

NWT Literacy Council

Literacy Matters

December 2008

A Message from Our New President

Hi, my name is Suzanne Robinson and I am the new President of the NWT Literacy Council. I have been on the Council's board for many years as a regional representative and treasurer. I am pleased to have been elected as the president of the NWT Literacy Council and believe that the Council's work in the NWT is fundamental to supporting adult learners, families and the literacy field.

I am dedicated to supporting literacy and education in my work life as an adult educator and also in a volunteer capacity. In addition to volunteering with the NWT Literacy Council, I chair the Inuvik Literacy Committee that started up in 2002. We have supported literacy through promoting NWT Literacy Week, Family Literacy Day and I have personally run several family literacy programs. I believe that literacy is a right for everyone!

It is my great honour to thank Kathryn Carriere for her outstanding job as president of the NWT Literacy Council for the past four years. Kathryn served on the board for seven years in total. Her commitment to literacy and the Council was unwavering. She provided support and encouragement to staff when the federal government cut all literacy money in 2006. And she helped lobby for the development of an NWT Literacy Strategy. Her contributions were numerous, and

the board and staff would like to thank Kathryn for her hard work and dedication to literacy and the Council.

I look forward to being the president of the Council and to continuing to support literacy in the NWT.

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Welcome to Our New Staff Members

Kathryn Barry Paddock

We would like to welcome Kathryn to the NWT Literacy Council team. Kathryn started working with us in early September.

Kathryn is originally from Nova Scotia. She has extensive experience working in family support and resource programs. Kathryn will be taking on the role of Community Literacy Coordinator and specifically working in family literacy. We are happy that she has joined our team. Kathryn is excited to be experiencing life in the North and working in the literacy field.



Kathryn experienced her first Family Literacy Training Institute in Hay River in November. She will be going to Inuvik, Fort McPherson, Aklavik and Fort Simpson in the New Year. You can email Kathryn at kathryn@nwtliteracy.ca or call her about family literacy training.

Patricia Ilgok

We would also like to welcome Patricia to the NWT Literacy Council team. Patricia recently moved back to Yellowknife from Kugluktuk.

Patricia is our new Administrative Assistant as of October 1st. Patricia has lots of experience as an administrative assistant. She has worked in a variety of positions with the government of Nunavut.

We are excited to have Patricia working with us at the NWT Literacy Council.



Next time you call the NWT Literacy Council - make sure you say a special hello and welcome to Patricia!

Bookmaking Workshop

We held a Bookmaking workshop in Yellowknife in October. Twenty people attended the workshop. Participants learned how to make six different kinds of books:

1. Envelope book
2. Family book (padded binders)
3. Folding book
4. Foam book
5. Quick book
6. Pop-up book

Participants really enjoyed their day of making home-made books. One participant said, "I can now teach children and other moms how to make simple, inexpensive books." Another participant said, "Who knew, making books was so much fun and so easy?"



We will be delivering another bookmaking workshop at the NWT Teachers' Conference, February 16-18, 2009.

Family Tutoring Workshop

We held a Family Tutoring Training workshop in Yellowknife in early December. Fourteen people attended the workshop from around the territory. Participants came from Tulita, Deline, Tuktoyaktuk, Wekweètì, Fort Providence and Yellowknife.



Family Tutoring is a program that supports school-age children and their parents with reading and writing. Participants learned new and exciting ways to engage children and families in reading and writing. They specifically learned eight different reading and writing strategies.



NWT Literacy Week Highlights - Yellowknife

Every year the NWT Literacy Council heads up a team of people to coordinate NWT Literacy Week events in Yellowknife. We would like to thank the following people for helping us plan this year:

- Dave Miller, Canadian Armed Forces
- Melissa Legacy, YK Public Library
- Spencer Tracy, NWT Native Women's Training Centre
- Lynn Carter, TAILS - St. John Ambulance
- Kathleen Roberts, Literacy Outreach Program, Aurora College
- Margaret Erasmus, ECE
- Valerie Gamache, Alpha TNO

Lunch with the Bunch

Each year we go and celebrate NWT Literacy Week with the seniors at the Baker Centre. This year we invited the Harmony Sisters to come and sing for the seniors. It was a wonderful celebration of singing and literacy!

