

The L.O.V.E. Letter ~ No. 16

The Newsletter of Project L.O.V.E. Winter/Spring 2004 PO Box 2000 Charlottetown PE C1A 7N8
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BOASTing about this thing called L.O.V.E.!

Project L.O.V.E. stands for Let Older Volunteers Educate, and is our elementary school project. BOAST stands for Bringing Older Adults and Students Together, and we find BOAST volunteers in intermediate and high schools.

In 37 schools across PEI, more than 270 very committed (mainly retired) older volunteers help students with their school work in various areas. In the elementary program, help is usually in that most important area, reading.

L.O.V.E. Volunteers go to their school once a week, spending between an hour and a whole morning or afternoon in the school.

They usually help one student at a time, listening and coaching them with words, reading aloud to model good pronunciation and expression for them, helping with classroom projects or to get caught up on missed assignments.

BOAST Volunteers are more flexible - some visit the school once a week, while others work on short-term

projects, which may involve more visits over a shorter period of time. The volunteer work is usually focussed on the areas of expertise of the volunteer.

Teachers whose students work with the Project L.O.V.E. and BOAST volunteers all agree: Their students benefit greatly from this help, gaining self-confidence through the interest shown in them by the volunteers.

New Program for LOVE at the Library

LOVE Volunteer Audrey Woodruffe is a pioneer. She has taken on the challenge of starting up a new type of Project L.O.V.E.

Mrs Woodruffe helps out at the Lap Sit Program at the Confederation Centre Public Library. Lap Sit is for very young children, ages 6 months to 3 years or so, with their mums, dads or caregivers. They listen to nursery rhymes and poems and do finger-plays in a session led by the Children's Librarian.

Mrs Woodruffe helps by registering the children, handing out materials, and

providing cookies and juice to the young participants after the session.

Chatting with the parents and holding some of the children is sometimes in her job description as well. "I really love the little ones, Mrs Woodruffe says. "They are just so sweet." She really notices their progress, even in as short a period as ten weeks, as they advance along from babes-in-arms to crawlers and toddlers.

The Library is happy to have the help - there are sometimes as many as twelve parents or caregivers at the program, often with more than one child - so an extra pair of hands and eyes is invaluable.

If anyone is interested in helping with younger children, either in a library situation or at a day-care or playschool program, please contact the office (at the above number). We are happy to help find the perfect opportunity for you to help even the very young experience books and literacy!

First Workshop Series a Success!

Thanks to so many of you for attending our first workshop series on the topic

of Helping Students who may have Learning Disabilities, presented by Sandra LeBlanc, Executive Director of the Learning Disabilities Association of Prince Edward Island.

Your evaluations were very positive, and your suggestions for additional topics will be very useful for planning future sessions.

If anyone has specific questions or requires copies of handouts, etc. please call the office.

MP Presents Cheque to Project L.O.V.E.

Hillsborough MP Shawn Murphy presented a cheque to Project L.O.V.E. Chair Liz Nimmo recently.

The cheque represents a grant from the National Literacy Secretariat for \$95,000.00. Project L.O.V.E. will use the funds over the next three years to present workshops, run recruitment campaigns, coordinate the project, and hire an independent researcher to study the effects of the volunteers' interventions with the students.

There will be more about this part of the project later in this newsletter.

Next Series of LOVE Workshops Set to Begin

The second series of workshops, entitled "**Book Walks and Library Resources: Enhancing the Learning Experience**" will be held in February and March. It will be led by Barbara Kissick, Children's Librarian for the Provincial Library System. All the sessions will be held in libraries.

The tentative schedule, (with storm dates) is as follows:

- 1. Charlottetown:** Monday February 16 (storm Date Feb. 23)
10 am - 12 noon at the Confederation Centre Library Children's Room
- 2. Summerside:** Friday Feb. 20 (storm date March 5)
10 am to 12 noon at the Rotary Regional Library Program Room
- 3. Montague:** Wednesday March 3 (storm date March 4)
10 am to 12 noon Montague Public Library (Town Hall)
- 4. Tignish:** Friday March 12 (storm date March 22)
1:00 pm to 3:00 pm Tignish Public Library
- 5. Souris:** Monday March 1 (storm date Thursday March 11)
10 am to 12 noon Souris Public Library, Souris

Town Hall

UPEI to Conduct Research on Project L.O.V.E.

