



Annual Report

2023-2024



PEI
LITERACY
ALLIANCE

Thank you to the Province of PEI for providing us with
\$150,000 of operational funding this year



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State of Literacy

Literacy is a human right currently denied to far too many Canadians.

Literacy – of which reading is a foundational element – is critical to allowing us to separate fact from fiction, share critical information, make informed decisions, and work effectively. It is at the root of social, emotional, and economic resilience.

Yet, according to the Government of Canada, 45% of adults in Canada lack the literacy, numeracy, and digital skills that are increasingly necessary to succeed in the knowledge economy.

A 1% increase in adult literacy could create an annual economic benefit of \$67 billion for Canada.

Strong adult literacy begins in early childhood, and starting to build literacy skills early delivers the best return on investment. Early literacy skills are vital to ensuring children and youth can thrive educationally, socially, and emotionally.

However, over 25% of children in Canada are starting school without some of the skills they need to learn to read. Furthermore, children who start behind are more likely to stay behind. About 30% of children are not meeting grade level expectations in school, resulting in over a million children without future-ready literacy skills.

Research shows improving literacy and essential skills creates:

- More employment and higher incomes
- A stronger economy
- Better health and well being
- Increased community and family engagement
- Less crime and safer communities



Literacy Opens Doors

Our Vision

“Our vision is that everyone has the learning opportunities they need to reach their full potential and to make PEI a great place to live, work, and thrive.”

- *Serena Smith, Chair*



Our Mission



“Our mission is to address the hidden literacy crisis in PEI by raising awareness, increasing skills, and making literacy programs easier to access.”

- *Jinny Greaves, Executive Director*

Our 2023-2024 Impact at a Glance

- ◆ **4,559 children** had increased access to programming that creates lifelong learners.
- ◆ **42 adults** gained the literacy skills needed to succeed at work, thrive personally, and contribute to their community.
- ◆ **Thousands of PEI residents** have been informed about the costs of low literacy on economic, cultural, political, health and social aspects of life.

Ready Set Learn

Ready Set Learn is a free summer tutoring program for children who struggle with reading, writing, and math. Since 2001, we have offered this program to children in grades K to 6 in English, French Immersion and Francophone programs across PEI. Each child receives 50 minutes of tutoring each week for eight weeks during the summer months. Our tutors are trained to create safe, fun, positive, and effective learning experiences.



“I learned that it’s better to make mistakes and keep trying than to give up.”

- Student Participant

Each year, resource teachers refer over 1,000 children to our program because they are struggling in school and need additional support. Many of the children who are referred to us experience a lack of confidence, worry, and frustration around learning. For this reason, in 2022, we embedded social and emotional learning in our program. This addition enhanced the experience of both children and tutors. Research from CASEL shows that children who build their social emotional skills cultivate confidence and become more willing to challenge themselves and learn new things.

495 children with low literacy had increased access to programming that creates life-long learners.



This year, we helped 495 children develop the literacy and social emotional skills they need to address their learning challenges. Since 2001, we have helped 15,743 children in PEI.

Program Evaluation Highlights 2023-2024:

- 94% of students enjoyed their tutoring sessions
- 93% of students learned strategies to keep trying when learning was challenging
- 74% of students learned strategies to work through difficult feelings related to learning challenges
- 99% of parents would recommend this program to others

Thank you to our Ready Set Learn funders and partners



Free Books for Children

Imagination Library

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library is a cost effective book-giving program that increases early literacy, builds home libraries, and inspires a love of reading in children and families. Since 2020, we have administered this program across PEI.

Children ages 0-4 enrolled in our program receive a high quality, age-appropriate book in the mail for free each month. Additionally, we offer program registration and a free book to parents and guardians at their baby's first immunization appointment. This is done through the existing *Born to Read* program in partnership with Health PEI and PEI Public Library Services.



“This program is an important part of our family time.”

- Imagination Library parent

This year, we distributed 32,687 free books to children, serving 3,734 families. Since 2020, we have distributed 131,079 books through the Imagination Library program.

