mailto:jspicer@furthered.ca)

**Thank You!**

### FESA gratefully acknowledges the following supporters

Our condolences go to the family of Joane Cardinal-Schubert whose painting Pow Wow Dream adorns the cover of our A-LAPS manual.

#### Individual Donors

- ☞ Alexina Giovannetti
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#### FESA News & Views

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Contributions may be sent directly to the FESA main office via e-mail [c/o ecairns@furthered.ca](mailto:c/o.ecairns@furthered.ca), or faxed to (403) 250-5029.

#### How you can help

It takes time, money and dedication in order to provide programs that help those families 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) 250-5034**

If you wish to donate, please send a cheque to:

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