Read for 15

This year we had a Read for 15 Challenge with Nunavut. Unfortunately we didn't win the challenge this year. We had 8,000 people Read for 15 - a little down from last year.



In Yellowknife we had Read for 15 booths set up around town. The NWT Literacy Council put a booth up at the post office

and gave away free books.

Canadian Armed Forces Read to Children

This year members of the Canadian Armed Forces went into Yellowknife schools and read books to students from Kindergarten to grade 4. The NWT Literacy Council provided the books and each class was given three free books for their class library.



Adult Learners' Luncheon

Aurora College and Education, Culture and Employment hosted an adult learners' lunch again this year. Adult learners, instructors and literacy students all enjoyed some caribou stew, bannock and desserts to celebrate learners' success.



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NWT Literacy Week - Author Visit

We would like to thank Canadian author, Maureen Ulrich for coming North of 60 to share her new book and writing ideas with students in Yellowknife and Fort Simpson.

Maureen Ulrich was born in Saskatoon, but grew up in Edmonton and Calgary. She taught middle-years students for 23 years and also worked in the oil-field industry. She has lived in Milestone and Lampman, in southeastern Saskatchewan, for the last 27 years.

She recently published her first book called *Power Plays*. *Power Plays* is about a young girl who moves to a new town and experiences bullying in her school and community. She tries out for the local girls' hockey team and finds friendship and community at the rink.

Maureen went to schools and adult education programs to share her book *Power Plays* and share ideas for writing books and plays. She also had some good discussions with students about bullying.



We gave the books to schools ahead of time and most of the students working with Maureen had a chance to read her book or at least read part of her book. Students were thrilled to meet Maureen and hear about her struggles and triumphs with writing *Power Plays*.

One young girl told Maureen that she had not read a book for years, but when she read *Power Plays* she couldn't put it down.

Maureen also traveled to Fort Simpson to deliver writing workshops at the high school. Her workshops encourage students to be creative with their writing. Students wrote a scene from a play and then acted it out.

Maureen also participated in a family literacy event at the library. She read books and entertained children and families.



NWT Literacy Week Highlights

NWT Literacy Week is celebrated all throughout the NWT. This year we heard from many communities about what they did to celebrate NWT Literacy Week.

Deline

Deline hosted daily events for NWT Literacy Week. Some of the activities and workshops they did were:

- Making reading fun at home
- Dene literacy
- Traditional crafts
- Family fun night

The goal of the week was to promote literacy at home with parents and children. They were surprised by the turn out they had for all the events. Everyone had a great time!



Aklavik

The Alex and Hope Gordon Learning Centre invited author Tom McLeod in to talk about his book *The Delta is My Home*. Elders also came and told stories to the students.



Behchokò

The Elizabeth Mackenzie School had tons of activities happening for NWT Literacy Week:

- Poster Contest for K - 3
- Writing Contest for Grades 4 - 6
- Read-a-thon
- Elder Storytelling
- Story Moment (Robert Munsch stories on the PA system)
- Karaoke Party

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NWT Literacy Week Highlights

Yellowknife

St. Joseph's Middle School did a variety of activities for NWT Literacy Week:

- Read-a-thon - students were encouraged to read throughout the week and keep track of how much time they had read. The school tallied minutes to see how much the school had read all together.
- Get Caught Reading - roving reporters took pictures of students reading throughout the week.
- Literacy Spirit Day - students were invited to dress up as their favourite author or character in a book.
- Book Swap - students and teachers brought in books to swap.

Lutsel K'e

The Lutsel K'e Dene School hosted a variety of NWT Literacy Week events. They participated in the Read for 15, hosted a bookmaking workshop and had storytelling and bannock making activities.



Tuktoyaktuk

The Mangilaluk School celebrated NWT Literacy Week by kicking off their Bookworm Challenge. The Bookworm Challenge encourages students of all ages to read. Every time a student reads a book they add a piece to the bookworm. The goal is to make a bookworm that goes right around the school.

The Tuk Child Development Centre hosted a reading program for NWT Literacy Week. They took pictures of all the children reading and put them up around the centre.



Family Literacy Training Institute

The NWT Literacy Council held a Family Literacy Training Institute in Hay River from November 3 - 7, 2008. Twenty people attended the training from Aklavik, Inuvik, Tulita, Lutsel K'e, Fort Providence, Hay River, Hay River Reserve and Yellowknife. Unfortunately, the people from Fort Simpson and Wrigley were unable to attend because of bad weather.

