



www.literacymerritt.ca

Literacy Merritt & Nicola Valley Society

Box 1510

Merritt, BC V1K 1B8

250 315 5851

info@literacymerritt.com

June 12, 2012

District Literacy Plan 2012

Reporting period July 2011 – June 2012

Prepared by Robyn Grebliunas, Literacy Outreach Coordinator,
Literacy Merritt & Nicola Valley Society

Project History

SUMMARY 2008-present day

In 2008 Merritt received the three year grant for community literacy implementation funds. A Literacy Outreach Coordinator (LOC), Robyn Grebliunas, was contracted in late 2008. Robyn continues to work as the LOC on the project. A Literacy Merritt Task Force (LMTF), representing sectors of the community, provided leadership and governance to the project, through a steward agreement with Merritt Youth and Family Resource Society, from 2008 – April 2012. In April 2012 Literacy Merritt formed a not for profit society called Literacy Merritt & Nicola Valley Society and signed a steward agreement directly with Decoda Literacy Solutions. A board of directors, representing literacy sectors of the community, provides governance and leadership to the society.

Implementation

Coordination and plan implementation is carried out by the LOC, directors, contracted instructors and volunteers. The board of directors represents a broad sector of the community: literacy, library, school district, social development, early years, Aboriginal, crime prevention, adult education and business. The recent changes in governance will continue to strengthen the group's leadership. Literacy Merritt continues to focus on keeping a balance of community representation on the board of directors and ensures that the voices at the table represent the four pillars of literacy: early years, k-12, adult and Aboriginal.

Reflections

1. Task Group

a) Board of Directors:

Board of Directors:

President: Steve McNiven, Assistant Superintendent, School District #58

First Vice President: Faye Adhemar, NVIT

Secretary/Treasurer: Deborha Merrick, Merritt Public Library

Directors at Large: Tracy Dunsmore, RCMP, Community Policing

Liz Touet, Work BC

Jane Kempston, SD #58

Georgina Beatty, ISETS

Barbara Sobaszekiewicz, Conayt Friendship Society

Staffing:

LOC: Robyn Grebliunas, R Brand Productions

Bookkeeper: Jeet Panghali

Instructors: Jeet Panghali

Curtis Kanigan (contracted ended March 2012)

Jeff Bloom (contract ended October 2011)

b) The LOC is contracted 15 hours per week to carry out the work of Literacy Merritt. The instructors are contracted for delivery of programming. Volunteers carry out the promotion of DPIL. The board of directors meets once monthly to provide governance and leadership to the project.

2. Community Context

a) Community Context: The economic state of British Columbia is affecting the need for adult literacy in our community. The declining forestry industry is forcing people who depend on large incomes to make career changes. This often requires the person to seek out a dogwood or grade 12 diploma. The local economy is putting more demand on programs like DPIL, Success by Six and Strong Starts that provide services for free to the community. Literacy Merritt stays in contact with these programs. We have supported the funding efforts of Dolly Parton Imagination Library since 2009. The Board of Directors continues to discuss gaps in community literacy services and form partnerships to help fill those gaps. The economy is negatively affecting the ability for private business to sponsor programs. The change in government at all levels continues to slow down the grant application process. There is more demand on literacy needs and less resources available. The social standings of our community show a great need for basic adult literacy services.

3. Community Development and Literacy Collaborations

a) Community Collaborations:

Literacy Merritt has been a leader at creating community partnerships and bringing a diverse group to the table to tackle community literacy services. In 2009 we set out to form those community partnerships and we have maintained these collaborations through to 2012 and the opening of our non-profit society.

