

NWT Literacy Council

Literacy Matters

March 2008

A Message from our President

The Board of Directors and Staff of the NWT Literacy Council are pleased to welcome Mandie Abrams as our new Executive Director.

Mandie comes to our organization with experience working in the not-for-profit sector. She also brings to the position experience with the Government of the NWT where she managed funding for community literacy projects in the Beaufort Delta region, and a familiarity with the range of literacy programs offered in the communities.

Mandie relocated to Yellowknife in December 2007 and joined the NWT Literacy Council on February 12, 2008. She has already participated in our Family Literacy Training Institute and is familiarizing herself with all our programs and services.

We are very excited to have someone with Mandie's knowledge, skills, and experience in our organization. We look forward to working with her.

Kathryn Carriere

President

What's Inside

- [A Message from our New ED](#)
- [Welcome to Marianne Bromley](#)
- [Welcome to Jill Vaydik](#)
- [Family Literacy Day Highlights](#)
- [Richard Van Camp's Tour](#)
- [Family Literacy Training Institute](#)
- [The Northern Edge](#)
- [More Northern Writes](#)
- [More Resources](#)
- [Proposal Writing Guide](#)
- [New Information on our Website](#)
- [2008 PGI Golf Tournament for Literacy](#)
- [Literacy Matters Workshop](#)
- [Spring Literacy Activities](#)
- [Board of Directors and Staff](#)



Literacy Matters

A Message from our New ED, Mandie Abrams

I would like to thank the many people who have called and e-mailed me in the past few weeks to welcome me to the NWT Literacy Council. It is such a pleasure to be here and I look forward to meeting and working with all of you.

For the past 6 years I have been living in Inuvik, where I worked for the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs as the Community Development Coordinator and most recently as the Manager of Career Development for the Department of Education, Culture and Employment.

While in Inuvik I worked closely with territorial, Aboriginal and community governments as well as Aurora College, District Education Authorities and industry partners to promote capacity building and training and education programs for residents of the Beaufort Delta Region.

Prior to moving to Inuvik, I worked for the Asia Pacific Department of Habitat for Humanity. Habitat for Humanity is an international non-profit organization that provides low-cost housing programs to people in need. While with the organization, I worked at the Habitat for Humanity headquarters in Americus, Georgia, USA as well as in Sri Lanka, India, Fiji and Papua New Guinea. I assisted these national Habitat for Humanity organizations to develop national fundraising plans and programs and assisted with fundraising and grant

writing. I also provided capacity building training to staff and board members of Habitat programs in the region.

Originally from Winnipeg, I graduated with a Bachelor of Arts - Honours, in Human Geography from the University of Manitoba. I went on to earn a Masters Degree in Public Administration with a concentration in International Development from Rutgers University in the United States.

I am thrilled to be with the NWT Literacy Council. The staff and I have begun planning our activities for the next few years and I am excited about the anticipated development of new resources, more targeted training and plans for enhancing existing partnerships and developing new ones. I look forward to meeting all of our partners and encourage you to contact me at any time.



Literacy Matters



Welcome to Marianne Bromley

We would like to welcome Marianne Bromley to our team at the NWT Literacy Council. She will be working with communities in her new role as the Literacy Coordinator.

Marianne has been in the North for over 30 years. Marianne has lots of experience in facilitating workshops, developing resources and working with communities. She worked with the Yellowknife District #1 Education Board for three years as their Coordinator of Aboriginal Programming.

Marianne is very interested in working with people to preserve Aboriginal language and culture.

Another of Marianne's passions is the environment and she loves the outdoors.



Welcome to Jill Vaydik



We would also like to welcome Jill Vaydik to the NWT Literacy Council. Jill will be helping Marianne as the Literacy Coordinator Trainee. She will also be helping on the Ulukhaktok Literacies Research Project.

Jill was born in Yellowknife, and has lived in the NWT for most of her life. She recently graduated from the University of Victoria with a BA in linguistics. Previously, she worked as a Student Case Officer at NWT Student Financial Assistance.

She spends a lot of her spare time at the arena, skating and coaching with the YK Speed Skating Club. She also likes to ski and play the guitar, and of course she loves to read.



Literacy Matters

Family Literacy Day Highlights

Many communities across the north celebrated Family Literacy Day on January 27th. Here are just some of the many creative activities that people took part in.

