

Live and Learn

The Newsletter of the PEI Literacy Alliance



Fall 2011

Photo courtesy of johnsylvester.com

Alliance Launches Book



The PEI Literacy Alliance is proud to sponsor *Treasures to Find*, which celebrates magical possibilities for both children and adults. Author and illustrator Dale McNevin has generously donated her royalties to the Alliance. We were delighted to work with Acorn Press on the production of this book. We donated a copy of this book to every public library and school library in PEI. To buy a copy, please see the back page.

What's inside

September 8 AGM • New Board Member
Information on ES • New Library Resources
Poor Eyesight and Adult Literacy

Live and Learn

The Newsletter of the PEI Literacy Alliance

Published by the PEI Literacy Alliance.

Edited, written and designed by Catherine O'Bryan, Norman Finlayson and Jinny Greaves.

We would like to hear from you if you have:

- learners' stories
- creative writing by learners
- articles or news about teaching adults
- upcoming events
- new resources for adult education

Please send your material to:

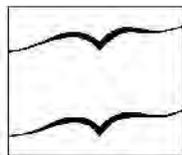
Live and Learn
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**PEI
Literacy
Alliance**

This publication is made possible by funding from the PGI Golf Tournament for Literacy.

AGM 2011

On September 8, 2011 the PEI Literacy Alliance held its annual general meeting at the Delta Hotel from 7:00 - 9:00 pm.

The business meeting included a report from the chair, treasurer, auditor and the executive director.

Jane Laird of the Native Council of PEI was affirmed as our newest board director.

After the business was complete we donated copies of our book "Treasurers to Find" to all the PEI public libraries and schools.

Terrilee Bolger, publisher at Acorn Press, Norman Finlayson and author Dale McNevin said a few words.



Teacher-librarian Carrie St Jean accepts the donation for all public school libraries in PEI.

The PEI Literacy Alliance Board for 2011-2012 is:

Lori Johnston, Chair
Tom Hilton, vice Chair
Natalie Worthen, Treasurer
Joey Seaman, Past Chair
Trina O'Brien Leggott
Mary Burke
Karyn Noble
Colette Arsenault
Jane Laird

Poor eyesight hampers adult literacy

GORDON CAIRNS, THE HEALD SCOTLAND—21 Jun 2011

A very high percentage of adults with literacy difficulties may simply have a problem with their eyesight, a four-year study carried out across Scotland has found.

The report's authors found that almost all of the adult learners with literacy problems who were selected to take part in the research had some form of impaired vision.

Dr Nadia Northway, from Glasgow Caledonian University's Vision Science Department, said "At one point we had assessed 108 adults and found visual processing problems in 107, ranging from very minor things; such as people who needed reading glasses but hadn't got them, to binocular vision problems." The report concludes that visual problems are likely to have been significant barriers to reading, whether by stopping a learner from accessing small font sizes, causing headaches and discomfort when reading or simply cutting motivation to read.

Poor visual memory also caused problems, Dr Northway said: "Visual memory is the ability to remember what you see and how you see it and the majority had problems with this."

Sixty-eight people, from adult literacy groups were chosen to receive visual perception training. Almost half of the group were prescribed glasses with coloured lenses or exercises to improve vision.

Dr Northway stated, "What was really exciting was that we were able to improve the visual perception skills of the adults," she said. "We weren't sure this would work as adults' brains are quite hard wired, unlike children's minds."

After the interventions from the optometrists, the learners' reading on average improved a level in the Wide Range Achievement Test, a measure of reading recognition, and showed a sustained improvement over 12 months. Learners reported being able to read a book for the first time or having a more ordered thought process.

One learner, Ashley Martin, from Arbroath, who initially started attending adult literacy classes four years ago because she was struggling with her son's homework. She felt her lack of literacy impacted on every area of her life, and she lived as a recluse, rarely going out. "I really didn't have the confidence to do anything," she said.

Through the study, she was diagnosed with dyslexia and prescribed glasses with purple lenses, which allowed her to learn to read. "When I would look at a page, the lines looked like they were falling off the edge of the page. When I put on the glasses everything sort of straightened out," she added.

TV Found to Have Negative Impact

Since the first television screens lit up our living rooms scientists have been studying its affect on young children. Now scientists in Ohio have compared mother-child communication while watching TV to reading books or playing with Toys to reveal the impact on children's development. The results, published in Human Communication Research, show that watching TV can lead to less interaction between parents and children, with a detrimental impact on literacy and language skills.



Study says reading much more effective than TV

The study, conducted by Amy Nathanson and Eric Rasmussen from Ohio State University, focused on 'maternal responsiveness' to reveal differences in the way mothers communicate with their children while engaged with books, toys, and TV. "Maternal responsiveness describes the quality of responses that a mother provides to an infant when they interact," said Nathanson. "When a mother and child are focusing on the same object, be that a book, toy or TV show, the mother's response can have

an important impact on their child's understanding and self perception."

By explaining and describing objects or new words and images, or by prompting conversation through questions, maternal responsiveness can help to engage a child with the activity. The parent can also provide positive feedback and encouragement to a child, or repeat what the child has said to help familiarize them with certain words or sights.

"Mothers who are responsive to their infant's communication promote a positive self-perception for the child as well as fostering trust in the parent. Positive responses help the child learn that they can affect their environment," said Nathanson. "However, if maternal responsiveness is absent, children learn that their environment is unpredictable and

may become anxious, knowing that their bids for attention or help may be ignored."