Program Evaluation Highlights 2023-2024:

- **92%** of parents and guardians reported reading more because of this program
- **83%** of children ask to be read to more often because of this program
- **74%** of parents and guardians are more aware of the importance of early literacy

Gift of Reading

Our Gift of Reading program has been helping build home libraries for children living in poverty since 2010. Free books are distributed to families in need through Christmas Hampers in partnership with PEI Food Banks and PEI Public Library Service. Most of these books become gifts for children on Christmas morning.

This year we distributed 2000 books through Gift of Reading to more than 500 families across PEI. Since 2010, we have distributed 36,375 books to thousands of families.

In total, 34,687 free books were distributed to children in PEI this year, increasing access to programming that creates life-long learners.



Thank you to our Free Books for Children funders and partners



Club of Montague and Eastern PEI

Club of Charlottetown Royalty



Rotary Literacy Foundation



Essential Employability Skills

This pilot program prepares individuals for work with 180 hours of classroom training followed by a six-week work placement in a health care setting. Program participants are adults who are underemployed or unemployed. This year, 65% of our participants represented vulnerable populations.



“This program gives people the opportunity to gain skills needed to enter the workforce, gain employment, and change their outlook on their worth, value, and abilities.”

- Program Graduate

Our classroom training focused on employability, social emotional, and essential skills to build participants’ confidence and skills in areas like problem solving, communication, and planning. During training, participants developed professional portfolios to highlight their skills, knowledge, abilities, and their vision for the future. They also gained the following certifications:

- Gentle Persuasive Approach Dementia Care
- Workplace Hazardous Materials Information
- Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR)
- Safe Transfer and Lifting

Participants who completed classroom training were offered a work placement in a health care setting. Participating employers received 30 hours of mentorship training for their managers so that they were better equipped to support our participants. Employers also received wage subsidies during our participants’ six-week work placement.

34 adults gained skills needed to succeed at work, thrive personally, and contribute to their community.



This year, we helped 34 adults gain the skills needed to succeed. Since 2019, we have helped 78 adults.

Program Evaluation Highlights 2023-2024:

- **68%** of participants reported gaining full-time employment or enrolling in a full-time post secondary health program three months after their classroom training
- **100%** of employers gained workplace mentorship skills
- **100%** of participants increased their literacy and essential skills
- **80%** of participants gained confidence and felt better prepared to enter the workforce

Thank you to our Essential Employability Skills funders and partners



Adult Learner Awards

We provide financial support to adults who are returning to school to increase their literacy skills. Each year since 2002, we have awarded bursaries to adults who are working toward a grade 12 equivalency (GED), and scholarships to adults who have obtained their GED and are working toward a post-secondary education.

The benefits of adult learning are numerous. Many studies show a direct correlation between adult learning and better mental health and well being, increased social emotional skills, improved confidence, reduction in crime, and improved employment and life opportunities. An additional benefit to adult learning is the chance to inspire others and lead by example.



“It became a priority for me to show my children that it wasn’t too late to go back to school. I wanted them to see how important education is and encourage them to achieve their goals.”

- Matt Perry, Scholarship Recipient

Our support helps address the financial challenges adults face with the added costs of going back to school. Many of our award recipients are managing the responsibilities of school and employment while also caring for family members. Financial support helps adult learners pay for living expenses such as rent, groceries, and utilities.

Eight adults with low-literacy had support to gain the skills needed to work, thrive personally, and contribute to their community.



We collaborate with Holland College to ensure that our application and selection process is fair, transparent, and accessible. We prioritize supporting vulnerable populations. Adults who do not have a high school diploma and are enrolled in a GED program are eligible to apply for a bursary. Adults who have earned their GED and are enrolled in a college, university, or private training center are eligible to apply for our scholarships.

This year, we awarded five \$750 bursaries and three \$1,500 scholarships to adults returning to school. Since 2002, 179 adults have received financial support totaling \$175,750. Sponsorship for our Adult Learner Awards comes from our annual Celebration of Learning fundraiser (see next page).

