

Live and Learn

Winter 2009

The Newsletter of the PEI Literacy Alliance



The Nils Ling group had a good time hamming it up at our Sing-a-Long Sound of Music fundraiser on January 31st. See page 6 for more photos.

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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
PEI Literacy Alliance
PO Box 20107
Charlottetown, PE
C1A 9E3

Phone: (902) 368-3620

Fax: (902) 368-3269

E-mail: literacy@eastlink.ca

Web site: www.pei.literacy.ca

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From the Chair

Happy Spring!

This has been another busy season for Alliance staff and board members. In addition to the mainstays of our literacy activities, we continued on our journey exploring the world of Essential Skills according to our new federal funding agreement.



Angela Larter
Alliance Chair

Bringing Essential Skills development to community members and individuals has proven to be a very timely venture. In times of economic uncertainty, there are often increases in the support for adult education - in its many forms.

It is our hope that people can find opportunities to increase literacy and essential skills and the Alliance is poised to help. People may be moving between work and school, and then back to work.

The Alliance continues to pursue our annual activities such as the PGI Golf Tournament for Literacy and the Summer Tutoring Program for Kids. In addition, the board of the Alliance is participating in an organizational review and other development exercises.

I hope you enjoy the photos from the Sing-a-Long Sound of Music and mark your calendars for our comedy night and the annual PGI Golf Tournament on June 18th!

The Alliance is happy to extend membership to any groups who share a vision for literacy on PEI. Increasing literacy is something we can all participate in and, of course, benefit from!

Angela Larter

Welcome to Our New Board Members

Lori Johnston is a Workplace Learning Coordinator with Workplace Learning PEI Inc. She brings a broad knowledge of workplace learning, essential skills, adult education, family literacy and early literacy to our board.

Through her work Lori sees first hand how literacy affects every aspect of people's lives. She works hard to provide a second chance to adults who for various reasons were not successful the first time around. She helps people overcome barriers to learning and shares in their joy when they are successful.



Joey Seaman works with the Association for Newcomers to Canada. He is responsible for directing the ESL Tutoring Program in association with the Confederation Centre Library. His work focus is to advance literacy, conversation and cultural skills of newcomers through a multi-faceted volunteer based program.

His literacy interests include the challenge of identifying learning deficiencies in second language learners. He works to reduce literacy and language barriers for newcomers. Encouraging the importance of literacy and lifting the barriers to literacy is the central part of his work.

Natalie Worthen is program manager for Adult and Community Education at Holland College. She says that part of her mandate is to provide literacy training to those who are in need of it. She believes it's best to work as a team to implement literacy initiatives

Natalie has worked most of her career in the field of adult education . She finds it particularly rewarding to see students progress in areas that they thought impossible. She is gratified when she reads testimonials of students whose world has opened up because of reading interventions provided by her organization.



Peter Love brings his experience and organizational skills to the board of the Alliance. He is one of four generations of school teachers.

Peter has been an elementary school teacher for 27 years, and currently works at West Royalty School. He has served on the Board of Governors of the PEI Teachers Federation as well as the Executive.

Peter and his wife have four children. He enjoys sailing and travelling, especially to visit his children in other provinces.

Russell Houston's Story

Russell Houston was born in Grenada, a small island nation in the Caribbean sea. Russell remembers when he was 7, his mother said “you must travel to better yourself.” He did not want to leave his family especially his mother. She died when he was 20 years old. When Russell was 28 he left Grenada and moved to Toronto. Now at the age of 39 he knows from experience that his mother was right.

As a child, Russell liked school very much and did quite well, but his family was poor. He explains that he grew up in a two-bedroom house with 10 other family members. He left school after grade 6 to work and help support his family. For the next 15 years he worked in various labour jobs that didn't require him to use his reading or writing skills. He says that life in Grenada was tough, “you had to work really hard just to eat and put shoes on your feet.” The future in Grenada was grim. Russell has friends who have a lot of education and still can not find work there.

In 1998, Russell arrived in Canada at the age of 28. He reflects on this time and says life was rough. He says “I worked hard to stay positive but it was hard at times.” He had a difficult marriage to overcome and a bad experience with the Toronto police. His life seemed to be spiraling downward no matter how hard he tried.