Community Partnerships:

Literacy Merritt has been very successful at building community partnerships. Community partners have included: School District #58, Community Policing Office, Interior Health, Merritt Public Library, Nicola Valley Institute of Technology (NVIT), Merritt Youth and Family Resources Society, CFDC Nicola Valley, Merritt & District Chamber of Commerce, Work BC, Conayt Friendship Society, City of Merritt, local media and private business.

b) The essential ongoing collaborations are reflected on the Board of Directors bringing together school district, public library, RCMP, Work BC, social development, business development, adult education and aboriginal representation.

c) The collaborations work well because the community members coming together at the literacy table share a common goal of working to identify gaps in community literacy and then build partnerships to help fill those gaps.

d) Community Awareness

Literacy Merritt works in partnership with local media to create community awareness about literacy services, literacy tips and literacy challenges. Merritt News, Merritt Herald, Merritt Morning Market, Q101 radio, and Shaw TV have been very supportive media partners. Articles and stories have been published in local media, along with information about courses and events. Stories have been covered on Shaw TV. Events have been coordinated to help create community awareness. Direct contact has been made with community representatives. Presentations have been made to Merritt City Council, School District 58 Board of Directors, and the Rotary Club of Merritt.

4. Goals and Actions for the Current Year

A and B) *Programming and Services*

Literacy Pillar: early years, K-12, Aboriginal, adult

Project: Bright Red Bookshelves

Project Partners: school district, community policing, local businesses and services

Project Funders and Supporters: school district, CPO, Success by Six, community, LMNVS

Project History and Actions: in 2011 we formed partnerships with CPO and the school district to implement this community program. High school students built and painted our bookshelves at school. A special needs class at the high school assists us with the maintenance of the project. We currently have 16 bookshelves located in the community.

Literacy Pillar - Adult and Aboriginal Services:

In 2009 the Literacy Merritt Task Force chose to focus on the largest gap in literacy services,

which was at that time, and continues to be, adult literacy in our community. The following action has been taken since then:

Project: Computer Literacy for Seniors

Project History and Actions: In 2009 Literacy Merritt developed curriculum for a Computer Literacy for Senior's course. The course was offered three times in 2009 and five times in 2010 in partnership with Merritt Public Library. Literacy Merritt could not keep up with the demand for this course and the long student waiting lists. In 2010 we applied for and received \$25,000.00 funding from New Horizons to expand the program. Merritt Public Library is a partner in the program. We purchased a computer cart (portable lab) consisting of 12 lap tops, software, printer and projector, as well as hired a program coordinator – Jeff Bloom. This has allowed Literacy Merritt to expand Computer Literacy for Seniors into an outreach program. We worked with the Senior's Society which has 150 members belonging to the Senior's Centre. We delivered at Senior's homes – The Florentine and Nicola Meadows – and we have excitedly expanded to include Lower Nicola Indian Reserve's Elder's Society. When the New Horizons funding ended, in 2011, we formed a partnership with School District 58. The school district provides us with classroom space and some classroom furniture. We are currently running Computer Literacy for Seniors two hours a week. Classes continue to be full. We plan to look at offering off-site classes on a fee for service basis in the future.

Project Partners: SD#58, public library

Project funders and supporters: SD#58, New Horizons for Seniors, LMNVS

Project: Get Your Grade 12 for Free

Project History: In late 2010 we were approached by South Central Interior Distance Education School (SCIDES) about the low enrolment of local people in the Dogwood Certificate program. In November 2010 and January 2011 we worked in partnership with SCIDES and Merritt Public Library to host "Get Your Dogwood for Free" information sessions. Fifty Adults attended the sessions and 100 adults contacted SCIDES to find out more information, with 80 adults registering into the Dogwood Program. The promotions were later expanded to include the upgrading services at the local college – NVIT. To further support this program Literacy Merritt hired a Tutor and offered free tutoring and study skills workshops to the adult students five hours a week at the public library. The response to tutoring has been low with approximately 15 adults attending the sessions at various times. In 2011 and 2012 we offered two hours of free tutoring a week at the public library. These sessions were poorly attended. Currently we are referring students to NVIT where they can access free tutoring. C) We are also discussing a partnership with NVIT to expand their tutoring services off-site.

Project Partners: SD#58, public library, Nicola Valley Institute of Technology

Project Supporters and Funders: LMNVS

Project: English as a Second Language for Adults (ESL)

Project History: In the summer of 2009 we developed ES L for adults program by producing a nine week curriculum package. In September 2009 two instructors were hired to deliver the course – Carmella Mathieu and Mike Tomlinson. Both instructors are working on a master's degree in ESL. The course ran with 12 adult students who attended a nine week program.

