

**Delta Community
Literacy Committee**

Literacy Plan Report

June 2012

Prepared by: Lynda Brummitt, Delta Community Literacy Outreach Coordinator

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Boys and Girls Club
Community Services
of Delta/Richmond

DELTA COMMUNITY LITERACY COMMITTEE

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REFLECTIONS ON THE CURRENT YEAR:

1) Task (Implementation) group:

a. Who takes part in the task group?

Members:

Boys and Girls Clubs of South Coast BC (BGC) – Roxanne Clark, Dianne Canning
Delta School District: Nancy Gordon, Catherine Watson, Paula Gelmon
SWIS – Hemi Dhanoa

Delta Board of Education – Laura Dixon
DiverseCity – Shabina Jahan-Chaudhary
Fraser Health Authority – Sepia Sharma
Fraser Valley Regional Library (FVRL) – Frances Thomson, Gillian McLeod
Kiwaniis Club of Tsawwassen Ladner- Neil Gray
Parent/Adults with Disabilities – Shirley-Ann Reid
Progressive Intercultural Community Services (PICS) – Poonam Kapoor, Eva Touzard
SOS Children's Village BC – Corina Carol
Tsawwassen First Nation (TFN) – Peggy Plumstead McLeod

b. How is the work of this group organized? (See the following section “Reflecting and Renewing: Ways to review and set priorities for the community literacy plan each year” for information about how task groups are organized.)

Our action group meets four times per year. The tasks of each meeting vary but include determining goals and objectives for the year, identifying projects and partnerships to accomplish goals, reviewing projects for implementation funds, and completing an annual review of progress. We recently incorporated an education component, which will be planned as needed. Our first topic was Literacy and Essential Skills.

We have a steering committee with representatives of the partners: Boys and Girls Club of South Coast BC (host agency), Delta School District, and Fraser Valley Regional Library that meets four times per year to make financial decisions and to oversee project development support and report preparation.

2) Community context:

a. What has happened in the community over the past year that impacts people in the community and the ability of organizations to support literacy development? Consider both positive and negative impacts.

Early Development Indicator (EDI), research conducted by Human Early Learning Partnership (UBC)

There is data for Delta that spans 10 years.

Latest results Wave 4 (2009/10 & 2010/11) District average of children vulnerable on one scale – 27%, the provincial average is 31%. The provincial goal is to have each district reduce the vulnerability of children entering kindergarten to 15%.

A recommendation from HELP, based on the 10 years of data, is to give consideration to proportional universality of programs and services for young children and their families. The discussion has often focused on universal programs versus targeted programs for vulnerable children and their families. Proportional universality refers to a universal platform of supports and services available to all children to be accompanied by additional targeted services for highly vulnerable children and children in low socio-economic status areas, with elimination of barriers as a key focus.

2011 Census Information

Growth statistics – 3 % growth reported in 2011 census compared to 9.3% average for Metro Vancouver. There is an ongoing trend of decreasing student population and increasing numbers of seniors. The 2011 Census data on age and gender released in May reinforces the aging of Delta's population – seniors make up 15.5% of Delta's population and the median age is 42.8 (up from 41 in 2006) On a national basis, there was a 11% increase in the number of children birth to 4 years old, the highest increase in over 50 years. However, in Delta there was no growth in the number of children in this age group, in fact the number decreased slightly.

By 2027 it is projected that Delta's seniors' population will represent 27% of its total population – compared with 30.4% in West Vancouver and 21% for the Metro region. (From Moving towards Age-Friendly Communities United Way of the Lower Mainland report).

Employment Services

The recent provincial-wide changes to employment services may result in a benefit for Delta residents. One organization is delivering the employment services to both North and South Delta. While the former employment resource centre was located in Ladner, South Delta is considered a satellite office, with fewer staff; unemployed Delta residents are able to access the full range of employment services at this location. There is some concern that the staff reduction at the satellite office could have a negative impact on South Delta residents. Once the new services are established, a Delta Community Employment Advisory will be established on which a representative of our committee will participate.

Early Childhood Development (ECD) Funding Cuts

The Delta ECD Committee has a smaller funding allocation for continuing its work. As a result, the funding for the Parent Child Mother Goose family literacy program has been cut. Prior to this change, the Boys and Girls Clubs and Fraser Valley Regional Library worked together and provided nine groups per year (three in each community), in a variety of locations to facilitate access by families with young children. In the past, the Delta Literacy Committee has supported this program by providing funds for required training for facilitators.