The Growing Together program in Hay River held a special literacy celebration on Family Literacy Day. They held a potluck lunch for kids and families, followed by storytelling and cake. They also had free books to give away to each child.

The lucky students at Lutsełk'e Dene School were treated to a pancake breakfast while teachers read stories aloud. During the day, they rotated through different stations with fun literacy activities.

In Fort McPherson, parents and kids attended a special family literacy night at Chief Julius School library on January 30th. This included games, crafts and stories. Each child also took home a give-away bag filled with books and literacy activities.



In Yellowknife, about twenty kids and their parents braved the -40 degree temperatures to attend a Family Literacy Day Event at the Yellowknife Public Library. Hosted by the NWT Literacy Council and Alpha TNO, the event featured literacy activities in both English and French. We started out by playing bilingual animal bingo, followed by stories and songs in both languages. Everyone had a chance to make a bookmark and to choose a book prize. We finished off with another story and a healthy snack.



Literacy Matters



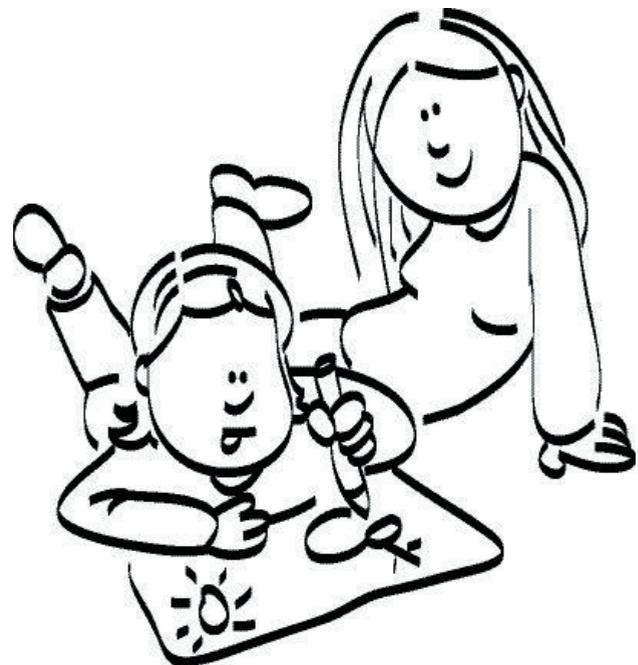
Family Literacy Day Highlights

Weledah Catholic School held a PJs and Books day on Monday the 28th. Students wore their pyjamas to school and tried to get caught reading during the day. The school also held a Literacy Survivor event in the evening for kids and their families, where teams went to different classrooms to complete challenges. The Dogrib language teacher even added a challenge of her own in the Dogrib language. About 45 people came to play - a great turn out for a very cold evening!



The Yellowknife Association for Community Living also held some special activities at the Abe Miller Centre. They worked on word searches and hidden pictures, played Scattergories and finished off with some one-on-one reading time.

The Centennial Library in Inuvik was also busy on January 27th. They hosted an open house for families that included a puzzle station, a games station and an area to play with puppets. Everyone also got to make a baby book or a family memory book. They ended off the evening with a draw for the Harry Potter series of books.





Literacy Matters

Richard Van Camp's Tour

Richard Van Camp is from Fort Smith, NWT. Richard is a proud member of the Tłı̨chǫ (Dogrib) Nation. He is a poet, a novelist and a short story writer. Richard has also written award winning books for children. Richard is a great talent and is the first published Tłı̨chǫ author.

Richard is a graduate of the En'owkin International School of Writing and the University of Victoria's Creative Writing BFA Program. He also went on to get his Master's Degree in Creative Writing at the University of British Columbia. Richard now teaches creative writing for Aboriginal students at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, BC.

He was recently awarded "Wordcraft Storyteller of the Year" in 2006-2007 for "the greatest storytelling in Canada and the US." Richard is the author of three children's books: *A Man Called Raven, What's the Most Beautiful Thing You Know About Horses?* and his newest book, *Welcome Song for Baby – a lullaby for newborns*.

Richard has also written a novel, *The Lesser Blessed*, which has been translated into French and German. In 2001 it won Germany's highest award for a translation. He also wrote, *Angel Wing Splash Pattern*, which is a collection of his finest short stories.

Richard Van Camp celebrated Family Literacy in the Northwest Territories by promoting his new baby book, *Welcome Song for Baby - a lullaby for newborns*.

