

# The L.O.V.E. Letter ~ No. 18

The Newsletter of Project L.O.V.E. ♥ Winter 2005 ♥ 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 250 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.

## Literacy - Our Most Important Goal

A year-end editorial in the Globe and Mail called for Canada to become the world's most literate nation.

It's simple, the editor said. Children raised in homes with books - many books - got the highest literacy scores in a recent study of 15-year-olds and their literacy levels by the OECD, (the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development).

Even the most wealthy children - who attend the most expensive schools - were no more literate than poorer children who came from homes with over 250 books. Regular use of libraries is also a major factor in students scoring high.

How does this affect the work of you, our LOVE

volunteers?

Well, you reading with students will help increase their literacy scores, and this will make them better able to cope with the future that they are facing: a future filled with CHANGE.

These future adults will not be able to get a single job **for life**, as jobs and work will be constantly changing. Good literacy skills will make them able to cope with constant change and the need to learn new things.

The editorial compared reading to hockey, and suggested that if Canadian children spent as much time reading as they do playing hockey (and if it were equally "cool" to be a reader as a hockey player) Canada would lead the world and become a reading power.

Your assignment: keep on reading with your students. Make reading fun for them. Talk about how enjoyable it is for **you** to get books from the library.

Relate how books have helped you learn new skills, experience new places and encounter new friends.

Help them to become good readers - it's the best gift they will ever get!

## Campaign to

## find more Volunteers in Prince County

Project L.O.V.E. now has a few volunteers in Elm Street and Athena schools in Summerside, but we would like to have more. Schools in West Prince (Tignish, Alberton) could use more volunteers also.

We will be putting inserts in the Journal-Pioneer in January to try to interest more residents to take up the L.O.V.E. challenge.

People often volunteer when someone they know asks them - or is having a good experience being involved in the same cause.

So, if you have friends in Prince County who ask you about your experience with Project L.O.V.E., tell them what it's all about! We would love to see more students benefiting from the help they get from older volunteers!

## Connecting Communities Conference

At UPEI on February 5 there will be a conference for those who work to help children. Registration is at 9:30, in the Classroom Centre, just off the parking lot north of the Atlantic Veterinarian College.

Sessions are planned on literacy, storytelling, making good choices of books for boys, learning disabilities, helping with homework and other topics.

Registration for the conference is free, and lunch will be provided. You must pre-register by telephone to 675-3614 or by e-mail to [sfl@upej.ca](mailto:sfl@upej.ca)

The workshop is organized by Frontier College, with financial support from the Great West Life Assurance Company.

## You Have What?

A volunteer noted that her young student seemed to be having a hard time climbing the stairs.

"Is there something wrong?" she inquired.

"Yes," he replied.

"What is it?" she asked.

"I have a broken spleen," he replied seriously.

"A broken spleen! Have you been to the doctor?" the volunteer asked.

"No, I don't have to go to the doctor," he said. "My mom is a nurse."

## What Benefits are We Providing?

Principal Paul Sullivan of Dundas Consolidated

School responded to this question.

"We have a large proportion of high-needs students, even though our school is small, he said. "We have resource teachers, Reading Recovery teachers, tutors, and Teacher Assistants, and still there are some students who don't get help. This is where our LO.V.E. volunteers come in. They fill that gap."

Dundas has nine volunteers this year, a very enthusiastic mix of new and returning volunteers. They all visit the school on the same day - Wednesday - and so have a chance to see each other, and chat about the work they do.

Yet, one volunteer expressed concern that, in a classroom of 20 students, there were four adults in the classroom, and then the two L.O.V.E. volunteers arrived to take their students out for some one-to-one time.

"I really wonder if, with so many people helping, we are really needed," she said.

According to Mr. Sullivan, we really **are** needed. "I teach a grade 7-8 class, and some of them have gone out with the Project L.O.V.E. volunteers," he said. "I can really see a difference (in their confidence) when they are called upon in class."

