



Princeton Leaders for Literacy

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2013 Literacy Plan

1. Who is the Task Group?

Princeton Leaders for Literacy (PLFL) consists of a small board of active and dedicated volunteers. Princeton Family Services is the non-profit society who stewards the literacy task force, so PLFL is able to operate and apply for grants as a non-profit.

PLFL meets monthly to discuss programs and make literacy decisions around funding and meaningful community impact.

Heather Ericksen - Princeton Family Services Manager & PLFL Executive Director

Steve McNiven - School District #58

Leah Ward - School District #58

Jane Kempston - School District #58

Nadine McEwen - Princeton and District Recreation and Culture Coordinator

Dierra Maynard - Literacy Outreach Coordinator

2. Community Context

Over the past year, Princeton has recognized a slow influx of new families to the community as a result of the reopened Copper Mountain Mine. Close to 300 people are employed at the site. However, a shortage of infrastructure has kept many workers and their families from relocating here. Many mine employees are working long shifts with no days off for long periods of time in order to go home to their home town on their extended days off. This transient work force has failed to boost the local economy as quickly as was first anticipated.

However, families are slowly realizing the separation of family for extended periods of time has its own downfalls and there is a slow trend of relocation. Schools are welcoming new students and Princeton Secondary School proudly celebrated the graduation of 42 students.

The mine has had and is continuing to have a positive impact on many local businesses who are presently experiencing an increasing economy incline.

Weyerhaeuser Princeton is also experiencing an economic turn around. The logging industry has been struggling in recent years, but Weyerhaeuser Princeton has recognized a new influx of product demand and profit.

Two other new mines have opened in Princeton and are winding up to full production. Huldra Silver Mine and Coalmont Energy. Coalmont Energy has a strong focus on hiring locally.

In general, Princetonites are feeling hopeful, optimistic and more secure about their future in this rural community. Businesses are recording higher profits than in previous years and purse strings are loosening. Numerous businesses, new and old, are looking to sponsor events and local organizations.

Recently, Literacy Outreach Coordinator Dierra Maynard has been able to forge some valuable connections with these businesses.

3. Community Development and Collaboration

In October of 2012, PLFL hired a new LOC. Dierra Maynard replaced Elaine Rutherford. Rutherford held the position for one year and took over from an LOC who only stayed in the position for 3 months. Rutherford was able to nurture and revitalize literacy partnerships and programs already in place and facilitate two new programs; **The Red Bookshelf Program** and **The Child Minding Program** for Young Parents enrolled in the alternate school The Bridge.

The Red Bookshelf Program was formed with a small set up grant. Princeton Secondary School built, free of charge, the red bookshelf for the program under the supervision of teacher Shane O'Malley. Riverside Community Centre provides a space to house the red bookshelf. The program offers books **free of charge** to the community to borrow or keep. The community has really embraced the Red Bookshelf program and it has become self-sustaining through donations. The facilitator only has to collect book donations and maintain the organization of the bookshelf monthly. The Princeton branch of Okanagan Regional Library and Princeton Crisis Assistance centre have been huge donators. Community "book fairies" also drop off books at the bookshelf for placement.

The "Books for Babies" infant literacy bags are provided at a minimal cost to the community. This program was initiated at the request of Health Nurse Beatrice Bibby. Princeton Leaders for Literacy successfully applied to become part of an outstanding North American book program called First Books. Monthly online grants from various corporate sources such as Target, TD Bank and Random House are provided to hundreds of non-profit organizations in an ambitious attempt to make sure every child has books in their home. The only expense is shipping. **The books are free** through these generous corporate sponsors who believe literacy is a priority on our continent. PLFL LOC applied for books and was successful. Several thousand dollars worth of beautiful books (482 books) were picked up from Raincoast Books in Richmond, B.C. through a Vancouver based HSBC grant. Books were distributed to several literacy initiatives; **Books for Babies, One-to-One Reading and The Amazing Literacy Race.**

The Child-Minding Program was helping parents of small children go back to school. This program was in partnership with School District #58, Princeton Leaders for Literacy and Princeton Family Services Society. The program provided free child minding to young parents enrolled in The Bridge (alternate school) while they work to complete their Grade 12. The program has celebrated the graduation of some of these young parents.

*This program is supplemented with School District funding and 2010 LegaciesNow final year funding.

When it was announced that LOC funding was cut to Princeton at the beginning of 2013, PLFL board member Nadine McEwen and LOC Dierra Maynard met with Bridge program facilitators Terri Ortwein and Andy and Princeton Secondary School Principal Sandee Blair to discuss the program's overall impact and success. It was decided to discontinue the program in conjunction with the Easter break for School District #58 due to lack of steady and committed use by students.