Students received two one hour classes a week and a one hour ESL Coffee Circle where they could practice their skills. The Coffee Circle was run by a community volunteer. The course was offered for free in partnership with Merritt Public Library. Based on the success of the program, Literacy Merritt committed to three program deliveries in 2010. The original students continued to attend the classes and new students were recruited. The ESL Coffee Circle was later replaced with more classroom instruction, due to lack of interest from the students who would prefer more classroom time. This nine week program was delivered twice in 2011. The original instructors continued to teach in the program. Currently ESL classes are not being offered due to limited funding. ESL applicants were encouraged to work with our tutoring program. C) Partnerships with Kamloops Immigration Services are currently being explored.

Project Partners: public library

Project funders and supporters: LMNVS

Literacy Pillar - Early Years:

Project: Dolly Parton Imagination Library

Project History and Actions: An energetic volunteer committee of the community members launched the Dolly Parton Imagination Library Program (DPIL) in Merritt in 2008. In 2009 the funding and the energy of the volunteers ran out. Literacy Merritt adopted this program, provided some funding, set up a volunteer committee and helped them plan and implement fundraisers in 2010 and 2011. The LOC also successfully worked on community funding and sponsorship for the program. In 2010 over \$6,500.00 was raised to directly support Dolly Parton Imagination Library. Funds were raised through a Reach a Reader campaign, a Literacy Pizza Party and community and business sponsorships. The 50 children who were on the waiting list since 2009 were registered and new applicants did not have a waiting period. In 2010/2011 sponsorship was received from Success by Six (\$3,000.00) Sunrise Rotary Club (\$300.00) and Punjabi Roots Club (\$300.00). Literacy Merritt has attended the youth health fair each year and had promotional booths at the public library and Coopers. Recruiting volunteers is a key focus for this project. In 2010 we called the 150 families that had benefitted from the program and asked them to pay it forward by volunteering a few hours a year. We did not generate volunteers from the Pay it Forward campaign. In 2011 we tried to recruit volunteers at the senior's health fair and the children's health fair. Volunteerism for this program continues to be a challenge.

Project Partners: SD#58, public library

Project Funders and Supporters: Success by Six, Punjabi Roots Club, Sunrise Rotary, SD#58, LMNVS

Literacy Pillar K-12 :

Project: One to One Tutoring

Project History and Actions: In 2010 Literacy Merritt successfully worked in partnership with the school district to implement *One to One Tutoring Program* in the elementary schools. This program had existed in the past in the district but had not continued for various reasons. A One to One Program presentation was made to the school administrators in November 2010. In December we received notice from the district that four Merritt and two Princeton schools had agreed to launch the program. In January 2011 we ran a public relations and advertising campaign to recruit parent and community volunteers to the One to One Program. In February

we trained the One to One School Coordinators and volunteers through funding from 2010 Legacies Now. Literacy Merritt sponsored the books for the four Merritt schools and coordinated the book orders for the two Princeton Schools, with billing to Princeton Leaders in Literacy. C) In the Fall term of 2011 Literacy Merritt worked with the school district to transition into the schools. In this school year all five of the Merritt elementary schools participated and the school district provided coordination services for the program. Approximately 50 students have benefited from the program, and an estimated thirty volunteers have worked in the program each year.

Project Partners: SD #58s

Project Funders and Supporters: SD#58, local media, LMNVS

Project: Events

Project History and Actions: In 2009 we participated in a **Reach a Reader** campaign with Merritt Herald and coordinated a book exchange for school age children at a youth event. The purpose of the book exchange was to promote summer reading.