The results demonstrated that mothers who co-read books communicated significantly more with their children than mothers watching TV. The amount of communication involved in reading was not significantly higher than playing with toys. However, the quality of maternal responsiveness was higher in books than toys.

The team found that when reading a book with their children parents used a more

active communication style, bringing the child into contact with words they may not hear in every day speech, thereby improving their vocabulary and grammatical knowledge. In contrast watching TV resulted in significantly fewer descriptions and positive responses than mothers playing with toys. “Reading books together increased the maternal communication beyond

a level required for reading, while watching TV decreased maternal communication. This is significant when we consider the amount of time young children spend watching TV. In some cases children are left alone to watch TV, missing out on any parental communication at a critical stage in their development,” concluded Nathanson. “

Amy I. Nathanson & Eric E. Rasmussen, “TV Viewing Compared to Book Reading and Toy Playing Reduces Responsive Maternal Communication with Toddlers and Preschoolers,” Human Communication Research, Wiley-Blackwell.

Open House at Confederation Centre Library



Do you have difficulty reading print or know someone who does? Does your organization serve people who have difficulty reading print due to a physical, visual, or learning disability?

CNIB launched resources in alternative formats at the Confederation Centre Public Library in late September.

Lindsay Tyler (L), Partners Program Lead for the CNIB Library was there to demonstrate the new resources for people who struggle with print. On hand was Pam Wheatley R) of the Cornwall Public Library.

Drop in and find out what services the PEI Public Library Service and CNIB have to offer through your local library, free of charge, thanks to funding from the provincial government.

October is Library Month

Adult Literacy Tutoring in partnership with PEI Volunteers for Literacy

Are you, or is someone you know, an adult who wants to read and write better? Free, confidential, one-on-one tutoring and a great selection of literacy resources are available in communities across the Island. Please contact the Learn Line at 1-800-348-7323 to set up an appointment with a tutor. For more information about library literacy resources and services please contact our Literacy and Public Services Librarian at 902-436-7323.

English as an Additional Language (EAL) Tutor Training

In partnership with PEI Association for Newcomers to Canada volunteer literacy tutors help adults improve their reading and writing skills and learn English as an Additional Language. Free training classes start November 19th.

Can't make it to class? Online tutor training is available anytime. Train at your own pace, from home or abroad, any time of year. Free tutor training manuals are supplied. For more information and/or to register, contact Confederation Centre Public Library at 368-4654 or PEI Association for Newcomers to Canada at 628-6009 ext. 224.

*-from the Public Library Service
Fall Program Guide*

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Why Do Employers Invest in Essential Skills?

Employers tend not to identify employees' lack of Essential Skills as an immediate challenge to be addressed. Instead, they address business issues arising from their operating environment. These issues, which include low productivity, poor safety records and high error rates, may mask underlying Essential Skills challenges. However, Essential Skills challenges are often not identified specifically until employers begin to grapple with implementing solutions to address their business issues.

Once Essential Skills gaps have been identified and Essential Skills training has been developed and implemented, businesses often notice soft returns in addition to business results. These soft benefits can include increased participation, improved morale, enhanced employee engagement, and improved team performance.

What are the benefits of investing in Essential Skills?

Increased productivity	Less time per task Reduced error rates and less waste
Enhanced Workplace Efficiencies.....	Capacity to understand job requirements and procedures Ability to work independently Ability to apply new knowledge and skills
Increased Competitiveness.....	Capacity to adapt to organizational change Meeting quality standards Improved customer service
More Vibrant and Engaged Workforce.....	Sense of ownership of work Improved self-esteem, self-confidence and morale Opportunities for career development and promotion
Better Workplace Health and Safety.....	Capacity to understand safety instructions Ability to retain and apply information from training sessions
Better Team Performance.....	Capacity to understand personal contribution to organizational goals Better communication between workers and management
More Highly Skilled Workforce.....	Capacity to communicate and use technology with confidence Ability to keep pace with changes in the workplace

The Back Page

Buy Treasures to Find

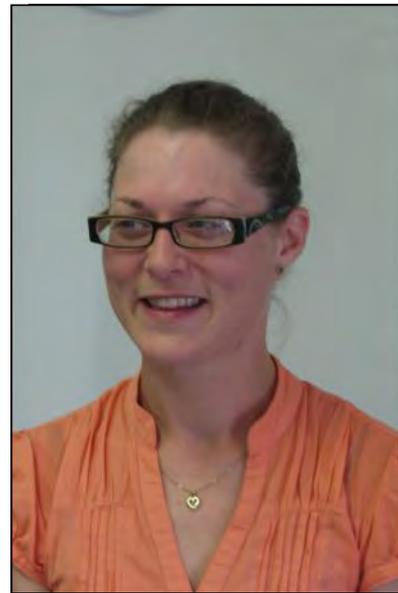
We are selling Dale McNevin's book for \$12 each which includes shipping. There is a 20% discount for orders of 10 or more.

You can buy Treasures to Find online. Go to our website at www.pei.literacy.ca and click on the link under "What's New."



Alliance Chair Lori Johnston presents Thien Tang with a creative non-fiction prize at the October 2nd Island Literary Awards. The Alliance sponsored the prize.

Welcome Aboard Jane!



Jane Laird is our newest board member. Jane is the GED instructor at the PEI Native Council.



Trina O'Brien Leggott accepts the donation from Chair Lori Johnston for all PEI public libraries at the Alliance AGM in September.