

The L.O.V.E. Letter ~ No. 17

The Newsletter of Project L.O.V.E. ♡ Fall 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.

Education Minister Dover speaks at June Luncheon

The Hon. Mildred Dover, Minister of Education, spoke at the June Luncheon and also presented our 10-year volunteers with plaques honouring their stellar service to Project L.O.V.E.

In her remarks, Minister Dover told LOVE volunteers:

“Thank you for inviting me to join you today. I’ve heard nothing but great things about Project L.O.V.E, and I’m glad to finally have

this opportunity to meet you and learn more about your work.

“I want to begin by saying thank you for giving your time and expertise to this very worthy project.

“Project L.O.V.E. benefits many people in very important ways. It helps children feel good about themselves and confident about their ability to learn. It also lets them experience the joy of reading through quiet comforting moments with a special friend.

“It provides older persons with opportunities to spend time with children, and to share the wealth of experiential wisdom you’ve gained through your own experiences as parents and teachers.

“Current research on early literacy confirms the thinking we’ve had for many years: that a child’s ability to read is a powerful indicator of that child’s ability to succeed in school and in life.

“Overcoming difficulties with reading in the early grades can make a world of difference for a young child, in terms of how they understand what is being taught, and how they view their own ability to learn.

“For these reasons, I

believe we are extremely fortunate to have a wide variety of effective early literacy programs in place in our schools.

“The more a child is supported to read at home, the better chance they will have at achieving early success in school. When children are involved in family literacy activities such as reading a recipe or writing a grocery list, and when they see their family members reading, they see that learning is valued, and that learning is fun.

“It is very comforting then to know that children who don’t receive as much support at home have the help of a very special Project L.O.V.E. volunteer who understands and cares.

“Project L.O.V.E. volunteers also make a great contribution to our schools.

“Good schools are ones that benefit from the contributions of many partners.... teachers, students, parents and volunteers. With your support and encouragement, students are achieving higher levels of success in school, and they are really enjoying the learning process.

“You also serve as important role models for them, because many children don’t have the privilege of sharing time and stories with grandparents or older persons. You are enriching our

learning environment, providing needed support to teachers, and reaching students in very meaningful ways.

“Please be assured that the Government of Prince Edward Island is a very proud supporter of your work. Thank you again, and I wish you much continued success in the year ahead.”

10-year Volunteers Honoured

At the end of Project LOVE’s 11th year, thirteen volunteers were found to have been involved with the program for 10 years - since 1994!

These volunteers were honoured at the June Luncheon with special 10-year plaques presented by Minister of Education Hon. Mildred Dover.

The list of ten-year volunteers, 1994-2004, are as follows:

Teresa Gotell and Gertie Murphy, of Georgetown Elementary School; Nancy Warren of Parkdale Elementary School; Nessie Bowden, Jean Cole, and Gemma MacCormack, all of Parkside Elementary School; Rose Mary Howatt, Prince Street School; Martina Doyle, Mary Doyle, Anna Lea, Rose

McKenna, and Jean Morrison, all of Vernon River Consolidated School. Congratulations and a huge thank-you to all of these wonderful volunteers!

We also honour teachers who have been coordinating the project in their schools for ten years, because we know that it is a duty above and beyond the job they are paid to do: they are OUR volunteers as well! This year we honoured Pam London of Southern Kings Consolidated School. Thanks Pam!

Research Project Outlined at AGM

Dr. Ray Doiron and Dr. Jessie Lees, researchers and professors at the University of Prince Edward Island, attended the Annual Meeting in June. They described the research project they are undertaking on Project LOVE, an attempt to discover the impact of LOVE volunteers on students and schools..

Volunteers in attendance were asked to fill in a survey, which is just one of the several information-gathering devices they will use to analyze what impact the volunteers have on Island schools. They will also try to

discover what benefits students believe they get from the project; and how teachers and administrators in schools feel it assists their students.