The training was four and a half days long. We covered the following:

Introduction to Family Literacy

The introduction to family literacy workshop explored the meaning of family literacy... how everyday activities such as cooking, making crafts and spending time together are literacy experiences for children.

Love Grows Brains

At birth, a baby's brain is not completely developed. In fact it is just beginning its largest period of growth. Participants learned about basic brain function and explored its relationship to emergent literacy.



1-2-3 Rhyme with Me

1-2-3 Rhyme with Me is a fun, interactive rhyming and singing program for young children and their parents. Participants learned how to facilitate this program. They learned northern rhymes and songs in the workshop and took home copies of the rhymes and songs to use in their program or community.



Books in the Home

The *Books in the Home* program works with parents to support the learning development of young children. Participants learned about the program and learned how to make some really neat home-made books.



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Family Literacy Training Institute

The Many Faces of Literacy

In this session participants learned that literacy is not just about reading and writing, but comes in many different forms. They also talked about how they could promote Aboriginal language in their community.



Family Literacy in Your Community

Family literacy nights are a great way to get started in family literacy in your community. This session explored different family literacy programs, ideas for family literacy nights, and ways you can partner with others in your community.

Choosing Books

The choosing books workshop explored different types of books and why we love them! Participants had the opportunity to share their favorite books with others and learn how to read with enthusiasm. It was a really fun and entertaining workshop!

Throughout the training we talked about how to promote family literacy and recruit participants.

Participants told us that they will share what they have learned at the training with others in their community. Many of them said they planned on starting a family literacy program in their community.



We would like to thank the participants of the training for such a great week. And we wish you luck in planning and delivering family literacy programs in your community!

Call the NWT Literacy Council if you are interested in learning more about family literacy.

Literacy in Canada

Individuals and organizations in the NWT are supported by and benefit from the work done by national level literacy organizations. There are six literacy organizations in Canada recognized as national literacy bodies representing a variety of different stakeholders. These six are:

ABC CANADA - ABC CANADA Literacy Foundation is Canada's private-sector voice championing adult literacy and raising public awareness of literacy issues.

La Fédération Canadienne pour L'alphabétisation en Français (FCLF), The Movement for Canadian Literacy (MCL) and the National Indigenous Literacy Association (NILA) - These organizations provide professional development, program support and research to support French, English and Aboriginal literacy organizations, learners and practitioners. Their membership includes representation from provincial/territorial literacy coalitions, learners and practitioners.

Frontier College - Frontier College recruits and trains volunteers to work with children, youth and adults. They also help other community-based organizations set up and run literacy programs for their own participants.

National Adult Literacy Database (NALD)

– This digital library provides full text documents and books online to be accessed by literacy practitioners, researchers and learners. NALD researches and organizes educational material found elsewhere on the Web. NALD also designs and hosts websites for literacy organizations free of charge and publicizes literacy-related activities and events from across the country.

These national organizations provide local and territorial literacy organizations with supports such as funding, resources, research, and programs. Through membership and consultation they also provide local and territorial organizations an entry to national policy networks and forums. In return, local and territorial level organizations drive these national bodies through membership and provide their expertise on program and service implementation and the impacts of policies on individuals, families and organizations.

National level organizations and local and territorial organizations provide important supports to each other and together strengthen the literacy field as a whole. For more information on any of these organizations please see the Links Section on our website: www.nwt.literacy.ca.

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Ministerial Literacy Awards

Minister Jackson Lafferty presented the Ministerial Literacy Awards to an outstanding educator and literacy organization during NWT Literacy Week. The Council of Federation Literacy Award was supposed to be presented at the same ceremony, but the winner Mardy Voudrach from Tuktoyaktuk was unable to attend due to the weather conditions in her community. We would like to congratulate the recipients of these awards.

Literacy Organization: Hay River Literacy Society

The Hay River Literacy Society is an organization that supports literacy in the town of Hay River. It is run entirely by volunteers. The society has been running for three years now. The society is dedicated to developing innovative programs that meet the needs of people in the community of Hay River. The NWT Literacy Council would like to congratulate the Hay River Literacy Society for their strong leadership role in promoting literacy in their community.

