



Our Voice

November 2004

**Community Literacy
of Ontario**

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CLO's "Raising the Bar and Celebrating Success" Conference

Community Literacy of Ontario hosted its conference and seventh annual general meeting at the Fern Resort in Orillia on October 20 – 22, 2004. The "Raising the Bar and Celebrating Success Conference" was funded by the National Literacy Secretariat for Ontario's community-based literacy practitioners. This event was well attended with 81 representatives from 54 literacy agencies from all areas of Ontario.

Conference participants were honoured to hear words of wisdom and encouragement from the Honourable Mary Anne Chambers, Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. Her compassion and empathy was heartfelt, inspiring and truly warmed the hearts of everyone present at CLO's 10th anniversary gala dinner. CLO was also delighted to have Patti Redmond, Director of the Skills Investment Branch and Robin Young, Field Consultant, attend the gala dinner on behalf of the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities.

In honour of our member community-based literacy agencies and in celebration of its 10th anniversary, CLO proudly launched the newly developed "Ontario's Community Literacy Agencies: Shining Across Ontario" promotional kit. This kit was developed to give CLO's member agencies a tool to promote and showcase how they shine across this province. The kit includes fact sheets with factual, statistical and anecdotal information; overhead masters; and a CD with electronic versions of the kit material that can be adapted for agency use in promotional and fundraising events. Member agencies not present at this event will receive their kit in late November.

Conference workshops all received rave reviews and conference delegates came away with information that they felt was useful and informative.

Workshops included:

- ⇒ Developing Goal-Related Learning Activities
- ⇒ Developing Partnerships
- ⇒ Learner Recruitment and Retention: Working Hand in Hand
- ⇒ Literacy Outreach to Social Agencies and Businesses
- ⇒ Outcomes Measurement: Are Your Programs Making a Real Difference
- ⇒ Tough Love

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Conference 2004	1
The Rae Review	2
In the Spot Light	3
CLO News	4

The feedback from conference participants overwhelmingly concludes that participants feel that they learned something new at the conference and that CLO's annual conference provides extremely beneficial training to community literacy agencies. The hard work and commitment of CLO's staff, board of directors and conference committee in combination with the enthusiasm of the conference delegates resulted in CLO's most successful conference to date. The conference truly "Raised the Bar and Celebrated Success"!

The Rae Review



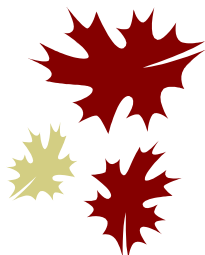
By now, you may have heard about “*The Rae Review*” on television or on the radio, or you may have read a bit about it in the print media. But just what is “*The Rae Review*” and why should community-based literacy programs be interested?

In the 2004 Budget, the current Ontario government announced that it would review the design and funding of the province’s postsecondary education system AND recommend innovative ways that postsecondary institutions can provide the best education to students. The Honourable Bob Rae, former Premier of Ontario, was asked to serve as an advisor for this review, hence the name “*The Rae Review*”. Mr. Rae will be assisted by a seven-member advisory panel that includes another former Ontario Premier, the Honourable William (Bill) Davis.

The Postsecondary Review is being carried out in three key stages:

- ⇒ Examining past studies and reports on postsecondary education and undertaking research and analysis of best practices in Ontario, other parts of Canada and the world.
- ⇒ Listening to Ontarians’ ideas about postsecondary education, including extensive consultations with the public, stakeholders and knowledgeable experts.
- ⇒ Developing recommendations to government.

The questions that Mr. Rae is asking Ontarians to consider are:

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1. What is your vision of a learning province?
 2. How would you improve the way the postsecondary system works?
 3. Do colleges and universities have too much, or too little autonomy?
 4. Are the pathways from high school to college and university clear enough?
 5. Is quality improving or deteriorating?
 6. How do we best fund the system to ensure both opportunity and excellence?

The second phase of the Review – consultation – is currently under way. A Discussion Paper outlining some of the possibilities was released on October 1, 2004 and can be downloaded at www.raereview.on.ca. A condensed version of the Discussion Paper called “*Higher Expectations for Higher Education: Working Through the Possibilities*” is also available. This document focuses on possible approaches and options. You can even work through the suggested approaches and submit your responses online. You can also submit any document that you think the Review should consider. The Review panel is also hosting a number of “town hall” meetings across the province. The full schedule is available on the website, and you can register to attend one of the “town hall” meetings online.

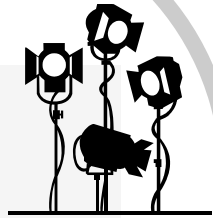
But what does all of this have to do with community-based literacy, you might ask? The LBS system is part of the overall education system, and many of the learners in our programs move on to take credit courses and/or college courses. Therefore, changes to the postsecondary system could have an impact on the work that we do.

The first question Mr. Rae asks is “What is your vision of a learning province?” Most if not all of us working in community-based agencies would include adult literacy in that vision and although the “*The Rae Review*” is focusing on postsecondary education, this question gives us the opportunity to speak out for literacy and to perhaps remind the panel and others that literacy and basic education can be a first step towards higher education.

You can find out more about The Rae Review at: www.raereview.on.ca.