In 2010 we expanded this service and announced that **May is Literacy Month in Merritt**. City Council officially endorsed this announcement. The following events took place in May 2010:

- Literacy Merritt presentation to City Council
- School visits – the LOC and The Cat In the Hat visited two elementary schools to promote Literacy Month
- Community wide book exchange – this was held during youth week and symbolized the kick off to Literacy Month. We had music, free books, a fish pond, an early year's booth, a booth from Kindermusic and The Cat in the Hat. This outdoor event was challenged by inclement weather. This event was held in partnership with Community Policing and CFDC Nicola Valley – youth event.
- Reach a Reader campaign – held in partnership with Merritt Herald. Two volunteers dressed as Dolly Parton participated. Ten volunteers, including the Mayor, sold papers by donation. The LOC handled the coordination and administration of the program. All proceeds went directly to Dolly Parton Imagination Library.
- Literacy Pizza Party – a pizza party was held in partnership with Boston Pizza. Community members attended the event that included a Dolly Parton dress up volunteer, The Cat in the Hat, silent auction and toonie auction. All funds raised went directly to Dolly Parton Imagination Library. The LOC and volunteers coordinated this event.
- Plain Language – Literacy Merritt worked in partnership with Nicola Valley Institute of Technology to offer a Plain Language workshop to the community and our literacy partners. Literacy Merritt Task Force members were each offered two free seats in the workshop for their organization.

- Literacy awareness – columns were run in two local papers, interviews and event coverage was done by all five of the local media
- Sponsorship – NVIT, Rotary Club of Merritt and Merritt Morning Market all became sponsors of Dolly Parton Imagination Library during Literacy month. A business sponsorship package was developed in 2010 and is still offered to local businesses.
- During Spring Break we partnered with Merritt Public Library to offer Games 2010 at the library. Elementary school children had the opportunity to attend the library each day and play interactive games. A coordinator was hired to work with the children. The event was planned by the Coordinated and marketing was done by the LOC. The LOC worked at the event on the first day to assist with the start up. The positive outcomes of this event were new people in the library, large crowds each day, some new library cards issued.
- New-2-U Book Exchange: in 2010 and again in 2011 we will partner with Merritt's Music in the City 2010 to do a weekly book exchange at the outdoor performances held on Thursday evenings in July and August. On Canada Day in 2010 Literacy Merritt gave away hundreds of books to all ages and asked people to come back each week to Music in the City to exchange it for another book.
- In 2011 we chose to announce **June as Literacy Month in Merritt**, allowing us to focus on summer reading messaging. The following events are taking place:
 June 9, 2011 **Reach a Reader** in partnership with Merritt Herald and Brambles Bakery. Funds raised from paper sales will directly support adult literacy programming. Brambles Bakery will be featuring staff dressed as Dolly Parton, live music and story time to promote the project. Volunteer paper carriers will be out selling the papers by donation.
 June 16, 2011 **GM Fit** in partnership with Murray GM. The Cat in the Hat will be touring the community with GM to pick up book donations. The books will be delivered to the Community Policing Office at 3:30pm for a press conference and ribbon cutting of Merritt's first **Bright Red Bookshelf**. That evening the book drive and visit by The Cat in the Hat will continue at the launch of Merritt's Music in the City 2011. A book exchange and book drive will continue at Music in the City for the summer.
 June 23, 2011 will be the launch of **Get Unplugged and Play** – a program that will encourage students, and their families, to unplug from electronics and play outdoors, visit the library, read a book, have fun... A draw for participant prizes will be made at the youth asset development event in August.
- c) In 2012 we have not yet coordinated a special event as our focus has been on the transition to forming the non-profit society and seeking sustainable funding.

5. Indications of Success

a) Indications of Success in 2011/2012:

Bright Red Bookshelves – there are currently 16 bookshelves in the community with books from

birth to adult available, all 16 bookshelves are being accessed by the community.

Computer Literacy for Seniors – expanded our services to four off-site locations and worked with over 100 seniors, formed a partnership for services with the school district.

Get Your Grade 12 for Free promotion – attracted 50 participants into the sessions and 100 through the doors of the school, with 80 registering for the program.