Then he met Kelly, his fiancé. She believed in him and supported him. Her family opened their home in PEI and encouraged him to go back to school to better himself. He says it was wonderful to have these strangers offer so much support to him.

When I asked him what it is like being in school, he said, “I have so much more confidence now. When I was living in Toronto, if a job required me to write I'd think to myself, *I should just walk out*. I had little confidence in my writing and reading.”

Russell feels that his life is finally on track. He is working on his GED so that he can apply to the Mechanic and Auto-body program. He says that even as a kid he was always fixing things and he knows he will be good at this trade. He has a wonderful encouraging partner who believes in him. He has the encouragement of her parents. He also has a 20 month old baby girl. Russell is very happy and thankful to be where he is today.

PEI Literacy Alliance Bursary Winners



Shawn

December Winners

Sheila MacAulay of Charlottetown exhibits the kind of perseverance that will allow her to reach her goals. She goes out of her way to help others and is very pleased when her classmates do well.

Brenda McMahon of St Peters Bay is trying hard to pick up the pieces of her life following a car accident. She is an enthusiastic learner who enjoys learning and is determined to reach her goals.



Brenda

Wanice Parsons of Summerside is a hardworking and dedicated student. She is willing to try new techniques and has an enthusiastic and positive attitude.

Shawn Casey Smith of Charlottetown has shown great dedication to his work in the GED class. He is focused on a goal and works hard to reach it.

Joanna Tomlinson of Alberton is set apart by the effort that she has put into changing her life around. It is amazing to hear what she has been through and to see the positive person that she is today.

February Winners

Russell Houston lives in Charlottetown. He was raised in Grenada and immigrated to Canada. He realizes the benefit of an education for himself and his family. He works hard every day. His daily mantra is “I try my very best.”

Rick White of Stratford is improving his educational skills to further his cooking career. He wants to set a good example for his children. Although he has dropped his income to attend school, he knows that it will eventually improve his financial situation.

Terry Wilson of Summerside has shown strong determination to accomplish her goal. Though she has struggled at times she has shown that she has the ability to achieve her GED.



Russell



Sheila

Sing-a-Long Sound of Music

The hills were alive at our fundraiser for literacy on January 31st. You can see more on our web site: www.pei.literacy.ca



Essential Skills at Home

Essential Skill	Used to:
Reading Text	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read to your children • Read mail • Enjoy books for personal pleasure
Document Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read recipes • Read instructions to assemble new furniture • Interpret warning signs on cleaning products • Help children with homework
Numeracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Figure out how much to pay for something • Budget the family income • Help children with homework
Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Record appointment times • Write cards to family and friends • Help children with homework
Oral Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share ideas with family • Present concerns to doctors or teachers • Resolve conflicts with family members • Seek, obtain and share information for personal health
Working with Others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop good relationships with parents, children and siblings
Thinking Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find information • Plan family trips and parties • Manage time and money • Make decisions to benefit the family • Help children with learning
Computer Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send email • Help children with homework • Find information online about health
Continuous Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be a mentor to other family members and continue to learn new things no matter what age you are • Learn a new skill with your kids or partner

The Back Page

Another winner

Our congratulations to **Jonathan Schut** who won the Canwest CanSpell Spelling Bee in Charlottetown for the third straight year. Jonathan is a student at Grace Christian School.

On-line articles

The **Canadian Council on Learning** recently published an article called *Why boys don't like to read: Gender differences in reading achievement*.

To find out more, Google "why boys don't like to read." The first link will take you to the article.

Numeracy is a basic skill you can improve like any other, and games make it fun to do it, says mathematician **Arvind Gupta**. If you would like to read his newspaper article, Google "How to conquer your math phobia."

Semi-annual meeting

UPEI Librarian **Mark Leggott** was the guest speaker at our March 25 semi-annual meeting. His topic was *Literacy in the Digital Age*.



Shirley Jay, Wendy Shilton and Mark Leggott share a smile at the semi-annual meeting.

Mark your calendar

Comedian **Lorne Elliott** will headline a night of comedy for the PEI Literacy Alliance on June 17.



He will also be the feature entertainer at our PGI Golf Tournament for Literacy on June 18.

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Atlantic
Summer
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on Healthy
and Safe
Communities

This year's Summer Institute will run from June 3 to 5 at the University of Prince Edward Island in Charlottetown. Call (902) 894-3399 for information.