The One-to-One Tutoring Program is helping learners of all ages increase their literacy skills. The program aids students from all **three** schools to improve their reading, writing and math. The program has successfully assisted Princeton Secondary School students who were in peril of failing their courses go from a failing grade to a passing grade. The tutoring program is aiding adult learners to become more literate. Some have enrolled in the program to complete schooling, some are learning basic reading skills and some are learning the English language. Adult learners are increasing their employability and educational opportunities. The tutoring program has partnerships with Princeton and District Community Skills Centre, School District #58, Riverside Community Centre, Princeton Family Services and Princeton Leaders for Literacy. The tutoring program has grown in popularity and is now receiving numerous requests each month for learner aid.

*This program is presently supported by 2010 LegaciesNow final year funding.

The Senior Computer Program was and is inspired by seniors. A need was identified for beginner to intermediate computer training for seniors. The courses are offered through Princeton Skills Centre. The program is aiding seniors to embrace the computer world while learning new skills for life and their community involvement as volunteers. Seniors are becoming less isolated and more engaged in their community. The tutoring program has partnerships with Princeton and District Community Skills Centre, Princeton Family Services and Princeton Leaders for Literacy.

*This program is supported by 2010 LegaciesNow final year funding.

The Amazing Literacy Race is a **fundraising initiative** supported by School District #58. It was a pilot fundraising event held on May 9, of this year. The event engaged students from Vermilion Forks Elementary School to participate in a Literacy Race in the community. The Race involved corporate sponsorship. Physical literacy, creative literacy, financial literacy, power sense literacy, healthy eating literacy, avalanche safety, school curriculum literacy and historical literacy were all a part of the event. The event involved local business, schools, and community in a fun way while promoting literacy for life skills.



The Human Upload Computer Pilot Project is providing one-on-one tutoring to learners of all ages who need help navigating the world of computers and technology. Princeton Secondary School currently has two volunteer students participating in this pilot project in partnership with the Princeton Branch of Okanagan Regional Library. The program is at **no cost** to the community, but addresses a strong need for one-on-one computer skills training through the local library.

Celebrity Reading Day was organized through the LOC. It was held at John Allison Elementary School and involved 6 celebrity readers and one hour of classroom time. Celebrities briefly told students why literacy was important to them in their jobs

and then, read to the students from their favourite books. Celebrity Reading Day was held in conjunction with Family Literacy Week.



Further, PLFL assisted China Ridge Trails Association in securing funding for their **Family Fun Day Event** held in conjunction with Family Literacy Week.

A mutual desire for community success through literacy has led to really positive open dialogue, resourceful idea making and respectful partnerships. By collaborating with established educational bodies, dedicated volunteers, educators, business, seniors and youth, PLFL has found people invested in this ambition of overall community success. These individuals and organizations have one thing in common...they willingly offer a leg up to those with the desire and the need to improve their literacy.

4. Goals and Actions

PLFL set out to re-establish firm bonds with all their partners already in place and strengthen programs whenever possible. They also made becoming a literacy facilitator of The Red Bookshelf Program a priority.

After, asking, educating and investigating literacy gaps in the community, PLFL established and commenced the **Child-Minding Program**.

When LOC Rutherford announced she would not be seeking to renew her LOC contract with PLFL, the board made it a priority to quickly find a competent replacement, so that no interruptions would occur to established literacy programs. By doing so, Rutherford was able to orientate Maynard to her new position before moving on.

PLFL also, identified the urgent need to start the process of program sustainability. They urged Dierra to start looking for funding opportunities and sponsorship.

Dierra successfully applied for a First Books Canada Grant for books which have been delivered to the community through Books for Babies, One-to-One Reading, Kindergarten Literacy bags and The Amazing Literacy Race.

A Community Foundation Grant was also received to cover the start up cost of signage for The Amazing Literacy Race. This grant amounted to \$616.00.