Richard kicked off his northern tour with a get together for moms and babies at the Yellowknife Public Library on Monday, January 7th. Everyone was treated to a reading of the book by Richard followed by games and songs. Each family received a signed copy of the new baby book.



Lisa Campbell and baby Maria read Richard's book together.

In the afternoon Richard visited K'alemi Dene School in N'dilo where he shared stories of his youth growing up in Fort Smith.

The older kids shared their ambitions with Richard and he gave them lots of encouragement to write down their stories. He told them anything is possible with hard work and determination. Richard also showed a DVD about suicide that is

Literacy Matters



Richard Van Camp's Tour

based on an Aboriginal comic book. The name of the comic is *Darkness Calls* and the DVD is in the Gitksan language of the West Coast with English subtitles.



Richard at K'àlemì Dene School.

Richard headed to Fort Smith on Tuesday evening. All day Wednesday Richard delivered writing workshops and promoted family literacy through visits to the schools, Aurora College and the library. He was happy to visit his home town of Fort Smith. While he was there he saw some old friends and made new ones.

On Thursday Richard travelled to Behchokò. The first stop was at Chief Jimmy Bruneau School in Edzo. The elementary students were enthralled by Richard's stories of growing up in another community and many were happy to find out they were Richard's cousins. He read his book *What's the Most Beautiful Thing You Know About Horses?* to different classes and then had the kids draw pictures of themselves as their favourite animal.

The high school students joined the Teacher Education students for a workshop with Richard. Richard inspired them through his stories of life experiences and the stories behind his books. He encouraged them to continue their studies saying, "We need more Aboriginal authors sharing their experiences of the North."

He also visited Elizabeth McKenzie School in Behchokò and St. Pat's in Yellowknife. No matter what the age of the students, they all loved the baby book. Richard encouraged students from all the schools he visited to email him with their writing so he could respond and encourage them.

The NWT Literacy Council is very pleased to have been able to connect students with an award winning Aboriginal author from the NWT. We thank Richard for sharing his stories and ideas and inspiring so many future authors.



Richard at Chief Jimmy Bruneau School.



Literacy Matters

Family Literacy Training Institute

We held our 12th Family Literacy Training Institute in February. Over 30 people attended the training from the Sahtu, Tłı̨chǫ, Deh Cho, Beaufort Delta and Yellowknife. We have now trained over 400 people in the NWT in family literacy.

We developed one new workshop and reworked several other workshops. The workshops that we delivered were:

- Family Literacy and Emergent Literacy
- Brain Basics
- Building Aboriginal Language Skills
- Facilitation Skills
- Family Literacy Programs and Ideas
- Planning for Your Community



Some new information we shared with participants was about emergent literacy and brain functions of children and adults.

Emergent Literacy

Children start to learn language from the day they are born. As they grow and develop, their speech and language skills become increasingly more complex. They learn to understand and use language to express their ideas, thoughts, and feelings, and to communicate with others. During early speech and language development, children learn skills that are important to the development of literacy.

This stage, known as emergent literacy, begins at birth and continues through the preschool years. Children see and interact with print (e.g., books, magazines, grocery lists) in everyday situations (e.g., home, in preschool, and at daycare) well before they start elementary school. Parents can see their child's growing appreciation and enjoyment of print as he or she begins to recognize words that rhyme, scribble with crayons, point out logos and street signs, and name some letters of the alphabet. Gradually, children combine what they know about speaking and listening with what they know about print and become ready to learn to read and write.

Literacy Matters



Family Literacy Training Institute

Brain Basics Workshop

Brain research confirms that children begin learning even before they are born. We know that early interactions and experiences play a vital role in the brain development of a child.

It's important for parents and those who care for children to know some of the basic facts about brain development, and what they can do to help a baby's brain develop.

The brain develops over a long period of time. It begins within a few days after conception and continues through our pregnancy, childhood and adolescence and beyond. But there is more brain development in the first three years of life than at any other time!

The human brain contains about 200 billion neurons (brain cells). At birth, infants have all the brain cells they will ever have, but they do not have all the "wiring" that connects the cells. After birth the brain continues to grow by developing the "wiring" or the connections between neurons.

A baby's brain is a work in progress. In the first months and years, babies' brains are VERY busy making A LOT of connections.

How do neurons know which connections to make? Experience is the key to connection!

The more an infant is held, talked to and rocked, the faster the baby's brain grows,

develops and makes connections. What a child sees, hears, tastes, smells and touches are all experiences that make connections in their brains. Connections that get repeated become stronger connections.