A Fresh Start, Refresh and Renew and Re-Boot Naturally

By Catherine Mochrie, Red Lake District Adult Learning Centre



The Red Lake District Adult Learning Centre held three special interest weeks this past year. The intent of these weeks was to stimulate our brains after some time away, to do something different and to learn something new. We also used these weeks to promote our Centre by inviting the public to join us for our workshops.

During the first week back from Christmas holidays we offered "A Fresh Start." Every morning we worked through "A Dream That Walks - A Goal Setting Workbook" by Myrna Hanna. Volunteers from the community offered other workshops on topics relating to resolutions and goal setting. Job Connect came in for workshops on "Job Search, Resume and Cover Letter Writing", "Body Image" and "Interview Skills". The public health nurse did a presentation on nutrition, someone from the bank spoke about "Balancing Your Chequebook" and a board member did a workshop on "Balancing Your Life Using the Medicine Wheel". As we were here all day, nice hot lunches of homemade soup, beans and chili were served. It was a welcome break from our regular routine.

This week was so well received that we offered another special week after the March break called "Refresh and Renew". Every morning we did money budgeting exercises, many from, "Living on a Shoestring Budget" by Dorothy Silver with Jan Greer Langley. Community Counselling did a workshop on "Stress Management"; a diabetic educator spoke on "Living With Diabetes"; Job Connect did "Dressing for Success"; a dental hygienist spoke on "Dental Hygiene" and someone from Family Futures spoke on "Taking Care of Your Self Esteem". A friend of mine led us through a "Yoga and Meditation" session and we *almost* fell asleep! Our local grocery store gave us a tour of their store pointing out yet more money saving strategies. We certainly finished the week feeling refreshed and renewed - just in time for spring to arrive.

In the evaluations of these special interest weeks, students requested a week dealing with environmental topics. So, the second week after summer break we offered, "Re-Boot Naturally". We wanted to kick off the year by getting ourselves back into 'learning gear'. This week was organized by the Ministry of Natural Resources. We had fascinating workshops on a variety of topics. What do you do when you encounter a bear? How do you use a compass and a map? What are the names of some of our common trees and shrubs? Why were the lake trout eggs not hatching in Pipestone Bay? We also learned about fighting forest fires and how fire can benefit the forest. Another presentation was on a study that was taking place on the sturgeon, a prehistoric looking fish that some thought were cute! We ended the week on a golden note - a geologist spoke on the rocks in the area and why there's lots of gold in 'them thar hills'!

These weeks recharged our batteries and introduced more people to the Red Lake District Adult Learning Centre.



Congratulations to Program Read in Sault Ste. Marie for winning the Canada Post Community Leadership Award in 2004!

CLO's Board of Directors

- Carynne Arnold (Kingston)
- Chris Benninger (Chatham)
- Joyce Bigelow (Sharbot Lake)
- Linda Conley (Picton)
- Jan Goatcher (Ottawa)
- Heather Hufton (Peel)
- Shelley Lawrence (Oshawa)
- Sheila Marshall (Timmins)
- Cheryl Reid (Toronto)
- Valerie Sadler (Hamilton)
- Penny Smith-Jensen (Dryden)
- Denise Tremblay (Iroquois Falls)

CLO's Staff

- Joan Beaudry—Administrative Assistant
- Jette Cosburn—Co-Executive Director
- Joanne Kaattari—Co-Executive Director
- Robb MacDonald—Project Staff
- Vicki Trottier— Project Staff

CLO News!

- ⇒ At Community Literacy of Ontario's Annual General Meeting on October 21, 2004, a full slate of directors was elected to CLO's board of directors. All regions of Ontario are represented.
- ⇒ Our directors elected this year are: Carynne Arnold (eastern); Chris Benninger (southwestern); Shelley Lawrence (central); Cheryl Reid (central); and Val Sadler (southwestern).
- ⇒ We are proud to announce our new executive: Jan Goatcher (Co-Chair); Penny Smith Jensen (Co-Chair); Carynne Arnold (Treasurer) and Joyce Bigelow (Secretary).
- ⇒ CLO wants to sincerely thank our four retiring board members: Laurie DesLauriers, Margaret Maynard, Joan Robinson and Brendan Tarry.
- ⇒ In 2004-2005, CLO has received project funding from the National Literacy Secretariat for "*Literacy Basics: Just in Time Online Training Modules.*" Project goals include the development of four web-based practitioner training modules and the delivery of online training workshops on volunteer management and learner exit and follow-up. Watch for the application form for CLO's online workshops in January 2005.
- ⇒ The National Literacy Secretariat has also provided CLO with project funding for "*Online Training in Foundational Family Literacy: Moving Forward*". CLO is delighted to bring this nationally recognized training to the Ontario literacy community. CLO will provide this foundational training once per month from January to June 2005 online on Centra. Application forms will be available in early November.
- ⇒ CLO has also received funding from the NLS and the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities for "*Literacy Volunteers: Value Added*". In this project, CLO will research and write a promotional kit and research report on the economic and general value of literacy volunteers.
- ⇒ Through a detailed hiring process, Robb MacDonald was hired as the Writer/Researcher for this project. Robb has extensive provincial level experience conducting project work in the literacy field.

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