Other Amazing Literacy Race sponsors; Weyerhaeuser Canada \$500, Orica Mining \$500, Princeton Rotary Club \$300, Vermilion Forks Elementary PAC \$100, Sun Rype donated 148 juices to the event valued at over \$200, School District #58 sponsored the lunch valued at \$471.25 through Links funding, Coopers Foods donated oranges, prizes, their business and discounted the purchased snack supplies, the Town of Princeton donated their community tent, tables, chairs, set-up labour, prizes and use of the green space and public washrooms, Reicherts Sales and Services donated the use of their avalanche survival gear and a knowledgeable staff member, FortisBC donated prizes, 3 employees and a cool Power Sense challenge, Princeton Museum donated their museum space and manager, School District #58 also, donated Health Promoting Coordinator Lynn Slater and her expertise and enthusiasm, Princeton Arts Council donated prizes and their time for a Creative Challenge, Vermilion Forks Elementary donated equipment for the physical and puzzle challenges and Princeton Skills Centre donated their space, laptops, prizes and one employee for the technology challenge.

In January, of 2013, the LOC applied for a Grant-in-Aid from the Town of Princeton. To date no official letter has been received regarding their decision.

Dierra is presently working on several other granting opportunities; a New Horizons grant for the Senior Computer Program due July 9, 2013 and an RBC grant due late 2013...date to be announced, UCBC and the Ministry of Health due November 2013, TD Bank, BC Gaming Aug 1 - Nov. 30, 2013 and Telus due Sept 20, 2013.

PLFL is actively and aggressively searching out these and other funding opportunities so that all current programs can continue. In addition, the LOC met with Valley First Credit Union marketing and sponsorship staff last week. Valley First is presenting to their board the idea of corporate sponsorship of The Amazing Literacy Race and PLFL in the next few weeks.

5. Indications of Success

Success can be measured by many variables. For the One-to-One Tutoring Program success can easily be charted through student success. Students have stuck with the program...completing all 20 hours of their free tutoring lessons and some have continued to pay their same tutor for more lessons beyond.

ESL students have in the case of 5 Phillipino learners been able to complete their Employment test to stay in Canada. Two Japanese learners are continuing their education, with further lessons beyond their 20 hours of free sessions. Learner success can also be measured through word of mouth recommendations to the program from past learners.

High turn-over of the books in the Red Bookshelf at Riverside Centre is a sure indication of success.

At the end of each senior computer course, participants are asked to fill out a brief questionnaire. Seniors also participated in a survey a few months after completing the course. Overwhelmingly, seniors felt the course was valuable and that they were more connected to the world (94%) as a result of learning to email, Google, Skype and share information through technology. Seniors also, felt better able to protect themselves from fraud and other technology related financial and security concerns. Workshop participants (54%) also were passing on their knowledge to neighbours, family and friends.

The Amazing Literacy Race had many positive spin-off successes. Four teachers who participated in the event showed further interest in booking field trips to the Princeton Museum. The teaching staff and students were all talking about the event for days after it ended. Businesses were intrigued by the event and have since contacted PLFL for more information, including sponsorship possibilities and repeat participation. The Princeton Arts Council has proudly asked to display the poem creations in Riverside Centre. More students are prepared for the worst if travelling in the backcountry during avalanche alerts. Princeton Crisis Assistance was able to donate the food from the Healthy Food Challenge back to the community to families in need.

Children who were the recipients of the new books were in some cases thrilled to be receiving their very own first book ever.

6. Challenges

The biggest challenge for PLFL right now is by far the lack of funding. While other communities were actively searching out and achieving grants in previous years, Princeton fell behind the game. The new LOC is working hard to secure monies to ensure the continuation of programs.

Grants are already in the works to address the lack of funding.

The announcement by the provincial government in early 2013 of no funding for Princeton's LOC really caused a setback. Instead of mostly encouraging and

facilitating ongoing programs and searching out funding, the LOC's time was spent fighting for a restoration of funding. PLFL will continue to be a strong voice for rural literacy and long term literacy planning to all levels of government.

A long term commitment by government to continue to fund LOC's would be a very big help to rural BC.

The loss of a valued tutor recently has led to some worries. He was a valued math tutor of high school students. PLFL is actively searching for a competent replacement.

Some learners are requesting tutoring who have special learning needs such as dyslexia and ADD. It would be great if there were special tutoring workshops/online advice and teaching tools available to tutors to further aid them with meeting these challenges.

7. In Conclusion

Princeton Leaders for Literacy is continuing to fill crucial literacy gaps in the community. They have continued to bridge educational opportunities with individuals seeking a leg up. Seniors, youth and everyone in between is recognizing the value of PLFL and its network of community partners. The track record and exposure of the literacy programs through media, oral and visual presence has led to a feeling of community pride and ownership. A trust has been built between partners that continues to evolve. Partners are looking out for one another's backs by joining together to recognize gaps, solutions and opportunities.

Funding must be secured for PLFL programs. It is the number 1 priority for PLFL, so that programs can continue to create positive change and have a meaningful impact on rural residents.