A child who grows up on the land will have different experiences and different brain connections from a child who grows up in a city.

A child who sees and handles a lot of books will have different experiences and different brain connections from a child who spends a lot of time watching TV.

Beginning about age 10, the brain starts "pruning"- getting rid of connections. How does it decide which connections to keep? By this rule: "Use it or lose it."

The brain gets rid of connections that are seldom used and keeps connections that are often used.

On a rich diet of love and new, positive experiences the brain grows and flourishes. The child's unique gifts can blossom.

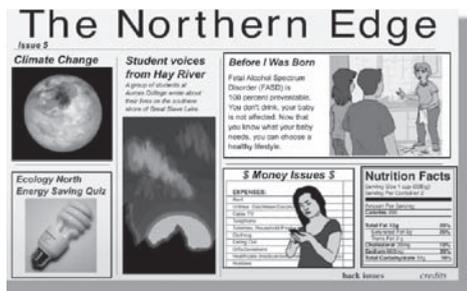




Literacy Matters

The Northern Edge

We are currently working on a new edition of the Northern Edge. The Northern Edge is an on-line newspaper for adult learners. We have developed five editions so far. To view the Northern Edge go to our website at www.nwt.literacy.ca.



The new edition will feature five topics:

1. Learner Stories

We invited two learners to share their stories with us. Both of these learners have been winners of the Council of the Federation Literacy Award. We would like to thank Cindy Voudrach and Kadiatu Dumbuya for sharing their stories and ideas with us.

2. Finding and Keeping a Job

This section has lots of information to help people find and keep a job. Included in this section is information about resumes, cover letters, using the Internet, reference letters, what employers want, networking and much more.

3. Biographies

A biography is an account of a person's life. We chose three Northerners to write a

biography on - Nellie Cournoyea, Richard Van Camp and Rene Fumoleau. You will learn more about these Northerners and about their accomplishments.

4. Family Literacy

Family literacy is about spending time with your children doing literacy related activities like reading, baking, playing games and much more. This section provides viewers with information on family literacy and some resources to use with your family.

5. Climate Change

Climate change is a hot topic right now. We have already done one piece on climate change in Edition Five, but felt that we needed to expand on the topic. This section uses the Smithsonian Institute's information on climate change. It covers sea ice, hunting practices, Arctic climate change and has a five minute video on Sachs Harbour and the changes that are happening there.

Learning Activities

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

Look for the new edition on our website this spring!

Literacy Matters



More Northern Writes

The NWT Literacy Council hosted a northern writing contest each year from 1992 – 2002 called the Northern Writes Writing Contest. Two years ago we developed the first *Northern Writes Study Guide*. We decided to develop a second Study Guide with four more stories from the writing contest.

- Story #1: A Tundra Spring Day
By Susan Webster
1997 NWT Writing Contest
- Story #2: Fascinating Myths of the Inuit
By Elizabeth Lyall
1992 NWT Writing Contest
- Story #3: As Are We All
By Chris Gamble
1999 NWT Writing Contest
- Story #4: Medivac
By Maureen A. Johnston
1995 NWT Writing Contest

We chose these four stories because they offer different stories and learning opportunities for adult learners. It is important that adult learners have stories and poems to read that reflect life in the North. Each story has a range of learning activities that can be used in adult upgrading programs. Activities range from 110 – 130 and can be used across the curriculum.

The guide is on our website. Call us if you would like a hard copy of this resource.

More Resources

NALD@Work is an online website that has everything you need to support workplace education programs. It includes program models, teaching, learning and research materials, news about what's happening in the field, event listings, contact information, helpful websites and much more . . .

NALD@Work hosts the new workplace/workforce literacy website for the NWT and Nunavut Literacy Councils at <http://www.nald.ca/nwwlc>. There you can find out more about the Northern Workplace/Workforce Literacy Partnership. The website has the new research reports from Nunavut and the NWT, as well as resources and information related to workplace/workforce literacy.

Annotated Bibliography of Aboriginal Literature

Over the years, many people have asked us to put together a package of information on Aboriginal literature that is suitable for different age groups. Two years ago we published an annotated list of Aboriginal literature for all age groups.