Dr. Ray Doiron and Dr. Jessie Lees will head a team of researchers to conduct a study on Project L.O.V.E.

You may remember that there was a survey of Project L.O.V.E. volunteers, teachers and students just a year ago. This gathered some valuable information, upon which Dr. Doiron and Dr. Lees intend to build, to assess the impact of our program on Island schools.

The National Literacy Secretariat, which funded the project, is keen to understand just how much time volunteers spend with how many children, and what that time means in terms of improvement in the children's learning in school.

We have always been aware that it is difficult to assign credit for any improvements solely to our volunteers' efforts - after all, all children in school are working with a number of educators and having a number of different educational opportunities presented to them.

We are therefore happy that the experienced research team at the

University is willing to take on this difficult task, and hope that you will cooperate fully with them when they request your assistance. They will be asking you to track your time with the students, and list the activities which you do with them, and perhaps other things.

The National Literacy Secretariat has given us funding for three years, with the understanding that we will be able to produce a “blueprint” of our project which might be applied in other provinces.

We seem to be doing something unique here in PEI, and the N.L.S. would like us to be able to share the secrets of our success with others!

Boys will be Boys...Now we Know!

One of the great benefits of visiting schools as part of the workshop series is the opportunity to chat with the volunteers and hear about what’s going on.

One thing that we have learned, thanks to volunteer Allan Graham at Alberton Elementary School, is that the selection of stickers provided is not, shall we say, of great interest to some of the boys he tutors.

You will be pleased to know that we now are stocking

a more “masculine” line of stickers, featuring cars, wild animals, dinosaurs, and such subjects.

Anyone wishing to avail themselves of the new line should give the office a call!

And thanks, again, to the Kiwanis Club of Charlottetown for providing the funds to purchase stickers as rewards for the children’s efforts.

Learning Disabilities Workshops: Thanks for the Feedback!

The following is a selection of comments from participants at the LD series of workshops:

- Children should be tested early if the Teacher thinks the child needs it.
- Learned how many children are learning disabled which is important because often children are considered lazy, immature, etc.
- Also learned strategies to use in dealing with these children.
- Where resources were available
- How LD interferes

- with social aspects
- Lack of help available
- How to do things different when testing learning disabilities.
- How frustrated these people get trying to do things.
- That children with L.D. can be very smart academically
- Be understanding
- Present assignments clearly.
- There are so many disabilities out there.
- How to approach the student to assist in his learning
- That finally they are making the service of helping these people on P.E.I.
- There are many different learning disabilities
- Many of these go undiagnosed ‘til it’s almost too late.
- Many students have disabilities
- It’s difficult to get proper help.
- Accommodations to maximize learning
- We learned a lot about children who learn at different rates and in different ways.
- That a lot of people have learning disabilities
- To be patient with those who have problems

- Ways to identify LD children and info. On how to get a proper diagnosis.
- Areas in which students may be having difficulties unknown to teachers or others
- It's not always possible to recognize this
- It can be helped.
- Greater appreciation for the special child
- This is possibly hereditary.
- How to adapt to coping in a classroom with children who have L.D.
- How some kids cannot retain what they just heard or learned.
- How some disabilities result in inconsistent performance.
- As a parent I found out the difference between ADD and Learning Disabilities.
- Children should be diagnosed between Grade 1 and Grade 3 of a learning problem.
- One should seek a psychologist!
- There are many more learning disabilities than I had expected.
- Learning Disabilities are permanent

were still able to put your thought down so clearly. Volunteers listed 60 different things they had learned at this workshop. That's what we were hoping to hear!

We look forward to learning together at the next series of workshops!

We can't say it enough!

Thanks so much for your thoughtful responses to the questionnaire - after a busy two hours in a workshop you