3) Community development and literacy collaboration:

a. What are the important collaborations that have taken place to support literacy and the work of the task group?

The on-going collaboration of the School District, Fraser Valley Regional Library, Boys and Girls Clubs of South Coast has been critical. This, along with the participation of community organizations and individuals, has helped us to reach out to individuals who have low literacy levels. This year, four of the six literacy projects initiated consist of partnerships of organizations working together to meet the needs of specific groups who have lower literacy rates.

b. What are the essential ongoing collaborations?

1. **Steering Committee:** Delta School District, Fraser Valley Regional Library, Delta Libraries and Boys and Girls Clubs of South Coast BC
2. **Parents as Literacy Supporters in Aboriginal Communities (A/PALS):** BGC/Early Years Programs/TFN/Kla How Eya
3. **Back to Basics:** PICS and FVRL-George Mackie Library
4. **Jarvis StrongStart Parents and Grandparents Group:** Jarvis StrongStart/PICS
5. **Adult Book Club:** Tsawwassen First Nation/FVRL-Tsawwassen Library

c. What makes collaborations work well?

Through collaboration, our members are able:

- to share and combine their knowledge and expertise of literacy to meet the needs of our priority groups (low income, immigrant/new Canadians and Aboriginal)
- to provide resources to develop projects that address gaps that exist in our community

4) Goals and actions for the current year:

a. What priorities, goals or objectives have you addressed this year?

GOALS:

- Recognize Delta as a literate community with a supportive culture for literacy
- Continue to strengthen collaborative school, public library and community partnerships
- Locate and support the literacy needs of hard-to-reach individuals and families
- Secure funding to sustain, and if possible expand, effective literacy programs and practices

PRIORITIES ADDRESSED THIS YEAR:

- Family Literacy – to continue to support investment of previous years’ projects
- Adult Literacy - to develop a pilot bridging project for a group of hard to reach adults
- Community Awareness and Education

b. What actions were taken to reach these? What organizations and groups participated in these actions?

Family Literacy - Food bank book and literacy kit distribution, A/PALS (BGC/Early Years Programs, TFN and Kla How Eya/Aboriginal Infant Development Program), District South Asian Student Support Initiative (DSASSI) Cultural Kits Pilot Project

Family Literacy/adult focus - Hellings Adult Literacy Club (StrongStart) and Jarvis StrongStart Parents and Grandparents Group (StrongStart and PICS)

Adult Literacy – Adult Book Club (TFN/FVRL- Tsawwassen Library), Back To Basics- for immigrants (PICS/FVRL-George Mackie Library), Speaking and Listening Intermediate Learners, (Delview Adult Learning Centre)

Community Awareness – Co-sponsored the North and South Delta Baby Fair events with the Delta Early Childhood Education Committee, Clear Language and Design Workshop for Delta organizations, Library Live and on Tour (LiLi), Adult Literacy Outreach from Fraser Valley Regional Library visit to the North Delta Food Bank.

c. What adjustments were made to the plan? That is, as the year progressed were there new opportunities or were there changes that did not allow for some actions to be taken?

Family Literacy:

- Parent Child Mother Goose (PCMG) – the current service delivery is under review due to funding changes that affect Delta Early Childhood Education Committee. We are currently determining the best way to support PCMG given the priorities of Delta Community Literacy Committee.
- Adult focus – introduction of the Raise-A-Reader funds requesting a focus on the adult literacy levels of parents. This gave our committee the opportunity to give additional consideration to support the literacy needs of adults participating in family programs in our community.

Adult Literacy:

- Plans to connect with the Delta School District Aboriginal Advisory Committee and the Delta Community Employment Advisory Committee were placed hold.
- Two new partnerships to support adult literacy initiatives were implemented: Adult Book Club and Back to Basics (see above for details)

Community Awareness:

- Introductory presentations on adult literacy made to Delta Child and Youth Committee and Delta Early Childhood Development Committee indicated support for a workshop that would provide an understanding of the literacy needs of adults and how to improve written communications required with service delivery.
- Workshop presented to 22 representatives of community organizations and agencies serving Delta residents: BGC, Corporation of Delta, Delta School District, FVRL-Delta Libraries, DiverseCity, PICS, Reach Child and Youth Development, Surrey Food Bank, Surrey City staff.