Adult Grade 12 Tutoring for Free – have worked with 15 adults in 2011 and 2012, as well as formed a community partnership for services with NVIT

One to One Tutoring Program – worked with 30 students and 27 volunteers in five local elementary schools and successfully transitioned the program into the school district in late 2011

DPIL – have signed up dozens more children on this program and maintain an average of 150 children on the program at any time

Funding: successfully brought in additional community funding for literacy services

b) The factors that contribute to the success of Literacy Merritt are:

- An experienced, educated and dedicated board of directors that represents all sectors of the community
- volunteerism
- educated and experienced instructors delivering all programs
- Instructors, an LOC and board of directors who are passionate about their programs and about community development
- Maintaining a qualified LOC since 2008. The LOC has 22 years of successful experience in the areas of communications, events, non-profit management, HR mgt, building community partnerships, granting, fundraising and community development
- Continuous evaluation of program delivery is done casually in the classrooms at the end of each course. Instructors then submit a report that includes recommendations, concerns, and student feedback. Evaluation of community partnerships is measured through repeat partnered programs and events and the continued support of the partners. Evaluation on creating community awareness is measured through direct feedback from the community.

6. Challenges

a) Funding continues to be a challenge, along with volunteerism. While we have been successful with our programming, we need to still fill the gap of adult literacy services for adults who cannot read and write at any level.

b) New funding and sustainability funding is key for our community. We are focusing on this, but resources, partnerships and support will help. We are campaigning for more volunteers. Regular regional meetings with other LOC's would be helpful.

Looking ahead:

1. There is an opportunity to work more closely with local government, the local college, early years programs and the school district to build community literacy services. These opportunities will continue to be pursued and maintained in the future. We recognize the need give a stronger more direct message of what we need from the local government to build community literacy. School District #58 has shown great leadership and is has been working closely with Literacy Merritt since 2008. 2011 marked the end of our start up funding. The focus is now on sustainability of all programs and sustainable funding. Literacy Merritt requires support in accessing sustainable funding. We want to learn from other community literacy organizations that are sustainable. We do appreciate the regional meetings and training sessions when they are available. The local economy and socio economic rating of our community continues to be a key factor in the need for basic adult literacy services. We will continue to build partnerships, identify gaps in community literacy services and collaborate to find solutions to best fill those gaps.
2. In 2012/2013 we will be focused on rolling out our new non-profit society, finding new funding, achieving sustainability strengthening and expanding our community partnerships and planning for Literacy Merritt services and structure beyond the seed funding. The actions planned against these goals will be funding research and application, volunteer drive, public relations campaign, sponsorship research and invitation, research of communities who are sustaining their programs and services and hosting a community literacy forum to strengthen partnerships.
3. To meet our goals we require the board of directors remain focused on sustainability and planning. We need our community partners to join in our efforts for sustainability, planning and identifying and filling the community literacy gaps of our community.
4. Our progress in 2012/2013 will be measured through evaluation of program delivery, community participation in literacy activities, growth of volunteerism, obtaining sustainable funding, community partnership and expanded partnerships.

Summary

Sustainability:

In 2009 Literacy Merritt focused first on building and sustaining community partnerships then on developing and delivering adult literacy programs. While those programs continue to be delivered through 2010 and 2011, the Literacy Merritt Task Force has been focused on sustainability. The discussion around sustainability is about creating

programs that will be legacies in the community and finding sustainable funding. In August 2011 the task force participated in a strategic planning session focusses on sustainability. In April 2012 we incorporated as a non-profit society.

Funding:

The 2010 Legacies seed funding ended in the Fall 2011. Our society has managed sustainability since then. The seed funding has been essential to creating Literacy Merritt & Nicola Valley Society, building community partnerships, developing programs and creating community awareness. LOC funding for 2012/2013 has been confirmed. .

Literacy Merritt successfully received \$25,000.00 from New Horizons for Seniors to expand the Computer Literacy for Senior's program. The funding contract expired October 2011 and sustainability planning is being explored. In 2012 we were turned down for an additional \$25,000.00. An application to New Horizons for funding in 2013 has been submitted for a project titled Seniors as Literacy Leaders.

A funding application for \$2,000.00 was successfully received from Success by Six for the Bright Red Bookshelves in 2011. In 2012 we had a successful grant application for Success by Six funding to expand the Bright Red Bookshelves out to Aboriginal communities in the Nicola Valley.