Dr Doiron and Dr Lees will be conducting “focus groups” with volunteers in schools during this year to gather more detailed information and personal impressions of the volunteers.

We do hope that our volunteers will attend these discussion sessions if invited, and give the researchers the benefits of their many years of experience volunteering with Project LOVE.

Some volunteers were also mailed the surveys to complete and mail back, and we hope if you have received a survey that you will find the time to fill it in - not always a pleasant task, but your participation will ensure that the data the researchers collect is more complete. As each of our “LOVE Schools” organizes its Project LOVE slightly differently, all information gathered is valuable!

Bookwalks Workshops with Barbara Kissick

In February and March Children’s librarian Barbara Kissick conducted a series of workshops on ways to enhance reading. Those who

attended the workshops learned the following things!

- ★ How to capture children’s interest in books by a number of hooks
- ★ Resources available through library system to borrow
- ★ The time I spend with the kids is very important
- ★ Boys like adventure
- ★ Be creative
- ★ Learn about individual authors (and share)
- ★ Learn about background / places of the book
- ★ How to use everyday things to generate interest in a book
- ★ Introducing a book - so much to point out!
- ★ There is so much help and aids to work with
- ★ Barb is a wealth of information
- ★ How we can use books to enlarge topics
- ★ Some of the materials available
- ★ Different ways to make children interested
- ★ Reading backwards
- ★ Different languages
- ★ Other ways to get children talking about books
- ★ You can talk instead of reading and make the story come alive
- ★ Need to make reading

- ★ interesting to children
- ★ How everyday things may be used to do this
- ★ Ideas for piquing their interest
- ★ Where you can find ideas to bring to school
- ★ How to link non-fiction books to the storybook
- ★ How to do a book walk with a group of children
- ★ How to find additional material for storytime
- ★ Take life experience and put it with books
- ★ There is more to books than just the text
- ★ Ways to make books more meaningful for children
- ★ Use of magazines, maps, calendars photographs in teaching children
- ★ Pictures capture the child’s interest as much as words
- ★ Each child reacts differently to books
- ★ The resources available through the public library and how to access them
- ★ Simple ways to intrigue children with reading
- ★ The importance of one on one

Thanks so much to everyone who attended and participated in the workshops, and thanks so much for your

feedback! We really appreciate it.

Congratulations!

Another of our ten-year volunteers honoured this year is celebrating a special event. Congratulations to Gemma MacCormack and her husband Dan on their 60th Wedding Anniversary.

Balloons and Fridge Magnets!

If you noticed the balloons decorating the room at the AGM, and saw the fridge magnet in your registration kit, you might like to know where they came from.

Volunteer Canada is a national organization which promotes volunteerism and helps organizations in their efforts to organize properly so their volunteers are well-served in their volunteer experiences. In addition to information, volunteer Canada provides lots of gifts and materials for honouring volunteers.

The PEI Network of the Canada Volunteerism Initiative held a contest last year in which any organization which filled in a questionnaire about their

volunteers was eligible for a gift of Volunteer Canada merchandise. To make a very long story short, Project L.O.V.E won, and the balloons and magnets were from Volunteer Canada!

If anyone would like more information about Volunteer Canada and the materials which they provide, you may check out their website at www.volunteer.ca

Early Notice: Next Workshop Series to be held in October

Project L.O.V.E. is organizing the next series of workshops with a Reading Recovery Specialist from the Department of Education.

As usual, we will try to hold these workshops in five regions of the Island so you will not have far to travel to attend.

Watch for our detailed posters, to be delivered to your school soon. And do plan to attend!

In Memoriam

We were saddened to learn of the passing this summer of Nancy Warren, who volunteered at Parkdale School for ten years and

attended the presentation in June to receive her plaque from Minister Dover. Mrs Warren will be much missed.

Back to School!

Where has the summer gone? Best wishes for a happy, healthy and busy 2004-2005 in Island schools!