Thank you to our Adult Learner Awards funders and partners



Public Awareness and Events

Social Media and Public Presentations

We use social media to raise awareness about the importance of literacy. We have 5,130 followers on social media and 3,745 subscribers to our e-news. We also present to stakeholders throughout the year at various events.



Thousands of PEI residents are better informed about the costs of low literacy on economic, cultural, political, health and social aspects of life.

Celebration of Learning

Our annual fundraising event celebrates the success stories of learners, recognizes literacy champions in our community, and raises funds to support our literacy programs. This event includes a catered reception, exceptional entertainment, and a heart-warming awards ceremony. This year, we were joined by Emcee and comedian, Patrick Ledwell, and singer-songwriter, Meaghan Blanchard. Approximately 100 people attended.



Literacy Awards

Each year, we have the honour of recognizing learners, literacy champions, and educators in our community for their dedication to literacy and life-long learning. The following awards were presented at our Celebration of Learning this year:



Vicki Peters and Santana Herney
Learner Achievement Awards



Allison Giggey
Literacy Champion Award



Phil Davison
Educator Distinction Award



Matt Perry
Scholarship Recipient

Thank you to our Celebration of Learning sponsors



Our Staff



Jinny Greaves

Executive Director



Amanda Beazley

Programs Director



Christine Snowden

RSL Manager



Eliza Casey

EES Manager

2023 Ready Set Learn Tutors

Haydyn MacAulay

Emma Hughes

Emma McQuaid

Claire MacPhee

Levi Tocjayao

Bailey Gaudet

Jamie MacAulay

Ellie MacLeod

Loren Enman

Lydia Enman

Jadyn Gallant

Emma-Claire Csernyik

Gracie Hackett

Jenna Lavers

Hilary Keedwell

Brianne Harper

Our Board of Directors



Serena Smith
Chair



Erica Ross
Vice Chair



Valerie Fitzpatrick
Treasurer



Rebecca Boulter
Secretary



Allie Keedwell



Megan MacPhee



David Arsenault



Kendra MacLaren

Our Member Groups

ADHD PEI
Black Culture Society of PEI
Bookmark
BGC Charlottetown
Canadian Mental Health Association
Canadian Union of Public Employees
CHANCES Family Centre
Collège de l'Île
Community Legal Information
Community Sector Network of PEI
Coopérative d'intégration
Francophone de l'IPÉ
Creative PEI
Dance Stars Academy
Early Childhood Development
Association of PEI
Greater Charlottetown Chamber
of Commerce
Holland College—Adult and
Community Education
Immigrant & Refugee Services
Association of PEI
Institute of Advanced Learning
La Commission de la langue française
Learning Disabilities Association of PEI
Lennox Island First Nation
Mi'kmaq Confederacy of PEI
Native Council of PEI
PEERS Alliance
PEI Advisory Council on the Status
of Women
PEI Alliance for Mental Well-Being
PEI Association for Community Living
PEI Business Women's Association
PEI Department of Social Development and
Seniors
PEI Department of Education and Early Years
PEI Department of Workforce, Advanced Learning
and Population
PEI Family Violence Prevention Services
PEI Federation of Labour
PEI Home and School Federation
PEI Public Library Service
PEI Senior Citizens' Federation
PEI Speech and Hearing Association
PEI Teachers Federation
PEI Trucking Sector Council
PEI Writers' Guild
Provincial Realty
Resource Abilities
Richardson Wealth PEI
Scotiabank - Charlottetown Branch
Société acadienne et francophone de l'Île-du-
Prince-Édouard
Steam PEI and Bricks4Kids
The Acorn Press
The Employment Journey
Tops to Floors
United Way of PEI
UPEI, Faculty of Education
Women's Network
Workplace Learning PEI Inc.

What you can do

You can support literacy in PEI by:

- ◆ Learning more about the impacts of low literacy
- ◆ Learning more about social emotional skills and how they support learning
- ◆ Giving a child a book
- ◆ Reading to a child
- ◆ Following us on social media and sharing our content
- ◆ Signing up for our e-news
- ◆ Making a donation to our organization



www.peiliteracy.ca