Educator: Hilary Gemmell – Fort Smith

Hilary is a long time teacher and northerner. She has worked very hard for adult literacy in the NWT, and even in retirement continues to volunteer, teaching learners with disabilities. The NWT Literacy Council congratulates Hilary for being a strong voice for adult literacy.

NWT Council of Federation Literacy Award – Mardy Voudrach

As an infant Mardy was stricken with meningitis. The disease impeded Mardy's ability to learn. Despite her tragic start in life, Mardy has demonstrated an exemplary level of courage and determination in advancing her literacy skills. Prior to enrolling in a one-on-one tutoring program in Tuktoyaktuk, she could not read or write, and spoke very little. In the past year, she has worked very hard on her literacy studies. Mardy can now speak clearly, do basic math, read and write texts, use a computer, and operate a digital camera. Since improving her literacy skills, Mardy has started her first job. Her employer describes her as a "great asset to our workplace," and says she has a very positive work ethic. The NWT Literacy Council congratulates Mardy Voudrach for her determination and dedication to learning.



Minister Lafferty with Marilyn Barnes from the Hay River Literacy Society and Hilary Gemmell from Fort Smith

Literacy Matters: Making Essential Skills Work

The NWT Literacy Council in partnership with WWestnet (the Western Canada Workplace Essential Skills Training Network) hosted an essential skills workshop in Yellowknife. It was a follow-up to the Literacy Matters Workshop held in January 2008.

Forty five people attended the workshop on November 17th and 18th. Most of the participants were adult educators or literacy practitioners.

Pat Salt, the facilitator from Calgary, has been involved in a variety of projects that involve essential skills. She is well-known in this field and has a wealth of information to share on essential skills and embedded literacy.



Pat started the workshop by giving people a global perspective on what essential skills are and why they are important. She then used authentic workplace materials to lead us through a series of activities to show how adult educators and trainers can integrate essential skills into their programs.

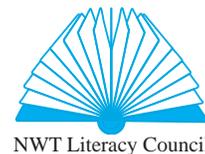
Pat used experiential learning to engage the participants in the workshop. Participants took on the role of learner as she lead us through a series of learning activities. We explored document use, cloze procedure, skimming and scanning and graphic organizers as a way to embed essential skills into curriculum and training.



Participants really enjoyed the workshop and found the material very relevant to their work. One participants said, "I would recommend this workshop to adult educators." Another participant said, "Relevant to my work. Would be great for all ALBE instructors."

The NWT Literacy Council would like to thank Pat Salt for coming to Yellowknife to share her expertise and ideas and we would also like to thank Melissa Gardner from WWestnet for helping to organize the event.

Literacy Matters



New NWT Literacy Council Resources

New Website

Check out the new design of our website www.nwt.literacy.ca.

We have redesigned our website to make it more user friendly. On the front page you will find three large boxes with pictures: *What's New*, *E-News* and *About the NWT Literacy Council*. In the right hand column you will find our menu. We have also added a research section and a literacy facts section. And we redesigned our resources section to make it more user friendly.

Please check it out and let us know what you think!

Tools for Community Building

In 2001 the NWT and Nunavut Literacy Councils developed a program planning and proposal writing guide called *Tools for Community Building*.

We have updated this guide to include a section called *Starting Your Project*. Also the program planning and proposal writing section has been updated. You can find a copy of this guide on our co-hosted site with the Nunavut Literacy Council at <http://www.toolsforcommunitybuilding.ca>.

We will have the hard copy completed in January. Please contact us if you would like a copy.

Northern Edge - Issue Six

The new edition of *The Northern Edge* is now online.

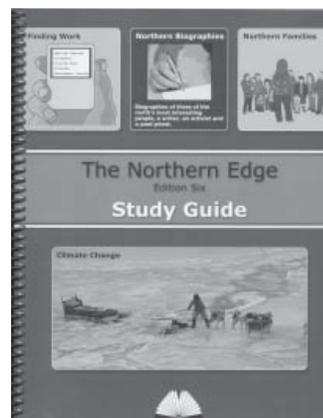
The new edition features five topics:

1. Learner Stories
2. Finding and Keeping a Job
3. Biographies
4. Family Literacy
5. Climate Change

Each topic has several learning activities. The learning activities are interactive and will help learners understand and digest the information.