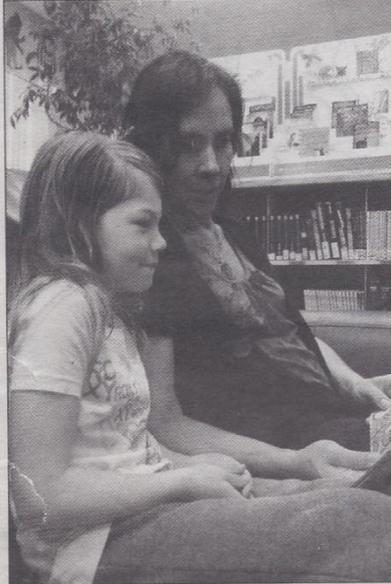
A joint proposal with NVIT for CALP funding was recently submitted for a project titled Adults in Literacy.

A City of Merritt Grant in Aid of \$1,000.00 cash and \$1,500.00 in kind for a Literacy Link Forum that will be held in January 2013, bringing together all of the literacy providers in our community to form partnerships and share presentations on services.

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NICOLA VALLEY NEWS

School reading program wraps up



Kristina Desmond, a volunteer co-ordinator with the One to One Reading Program, reads to Grade 1 student Jayda McKnight. Phillip Woolgar/Herald

By Phillip Woolgar
THE HERALD

reporter@merritherald.com

The One to One Reading Program is wrapping up another successful year teaching Merritt's elementary school students how to read, and now organizers have their sights on registering next year's volunteers.

"It's a really positive program and I think it's a great thing to have good news about the schools, and about teachers, because it's not really out there right now," said Jennifer Denton, literacy helping teacher. "Great things are happening in schools right now and I think that's an important message to give. People are coming together and working on a goal that is important to everybody."

Each student attends approximately three times per week.

"I really like reading," said Bench Elementary Grade 1 student Jayda McKnight. "It's fun and I get to play games."

The class is structured so that approximately 15 minutes is spent reading and 15 minutes is dedicated to reading games.

The program was on a hiatus,

but returned for the last 1.5 years to Bench Elementary School and is run throughout Merritt by the Nicola-Similkameen School District 58 after Literacy Merritt initiated the program.

Approximately 40 students are part of the program this year, Denton said.

"The students [who might benefit from one-to-one reading] are recommended by teachers," she added. "Some benefit in different ways, some need to move up a level in reading, while others might want to improve at their current level."

Kristina Desmond is a volunteer co-ordinator with the program. She said students love the initiative.

"Sometimes their time slot falls into gym class, but they are still happy to be here," she said.

The group is looking for volunteers. In order to be a part of the program, candidates must go through a criminal record check and several hours of training.

Volunteers can contact Denton at jdenton@sd58.bc.ca.

Each volunteer is asked to contribute at least 1.5 hours each week.

Dolly Parton Imagination
Library sponsored by Literacy
Merritt & Nicola Valley Society



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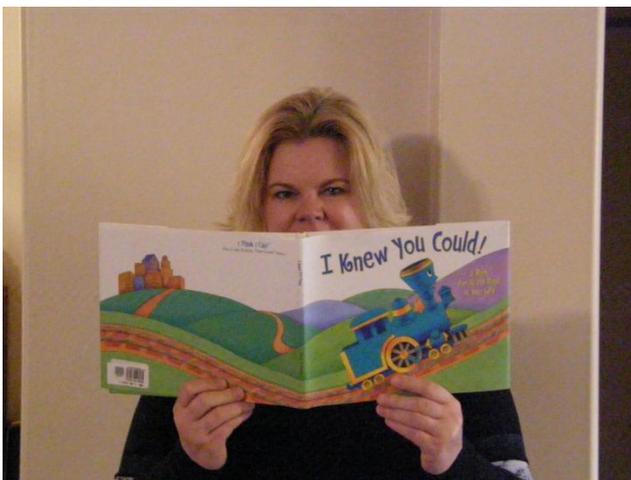
CHECK OUR BRIGHT RED BOOKSHELF LOCATIONS

Community Policing, Ministry of Children and Family Development, Merritt;
Youth and Family Resources, Merritt; Monts. Strong Start Programs, Interior
Health, Teen Centre, Family Place, Brambles Bakery, Espresso Etc., NVIT,
Hears & Hands, CLC & Nicola Valley Advocacy Centre

Thank you to our community partners: SD58, Community Policing & Success by Six



High school students working with LMNVs on the Bright Red Bookshelf Project



Dolly Parton Imagination Library Promotions

Community Literacy Plan Update: June 2012

Princeton Leaders for Literacy

submitted by

Elaine Rutherford

Literacy Outreach Coordinator

Reflections on the current year:

Community Context

The town of Princeton has had a challenging year. In a broad-brush analysis, it must be said that the reopening of the local Copper mine has not yet provided Princeton residents with the level of economic opportunity that many had anticipated.