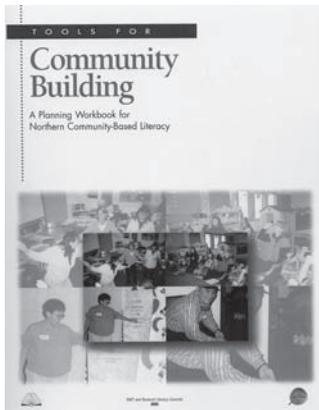
We are now updating our bibliography of Aboriginal literature. Many books have been written in this time period and we want to keep our list current. We are also adding more northern, Aboriginal, and adult books to the list. **Look for it on our website in April.**



Literacy Matters

Proposal Writing Guide

The Nunavut and NWT Literacy Councils are working together to revise the *Tools for Community Building Workbook*. The new workbook will have a project planning section, a proposal writing guide, a starting your project section and an evaluation section.



We have developed an up-to-date *Proposal Writing Guide* that will be included in the Tools Manual. We have completed this section first because we know people are writing proposals for projects for the new fiscal year.

Successful proposal writing involves planning, searching for information and resources, writing, submitting your proposal to a funder, and follow-up.

This guide has all the information that community groups need to write a funding proposal. However, we encourage you to carefully read the guidelines for each funding program you apply on.

10 Steps to Writing a Proposal

We have outlined 10 steps to writing an effective proposal. They are:

1. Develop a project goal and objectives
2. Identify activities
3. Develop a work plan
4. Develop a budget
5. Develop an evaluation plan
6. Complete the proposal (write a summary, description of your organization and a description of the project)
7. Fill out the application form (if there is one)
8. Write a cover letter
9. Get letters of support
10. Put it all together

Take the time you need. It's normal for people to go through the first five steps more than once before they agree on the final objectives, activities, work plan, budget, and evaluation plan.

You can download a copy of the guide from the new website: Tools for Community Building <http://www.toolsforcommunitybuilding.ca>. You will also find a couple of example proposals to look at.

Literacy Matters



New Information on our Website

We continue to add to our website weekly. The following resources and information have recently been added to our website. You will find them on the front page of our website under *What's New*.

1. Literacy Outreach Stories

Students at the Literacy Outreach Centre in Yellowknife did a story writing unit before Christmas. Each student wrote about a memorable Christmas. Read their stories on our website.

2. Our Annual Report

Our annual report is now on-line. Download a copy and learn more about our programs and services.

3. English 130 Nonfiction Study: *Raising Ourselves* by Velma Wallis

Want a fully prepared nonfiction study for your learners? This study gives detailed instructor notes and handouts for learners. *Raising Ourselves* is a wonderful book to share with learners. Velma Wallis writes honestly and with passion about her people's struggle with alcoholism and cultural loss.

4. English 120 Novel Study: *Two Old Women* by Velma Wallis

This novel study is at approximately the Grade 6 reading level according to the Fry readability score.

Velma Wallis tells a story from her ancestors. Passed from mothers to

daughters for many generations, this ancient story tells of hardship and triumph from a time long ago. Two old women are abandoned by their People only to realize their strength of will and determination to live. This novel study provides learners with a variety of learning activities and handouts.

5. English 110: Five Photo Stories

These Photo Stories are designed for the low English 110 level. They can be used to initiate discussion on northern topics like dog racing, fishing, sundogs, the Arctic Winter Games, and crossing the Mackenzie River on a ferry. The instructor can select the handouts needed to teach or reinforce different concepts.

6. Stories and Activities for English 110 and 120

This resource provides eight stories that were either written by adult learners from the Hay River Learning Centre or used in adult literacy classes in the NWT. The stories that were written by adult learners were made into booklets and illustrated by local artists in the community.

Each story has a brief introduction with learning outcomes, learning activities and handouts.

7. Literacy Fact Sheets

Want to know more about how literacy is related to other social issues? Check out our up-to-date literacy fact sheets at <http://www.nwt.literacy.ca/litfact/litfact.htm>



Literacy Matters

2008 PGI Golf Tournament for Literacy

This year we are hosting the Peter Gzowski Invitational Golf Tournament in both Yellowknife and Behchokò. We have changed the golf tournament to a putt with a celebrity.



Our special celebrity guests this year include Shelagh Rogers, Canadian music legends Murray McLauchlan, Ian Thomas, Connie Kaldor, and Mike Stevens. Jonathon Torrens (J-Roc of Trailer Park Boys) will be rapping along with home grown celebrity Aaron Hernandez (a.k.a. Godson). Alison Gzowski will also be joining us again. We would like to thank First Air for their generous donations of airfare from Edmonton to Yellowknife for our celebrity guests.