5) Indications of success:

a. How do you know that actions taken are working to support literacy? What impact have the literacy initiatives had?

- see table

Program	Indications of Success	What things support literacy work
<p>Aboriginal PALS (Feb/11-Jan/12 – commenced 2nd year Feb/12) - Format for monthly sessions with dinner provided that followed the A/PALS program manual</p>	<p>Combining literacy support with cultural pride – participants identified this as strength of the program; parents learn cultural stories, customs and activities to share with their children; positive relationships established; parents appreciated both the literacy resources along with the support they received from other parents; inclusion of non-aboriginal families caring for Aboriginal children gave opportunities for foster families to have cultural experiences together with their foster children.</p> <p><i>“This program was particularly effective in building bridges between TFN and the Delta Community. Families of all cultural backgrounds were welcomed and encouraged to participate in the A/PALS dinner program. This was a wonderful way to introduce Aboriginal stories, dance, food and art to anyone interested in learning more.” A/PALS participant</i></p>	<p>Partnership between BGC/Early Learning, TFN and K1a How Eya, connects more families to the program. Evening meal provided at each session Elders participation in presentation of cultural content Culturally rich environment of the location</p>
<p>Adult Book Club (Feb/12-May/12) – monthly meetings, group selected books to be read and participants maintained journals for recording their comments, impressions and thoughts. The fourth session was a trip to the Tsawwassen Public Library</p>	<p>The primary purpose of the book club is to establish a trusting relationship upon which future literacy success can be built. None of the 13 participants have belonged to a book club before. Participants reported that they are reading books they would not have chosen to read on their own, they are forming new social connections with members of the club, they are being introduced to accessing library services, the efforts of the librarian to create an inviting setting based on the monthly novel is a visible presence of being ‘valued’. The goal of building relationships has been achieved.</p>	<p>Partnership between TFN and Tsawwassen Library staff TFN provided meeting space Library staff prepared the activities to support the discussion of each book by engaging the readers in elements of the setting of the book Books and journals provided</p>
<p>Back to Basics (Mar/12 – May/12) – 2 hours per session 2 times per week - deliver literacy training immigrants at an easily accessible location, reach out</p>	<p>Creation of a classroom atmosphere that was informal, enjoyable, and beneficial to participants Positive social connections – students exchanged names/phone numbers Multicultural participants from Taiwan, Japan, Korea and</p>	<p>Partnership of PICS and George Mackie Library Provision of English language instruction and support from PICS Literacy rich environment provided by the library Literacy training in essential skills Conversation circles based on daily concerns –</p>

Program	Indications of Success	What things support literacy work
<p>and support them in enhancing their skills for better integration into the community (reading, writing, speaking, etc.)</p>	<p>Germany</p> <p><i>“I attended the English conversation program for one and a half month. In the program I learned about idioms, simple grammar, different country cultures... Beginning, I felt nervous and shy. Then I felt fun in the class. So I tried to speak with my teacher and classmates. It improved my English conversation and encourage me to talk. It was great and helpful course. I hope to attend and enjoy it again.” Back to Basics participant</i></p>	<p>ordering food in restaurant, making appointment with doctor, asking directions</p> <p>Access to library membership cards, books and services</p> <p>Access to computers and basic computer literacy instruction from library staff</p> <p>Numeracy – mock conversation on shopping/banking for learning basic numeracy</p> <p>Field trips to local shops and banks for practise</p>
<p>Book and Literacy Kit Distribution</p> <p>Books: Support literacy development of children at home:</p> <p>Monthly visits to the North and South Delta Food banks</p> <p>Nobody’s Perfect Parenting Groups offered through Deltassist Family and Community Services– books distributed to each of 3 groups offered this year</p> <p>Literacy Kits: distributed quarterly at food banks</p>	<p>Feed back from parents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cannot afford to buy books even at the thrift store, • Books have helped family with solving difficult problems (i.e. blended families) • One parent of an autistic child is able to select books that appeal to her child’s specific interests, • Another was able to connect with local employment resource centre and received a mentor to help with her plan to become self employed. • Library Live and on Tour – adult literacy program visited N. Delta food bank, new library cards issued with family visiting library the same day 	<p>Books, gently used, donated by Reading Tree, Delta Hospital Thrift Store and Delta residents</p> <p>Literacy kits – assembled based on the themes of back to school, family games and Christmas holiday activity.</p> <p>Connections to community - – library staff visit food bank quarterly, community information available monthly on family literacy programs, library programs and services, adult education opportunities, employment services, legal aid, etc</p>
<p>Hellings Adult Literacy Club (Sep /11– Jun/12) – parents and grandparents of Hellings StrongStart have introductory and informal English Language support</p>	<p>Building literacy skills shown through increased confidence of participants and increased participation in program activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants value their involvement – request “leave of absence” if they need to miss class. • Some participants have gained enough confidence that they will phone the school to ask to speak to the instructor when 	<p>Literacy rich environment of the StrongStart room</p> <p>Use of iPads</p> <p>Erasable white boards/paper/pencils</p> <p>Simple board games</p> <p>Conversation circles</p> <p>Games – Charades, bingo</p>