The housing market has not flourished and there has not been significant increase in local business or population. Plans for an indoor recreation centre that many perceived as an incentive for population growth did not pass referendum. At the time of this snapshot, there is vocal and energetic protest by citizens, addressed to the decline of local hospital service, currently evidenced by weekend overnight emergency room closure.

The Princeton literacy task force, Princeton Leaders for Literacy (PLFL), have also experienced a challenging year. The structure of the task force has remained much the same as the year before, with representatives from Princeton Family Services Society, Princeton Parks, Recreation and Culture, Princeton & District Community Skills Centre and School District #58 regularly attending meetings. This group has weathered a four month gap in literacy outreach coordination, a short three month participation by Literacy Outreach Coordinator (LOC) number two, and a second gap in service from July to September of 2011. The current LOC has been in the position since October of 2011; just over eight months at the time of this writing.

Despite these challenges, PLFL has made a strong recovery and currently supports, in partnership with local organizations, three successful initiatives. These are our computer classes for seniors, our childcare program for young mothers completing high school diplomas and our community based tutoring program.

We are indeed appreciative of the literacy funding that enables these necessary programs to be created and continue to run. During this time of ongoing economic challenge it is crucial to offer literacy support to those who would otherwise have few means to build their skills.

Our Current Programs

- **Introduction to Computers and Intermediate Computers
(Courses for Seniors)**

PLFL continues to fund these two highly popular programs for seniors, which commenced in 2010 and are offered in partnership with the Princeton and District Community Skills Centre. Due to consistently positive course evaluations and full wait lists for all programs, PLFL funded extra programming in 2012. A comment from an evaluation sheet:

“It was very helpful to provide this. I am a Senior

who was feeling very behind with technology.

Having the course subsidized was wonderful”

- **Childcare at the Bridge**

In November of 2011 the current Literacy Outreach Coordinator brought the proposal for this pilot project to PLFL. The task force enthusiastically offered full support for the idea and by January of 2012 we were able to provide excellent on-site childcare to assist teen and young adult mothers attending the alternative high school program at The Bridge.

The pilot is now at its completion. Attendance stats indicate that an average of 2 children per day attended the program from January to March. Attendance has increased to an average of 2.5 children per day from April to June as the mothers gain familiarity and increase their trust in the program. One mother remarked to the LOC:

“Now I can attend school twice as often and so I have better continuity. This program is literally changing my life!”

Partners in this pilot have been PLFL, offering funding and coordination, and Princeton Family Services, assuming responsibility for childcare providers, insurance and supplies. Riverside Community Centre, the facility which houses the childcare project, has come forward with the offer of an extended contract and reduced rental fees for the coming year. School District #58 has been in full support and will consider how they can further assist the project in September of 2012.

- **The Tutoring Program**

In November of 2011 the current Literacy Outreach Coordinator brought the proposal for this second pilot project to PLFL. The request was that a block of funding be designated to pay qualified tutors, from December 2011 to June of 2012, with the service being established, supervised and administered by the LOC. Due to the wide range of learning needs in this small community, the LOC realized that the tutoring teaching would require differing skill sets and a dependable presence that could not be ensured with volunteer help.

Many community agencies have supported this project, both by making referrals and by offering public tutoring space. The Princeton and District Skills Centre has offered the use of one of their offices, and Princeton Community Services and School District #58 have also provided tutoring space. All of these are being used at present.

As of the end of June, the tutoring pilot will have utilized its funding to great success.

Service has been offered to 12 students, consisting of 106 hours of tutoring, with 54 more hours scheduled in June. There are currently ten students who have contacted the LOC and are in the process of completing intake. As well, the program has provided part time employment for three tutors.

