



Princeton Leaders for Literacy

Box 2028 Princeton, BC V0X 1W0

“Bridging the community ~ creating a strong union between
Literacy and life”

June 2009

DISTRICT LITERACY PLAN UPDATE

Reflection of the 2008 Plan

After receiving implementation funding from *2010 LegaciesNow* late last summer, the *Princeton Leaders for Literacy* task group (*PLFL*) established a relationship with the steward, *Princeton Childcare Services Society (PCCSS)*. In December of 2008 the *Literacy Outreach Coordinator (LOC)* for Princeton and area, Shauna Hassell was hired and she commenced work as of January 2009.

The local task group, *PLFL*, led by the *LOC*, has been working hard at the task of implementing the *Community Literacy Plan (CLP)*. To date work has commenced on 4 of the 6 action plan goals that are outlined in the plan. This is not to say that the goals are complete, but are in various stages of implementation.

Goal number 1 – Enhancing Community Awareness

- In January of this year *PLFL* held a Celebration Evening to announce the approved funding budgets
- *PLFL* had an important presence in Princeton’s first annual “Winter Celebration” which focused on physical literacy
- *PLFL* participated in the John Allison Elementary School “Bedtime and Books” program in which the *LOC* read to a packed gymnasium of parents and children
- *PLFL* has become a contributing member of the *Welcome Wagon* baskets which are distributed to Princeton residents, with information that outlines the role of *PLFL*, including descriptions of programs offered and opportunities to volunteer
- The *PLFL* has been a positive light for improved literacy in Princeton

- *PLFL* has seen an increase in support as our task group grows in numbers
- *PLFL* has seen increased municipal government support through attendance of community meetings
- The attendance of our programs and community events has increased
- Networking between the *LOC* and the *Princeton & District Community Skills Centre*, has resulted in the in the sharing of ideas and collaboration on potential programs for the betterment of adult literacy levels in Princeton and area

Goal number 2 - Facilitation of ongoing educational opportunities and to arrange for local training

- Increased focus in Fall 2009 will be priority

Goal number 3 – To build relationships and bridge connections between the age groups

- Increased focus in Fall 2009 will be priority

Goal number 4 – Enhancing health and physical literacy

- In February *PLFL* were front and centre in the community as part of the *Spirit of BC Week*, acknowledging the importance of physical literacy
- *PLFL* provided large, plain language posters that illustrated typical physical literacy's and the benchmarks for age groups to target through participation in sport
- Recently a youth task force *Princeton's Active Strategy to Re-energize Youth (P.A.S.T.R.Y.)*, has been formed, addressing youth at risk with factors such as health inequities and recreational opportunities for Princeton Youth. They are also including the vital links between their project and the different literacies they are strengthening, for not only themselves but other youth as well.

Goal number 5 – Acquire resources to implement the Community Literacy Plan

- *PLFL* has developed a partnership with a steward, hired a *Literacy Outreach Coordinator* and holds regular monthly task group meetings
- *PLFL* has been able to increase the number of task force members to a total of 11, an increase of 4 from January 2009

- The *LOC* has attended two *Regional Literacy Infrastructure Meetings* and will continue to participate on a quarterly basis for the remainder of 2009

Goal number 6 – Addressing speech and language delays in the community

- *PLFL* has recently partnered financially with the *Princeton Childcare Services Society* to provide a six week program that addressed speech and language delays.
- The “Talk-Talk” program commenced May 6th and ran for six consecutive Wednesdays teaching both parent and child techniques for improved speech delivery.
- The course is being run through the *StrongStart* classroom at John Allison Elementary School.

As a result of the progress made so far the work of the PLFL has had a positive impact on literacy in Princeton.

The most successful aspect has been that *PLFL* is working towards its goal, making things happen, watching the hard work and passion become a reality through well attended programs and increased community support.

There are always challenges, including the most important: continued, secured funding. There is significant time commitment that goes into future fund sourcing.

Evaluation has been based upon the remarkable numbers of residents coming out and supporting the process at events and activities. An increase of awareness and discussion at a variety of community meetings lends to our successful evaluation of Princeton literacy as well.

The role of the *LOC* has been beneficial as the residents of the area are able to put a face to the process of improving literacy. It lends authenticity to a sometimes ambiguous topic. Having a local *LOC* who participates in the community and supports the *CLP* gives the community an opportunity to play a role in the process. The people can ask questions, lend support and volunteer their time to help raise literacy levels, creating ownership and engagement. The role of the *LOC* has greatly improved awareness for Literacy in and around our area by hosting events, coordinating programs and networking with both the community groups and municipal governments.

Through the expansion of relationships with other community groups such as the *Princeton Childcare Services Society* and *Princeton Town Council*, *PLFL* has strengthened its resolve to build a better, more literate community. The ideal of working with the *Princeton & District Community Skills Centre* and the local branch of the *Okanagan Regional Library* to bring accessible and relevant learning to our community is essential to successful outcomes. The resources expended throughout the process thus far have been through our *LOC*, budgeted funding, community partnerships, and most importantly our community residents. They are our greatest resource and evaluation tool.

Looking forward to 2009-2010

The most significant change is the measure of awareness within our community on the topic of Literacy. Literacy is being discussed in conversations among families, friends, co-workers and municipal governments alike, and is no longer a quiet, unspoken word, as the shroud of mystery and/or inadequacy lifts. *PLFL* needs to maintain its momentum and mobilize for change to continue to strengthen the community.

Stage three – Implementation

Challenges recognized by the *PLFL*

- Engaging priority populations from low income to single parent to drug affected residents
- Creating a way for the priority populations to willingly come to the table and try something new and exciting that is beneficial to not just themselves as individuals but to their entire family, friends and community

Changes to our current *CLP* have been at a minimum as we are in our first year of implementation. New initiatives invariably come up in discussions within our task force including;

- Improved use of plain language correspondence
- Expanded programs for youth
- Creation of a local adult literacy program
- Produce plain language health literacy pamphlets

The role of the *Regional Literacy Coordinator (RLC)* as well as the local *LOC* will lead the way of improved literacy by providing:

- Direction of the *CLP*
- Action planning goals
- Creative ways to weave literacy into day-to-day activities
- Advocacy for stable funding
- Community meetings for future literacy planning
- Partnerships with different agencies that play a role in providing resources / programming

Resources that we will need to increase our literacy success include:

- Secured funding
- Stronger provincial/regional literacy infrastructure
- Professional development seminars offered province wide
- Enhanced partnerships between governments and community