Program	Indications of Success	What things support literacy work
bi-weekly	<p>they are not able to come.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some of the participants are literate in their first language and some are not. Those with more advanced skills are able to help those less skilled, thus building the literacy and self confidence of the former, and the literacy skills of the latter. • Increased social connection and friendship among the participants • The location of the program in the school where their children and grandchildren attend has increased their familiarity and comfort to the point that some are considering volunteering in classrooms and helping teachers. <p>Reports from participants (anecdotal, media coverage) show that this program is breaking down the isolation experienced by participants</p> <p>A news report with Omni TV featured a grandmother attending the program and her grandson. Her grandson spoke of the pleasure in reading with his grandmother and sharing books that he enjoyed as a child. He said he was proud of his grandmother's efforts.</p> <p>Quotes from other participants: <i>"I love English. I like come here. Good,"</i> <i>One grandmother said her wish was to write her name in English before she dies</i></p>	Access to the learning assistance room – books are sorted according to reading level and participants can select books at their reading level
<p>Jarvis Strong Start Parents and Grandparents Group (Feb/12 – Jun/12) Modeled on the program offered at Hellings, to provide an informal setting for basic English and socialization</p>	<p>High level of enjoyment and social connection through learning basic English together – building vocabulary and print awareness (pre-reading skills)</p> <p>Increased level of comfort with use of many classroom materials – books, flash cards, colours, games.</p> <p>Increased opportunity to meet new people and interact with two non-South Asian teachers.</p> <p>Teachers observing that these activities are very empowering to</p>	Partnership of Jarvis StrongStart and PICS provides the needed resources for the program – literacy activities, supplies and English Language support

Program	Indications of Success	What things support literacy work
	senior students as they will have more opportunities to initiate and engage in free play with their grandchildren.	
<p>Speaking and Listening for Intermediate Learners (Jan/12 to Jun/12) Weekly, 3 hour class for adult ESL students who have functional English but want to be fluent.</p>	<p>Increased fluency when speaking English – initially students shy and would not initiate English conversation, after 16 weeks the reverse is true. Students are at ease and comfortable speaking English, participating in and initiating conversation topics.</p> <p>The students appreciate the relevancy of the course content, they practise using day to day situations, and they give each other ideas for a situation, and each report back to the class on the results. Their discussion of current events covers many difficult issues, which some have personally experienced and willingly share (i.e. human smuggling).</p>	<p>Curriculum that is based on real life experiences – parent/teacher interviews, doctor appointments, telephone conversations. Use newspapers, documentaries, current events and personal stories for conversation topics. Use of student presentations such as food demonstrations. Diversity of the students in the class – from many different countries, cultural and linguistic groups, with a wide variety of life experience.</p>
<p>Community Awareness North and South Delta Baby Fairs Oct/11 and Feb/12 An information fair for new and expectant parents to raise awareness of the important role they have in literacy development of their children</p>	<p>400 copies of Babies Love Books – guide for grown-ups were distributed, as well as handouts providing tips for parents. Comments from participants.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The fair was very informative, really enjoyed it! • Loved the play area for kids. • It was fabulous. I walked in by surprise- we had a dance class here. Everything was well put together. • Had a great time. The fair is great. I get a lot of information which is really helpful. • Lots of stuff & good information. Not much to change 	<p>Partnership with Delta Early Childhood Education Committee. Shared the resources and people power of both groups for planning and organizing the two events.</p>
<p>Community Awareness Clear Language and</p>	<p>Participant feedback indicated that the workshop met their</p>	<p>Introductory workshop about the use of clear language and design when working within a diverse</p>