Perhaps the most exciting thing about this initiative is the way in which we have been able to reach out to so many spectrums within the community, and to offer assistance with individual learning needs that formal establishments may not be able to meet.

To date we have provided tutoring to students referred from the Skills Centre for basic GED, the Anchorage Mental Health Clubhouse for basic literacy, and the Community Services New Beginnings program for students with learning challenges. We have also offered ESL for beginning and intermediate students, Algebra tutoring for an employee obtaining workplace upgrading, and general grammar and report writing improvement for front-line staff at a local agency. We have been able to offer some bridge ESL tutoring in May and June for four newly arrived Japanese elementary students, with the expectation that the school district will be able to meet the student's ESL needs in September.

In a community with a small population base, these are exactly the type of gaps that we are pleased to be able to address with literacy funding.

Plans for the coming year:

The Literacy Outreach Coordinator will continue to network within the community, assessing needs, working to develop appropriate literacy programming, and seeking the support of PLFL as needed.

Two of our current programs are now road-worthy and should need only minimal coordination in the coming year:

Introduction to Computers and Intermediate Computers courses for Seniors can continue in their present form, each running for one week, three or four times a year.

The task group may wish to consider expansion of these courses into two week blocks. The LOC solicited feedback for this idea from class participants and many felt that it would help them to have a longer period of training, in which they could engage in more repetitive practice, to help them assimilate their new skills.

Another suggestion has been to subsidize some members of the general adult population, and offer a similar course, as the acquisition of computer skills has been variable and there is a segment of the population in Princeton under the age of 55 who would greatly benefit from computer upgrading.

Funding for the continuation of these classes beyond next year will need to be accessed. Two possible sources of funding were suggested at the April regional LOC meeting, which can be followed up on by PLFL.

Childcare at the Bridge. Prospects look good for the continuation of this project in 2012-2013 and we are moving toward increased support from our partners. We have two additional mothers who will benefit from the program in the coming year.

Princeton has a high number of school age parents and the awareness of this gap in social support had existed for some time. This is an instance in which funding for literacy coordination in Princeton has sparked an initiative that had been conceptualized but never actualized in previous years. The hope is that the program can become a permanent support in the town.

Our third program is **The Tutoring Program** and this program will require further commitment on the part of the LOC in terms of program development, and by both the LOC and PLFL in terms of gaining funding support.

The vision for our tutoring program is that it will remain community based, and work effectively to cover the informal learning needs of local citizens. Much work gets done at the pre-readiness and engagement level, to encourage those who have seen their learning as not possible or a thing of the

past. The LOC has had good success to date in reaching these priority populations, both through visibility in the community, attendance at interagency meetings and through participating in local Mother Goose (parent-child) programs. As these folks return to a supportive learning environment some will find themselves establishing new goals to prepare for participation in formal learning structures.

Other townsfolk are appreciative to access GED support as they prepare to write their exams, and it appears that the need for ESL support will be ongoing as well. We are fortunate to have two local tutors well versed in ESL training. Individual computer training is also a high demand for those with difficulty learning in a classroom setting.

The LOC is in contact with Diana Twiss, Senior Director of Literacy Development at Decoda. Diana provides invaluable support both in offering appropriate resources for program set-up, and in problem solving tricky situations.

The opportunity to attend one of Diana's workshops on Adult Literacy, in person, during the fall or spring season would be much appreciated, as the LOC missed the one offered in February due to weather conditions.

The LOC has compiled a list of potential funding contributors which we will approach as the program takes shape. If needed, we can hire a writer to do grant proposals. In order to implement the tutoring program we will continue our partnerships with existing entities such as the Princeton and District Skills Centre and Princeton Community Services. We want to be creative in order to offer the most convenient set up for program users. It may prove beneficial to rent a dedicated space for our literacy and tutoring services, possibly from one of the above mentioned agencies, which will help us establish a larger presence in the town.

To conclude, despite challenges within the community and an interrupted LOC presence over the past two years, our literacy initiatives are rebounding in the past eight months.

Princeton Leaders for Literacy head into our third year of funding with real optimism that our contributions are genuine, appropriate, valuable and lasting.