The Northern Edge Study Guide Edition Six

We have also developed a study guide to go with edition six. The study guide provides learning activities and ideas to go with the stories from the online newspaper.



You can download a copy on our website: www.nwt.literacy.ca.

Pihuaqtiuyugut: We are the long distance walkers

What does walking have to do with literacy?

To find out you really need to visit the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre in Yellowknife. On Sunday September 21st, 2008, a new exhibit opened there. The exhibit takes you along a trail that people from Ulukhaktok used when they moved off the sea ice to the summer caribou calving grounds. The exhibit tells you about the literacy skills people learned and used along the way. It also shows how people in Ulukhaktok still use many of these literacy skills today. At the opening, people took part in a variety of activities like sewing, print making and Inuit games.



Jean Okheena lights the qulliq.



Emily Kudlak dances.



Mary Okheena and Justin Memogana sing a Western drum song.



Alice Kaodloak and Jill Vaydik help the sewers.



Mabel Nigiyok teaches print making.

The exhibit is sponsored by the community of Ulukhaktok, the NWT Literacy Council, the University of Lethbridge, the Inuvialuit Cultural Resource Centre and the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre. The exhibit runs until the end of February 2009.

Storying Progress: Non-Academic Outcomes Research

The non-academic outcomes research project is about exploring different outcomes for adult learners. It looks at how going back to school has helped learners become more confident and better able to cope with life demands.

This exciting project is now coming to an end. In this project we have interviewed 52 adults learners in three different adult education programs in Fort Providence, Inuvik and Hay River. We asked them to tell us the story of their learning journey, and of the things they thought they achieved. Many of the learners overcame huge barriers to go back to school. Although it was extremely challenging for many of them, they were all successful in different ways.

Here is part of one learner's story.

"I came back to school because I wanted to get a good job, so I needed to get my education. During the summer I was working somewhere I didn't really want to be. I think nursing is where I want to be. I'll do practicums in the hospital here. I didn't really enjoy school before – I like ALBE way better. Here the teachers are different. They treat you like an adult, not like a child. I like that better.

Most of my challenges are keeping up with my home, cleaning and stuff. Sometimes my dishes sit for days. I get most of my support from my boyfriend and my family,

but I also get a lot of support from teachers.

I noticed that now I can present myself better. I can speak better. Before I started school, I'd read my nephews and nieces books and I'd be a slow reader, but now I can read fine. I like it better. I have more confidence – I wouldn't be doing this kind of thing [this interview] before. I also think I'm more positive. I've always been positive, but it's improved a little, I guess.

If someone asked me about going back to school, I would tell them to do it. I'd say, "Don't think about it too much, just do it, because it will help you with your life." It will help them get on track and get a better job.

I'm glad I came back to school. It helped me so much with my writing and my math and everything. It makes me feel good, really good. When I'm talking, I notice that I use words that I would have never used before coming back to school. I use bigger words. Going back to school made me a better person. I can do so many more things now than before coming back, so I'm glad I came back."

The NWT Literacy Council will complete this project by December and will use the results to develop a workshop for adult educators on non-academic outcomes.



NWT Literacy Council

Literacy Matters

Upcoming Training

This year the NWT Literacy Council developed a training calendar for the 2008/09 year. Please call us if you would like to register for one of these workshops.

Program Planning & Proposal Writing

Inuvik, Jan. 27 & 28, 2009

Come and learn how to plan for projects in your community and write a funding proposal. At the end of the workshop participants will have written a funding proposal for a needed literacy project in their community.

Advanced Family Literacy Training

Yellowknife, Feb. 3 – 5, 2009

This training is for people who have extensive experience in delivering family literacy programs in the NWT. Workshops include:

- Evaluation and Report Writing
- Computer Training (Blogs, Internet Research, Facebook, etc.)
- Celebrating Success in Family Literacy

Facilitation Skills

Yellowknife, Mar. 4, 2009

In this workshop you will get useful tips and tools for working with groups and for public speaking. Learn fun warm up activities, how to deal with difficult situations, and ways to get people involved.

Talking Books

Yellowknife, Mar. 5, 2009

The Talking Books workshop demonstrates how to make talking books on the computer. At the end of the session participants will have created a talking book of their own. The workshop will be held in a computer lab.

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