Another volunteer noted that the students in the

grade two class are really showing progress in their reading since the beginning of the school year. "Some of them weren't reading at all at the beginning," she said. "Now they are very comfortable and read quite well."

Another thing this volunteer appreciates is the opportunity to take children who already read well. "We get a chance to talk together and I hear some great stories," she said.

So, while we are waiting for the UPEI study of Project L.O.V.E. to be completed, we have this endorsement of the program. We are needed. There are never enough hands - and ears - to do all the working and listening that needs to be done!

## **Research Project Update**

Drs Jessie Lees and Ray Doiron continue to work on the UPEI - based research project on Project L.O.V.E.

Dr. Lees said recently that they are presently collecting survey sheets from teachers and from students. There will also be group sessions with students - similar to our focus group sessions - and the data from the volunteer surveys are being collated.

The next phase in which you, the volunteers, will be involved is in tracking. Dr. Lees and Dr. Doiron are

designing an easy-to-use tracking form and they are going to ask volunteers from a number of schools to keep records for a two-week period. The records will help specify just exactly which tasks our volunteers are helping with in schools.

## **Family Literacy Day - Jan. 28 - Family Literacy Carousel - Jan. 29**

Every year the importance of Family Literacy is celebrated on January 28<sup>th</sup>.

This year Premier Pat Binns will sign the Declaration of Family Literacy Day, in recognition of the fact that literacy touches all aspects of life, and is not just an education issue.

On Saturday, January 29, at the Charlottetown Mall from 12 until 4pm there will be a Family Literacy Carousel.

Bringing together the Early Childhood Education Association, Frontier College, and the provincial Library system, the PEI Literacy Alliance hosts the carousel. This year there will be children's musical entertainment, reading, puppet plays, storytelling, and all

sorts of fun.

All are welcome to come and encourage family literacy at this lively event. Kits with information on how families can promote literacy are provided to all.

## **Celebrate Volunteers During National Volunteer Week - April 17 - 23!**

National Volunteer Week is a dedicated week in April set aside to honour and recognize Canadians who volunteer! Not only is it a great time to acknowledge the time and energy contributed by Canada's 6.5 MILLION volunteers, it's the perfect occasion to raise awareness of volunteerism in general.

April 17 -23, 2005 has been set aside as National Volunteer Week this year, and Volunteer Canada provides materials to help celebrate.

Visit [www.volunteer.ca](http://www.volunteer.ca) marketplace to order your FREE National Volunteer Week information package or postcards and posters, while supplies last. Shipping and postage costs apply.

## **Assistance for groups through**

# PEI Network CVI

Project L.O.V.E. volunteers are often volunteers for lots of other community organizations, so the following might be of interest to some of you:

The PEI Network of the CVI is looking for partner groups to organize and host several events before the end of March. Contact Shari at:

[peivolunteernetwork](http://peivolunteernetwork)

[@bbema.ca](mailto:bbema.ca)

or 886-2188 or 1.866.568.2188 for more information. If your group might be willing to host and help organize any of the following:

The PEI-CVI network has money allotted to cover the costs of these events:

- Mixers- to be held in several communities (this could take the form of a mini volunteer expo with displays by local volunteer groups and an open house in areas outside Summerside or Charlottetown,

OR: A networking evening with a speaker or panel about some aspect of volunteering (recruiting, employer supported volunteering, or how to encourage and support volunteerism.) and followed by discussions OR Lunch and Learn.

They are hoping to provide a networking opportunity for volunteers and voluntary organizations, in communities outside of Charlottetown and Summerside.

Many thanks to the fine volunteers at Dundas Consolidated School for modelling good reading practices for this issue of the newsletter!

Project L.O.V.E. is a member of the PEI Literacy Alliance. Support for Project L.O.V.E. comes from the PEI Department of Education and the National Literacy Secretariat. Project L.O.V.E. is a Registered Canadian Charity.