Program	Indications of Success	What things support literacy work
<p>Design Workshop, March 5, 2012 This workshop was offered to introduce community organizations and institutions to the concept of clear language and design.</p>	<p>needs.</p> <p>Twenty-two individuals attended from a wide-range of organizations. Subsequently, three organizations have requested the contact information of the instructor to make arrangements to hold a similar workshop in their workplace.</p> <p>Participant feedback indicated that the workshop met their needs.</p>	<p>community. It provided both information and practical tips for applying new knowledge including: the basics of how to write easy to understand materials using the principles of clear language and design and how to write communications in a way that is understood the first time that is read.</p>

6) Challenges:

a) What are the difficulties? And b) what would help?

In general terms, the geography of Delta creates challenges regarding access. The geography includes three distinct communities that are separated by a large bog, three major highways that are impacted daily by commuter traffic, and poor access to public transit. This often necessitates programs being offered in each community to ensure that individuals and families are able to participate. In the case of adult literacy programs, there is a need in some programs to provide childminding so parents can attend.

This year, based on the needs of the community, literacy projects were offered in the three Delta communities in order to overcome the barrier imposed by lack of transportation. Of all the projects, the A/PALS group is most challenged because the Aboriginal families in Delta live throughout the community and transportation can be a challenge to both of the locations where the program is offered. Where possible, transportation assistance is provided for families wishing to attend.

The following adjustments being considered to our current programs include:

- Based on their first year of experience the organizers for A/PALS are going to review the schedule of the individual sessions to have a better balance between children's play needs and the parents' desire for learning from the Elders and other resource people.
- Both Hellings Adult Literacy and Jarvis StrongStart Parent and Grandparent Group have discovered that their students would benefit from weekly sessions rather than current 2 times per month or bi-weekly schedule. This suggestion will be considered for the sessions starting in September.
- The facilitator of the Hellings Adult Literacy identified the challenge and time consuming nature of finding level appropriate activities. This will be partly addressed by including speakers and community field trips to the program (this year library staff came to talk about library services and it was followed up with a field trip – very successful). Another option is to consider formation of a partnership with an organization that has adult literacy expertise.
- Back to Basics – the meaning of the name of this project was not clear to participants. It will be changed for the Fall and more promotion will be done in the neighbourhoods surrounding the library.

FOR THE COMING YEAR:

1) Are there new opportunities, challenges or issues in your community? How will you respond to those?

Two new programs in the process of establishing themselves in our community may serve individuals with literacy needs. We will contact these programs to explore opportunities for partnership.

- WorkBC Employment Service Centre/Delta Community Employment Advisory Committee and
- Vulnerable Immigrant Population Program

Knowledge of Literacy and Essential Skills – a presentation to the action group started the discussion on the importance of this information for employers. Delta has many small businesses and the Essential Skills information may not be readily available to them. We will look at ways to connect with business organizations through members of our committee.

2) What goals, priorities or objectives will you work on in the coming year? What actions are planned against those goals?

This year we have initiated projects for hard to reach groups in our community. The projects include family literacy, family literacy with an adult focus, and adult literacy. We expect to support the development and maturation of these projects. We will continue community education and awareness that promotes the importance of family literacy support for parents with lower literacy skills, the importance of continuous learning, and essential skills.

Our goals remain:

- Recognize Delta as a literate community with a supportive culture for literacy
- Continue to strengthen collaborative school, public library and community partnerships
- Locate and support the literacy needs of hard-to-reach individuals and families
- Secure funding to sustain, and if possible expand, effective literacy programs and practices

3) What will be required to meet the goals and effectively employ actions for the coming year?

In our experience, working in partnership on collaborative projects is effective in addressing the literacy gaps in our community. Sharing expertise, knowledge and resources have resulted in projects that target specific literacy needs of Delta residents who would not otherwise receive literacy support otherwise. We will continue to develop and nurture partnerships and expand the membership of our committee.

We will submit our request for the second allocation of implementation funds in reserve for our committee. As our current projects develop and grow over the next year, we will seriously consider sustainability and look for ways to support projects beyond the term of this funding.