We are hosting two community concerts in Yellowknife on Monday, April 16 and Tuesday, April 17. The event begins at 6 pm with a chance to putt with a celebrity for a donation and a raffle. The concert starts at 7 pm with the St. Pat's Four Leaf Clover Jazz Combo kicking it off.

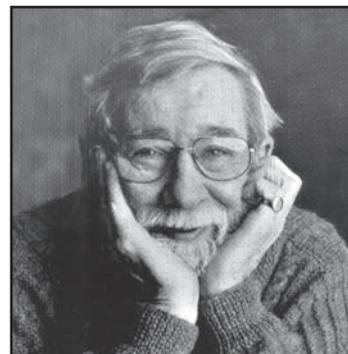
On Tuesday morning the celebrities will be visiting children and adult learners in Yellowknife. The Minister of Education, Culture, and Employment, the Honourable

Jackson Lafferty, will sponsor a lunch for the guests before their helicopter tour of Yellowknife.

On Wednesday celebrities travel to Behchokò to visit schools, the daycare, the adult education program and the Elders' Home.

The Premier's community feast will start at 6 pm. Prior to that members of the community can come out to test their putting skills against our guests for a donation. Community members will showcase their talents such as drumming and hand games over the course of the evening.

After dinner, two adult learners will receive the Co-operators Learner Award and the Northwest Territories Power Corporation Learner Award. The awards go to learners that have shown dedication and determination to return to school to further their education. The Gzowski Award will also be presented to the person showing the most enthusiasm for the PGI.



Literacy Matters



Literacy Matters Workshop

Invest \$9 million in literacy in the NWT and the payback time for the GNWT will be approximately one year! That was part of the message Scott Murray brought to the participants in the Literacy Matters workshop in January.

Mr. Murray emphasized the link between literacy levels and economic growth. He also drew a link between low literacy and health, in particular diabetes, which interested the health professionals at the workshop.

As a result of increased literacy skills:

- More people will be employed.
- Those who are employed will work more months each year, as well as more hours in a month.
- People with higher skills earn higher wages.
- Peoples' general health improves.
- Peoples' mental health improves through less stress, for example.

This in turn means government receives higher tax revenues from employees; fewer people have to rely on income support or employment insurance; and health care costs go down.

Mr. Murray worked for Statistics Canada for many years and was the driving force behind the International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey. He is now president of a policy research agency. Almost 100 people attended the two day workshop sponsored by the NWT Literacy Council and the Western Canada Workplace Essential Skills Training Network (Wwestnet). They represented educators, government, Aboriginal organizations and not-for-profit organizations.





Literacy Matters

Spring Literacy Activities

Jump into spring with fun literacy activities for the whole family. Here is a great website to check out: <http://www.apples4theteacher.com/holidays/spring/index.html>

- Learn about spring - the season. When does it start? When does it end? What makes spring?
- Thematic reading list: Spring book descriptions and reviews for pre-school and elementary reading.
- Spring crafts and activities: Tons of craft ideas for spring! Make a butterfly memo board, a craft stick birdhouse, cute as a bug photo magnets, a frog photo holder, a ladybug photo magnet, a photo frame backpack tag or sequin flower photo magnets.
- Printable spring short stories: Great stories to share with children to celebrate springtime.
- Printable spring poems and rhymes

Another great website is <http://www.enchantedlearning.com/crafts/spring/>

You will find spring crafts, worksheets and activities at this site. Some examples of activities are:

- Spring puzzles
- Spring books to print
- Spring colouring books
- Spring spelling handouts

Board of Directors

Kathryn Carriere, President
Bette Lyons, Vice President
Jeri Miltenberger, Secretary
Suzanne Robinson, Treasurer
Debra English, Beaufort Delta
George Collins, South Slave
Marlene Tutcho, Sahtu, North Slave
Vacant, Deh Cho
Amanda Mallon, YK, Ndilo, Dettah
Vacant, Tłıchǫ

Staff

Mandie Abrams, Executive Director
mandie@nwtliteracy.ca
Lisa Campbell, Resource Coordinator
lisa@nwtliteracy.ca
Helen Balanoff, Research & Evaluation
helen@nwtliteracy.ca
Marianne Bromley, Literacy Coordinator
marianne@nwtliteracy.ca
Jill Vaydik, Literacy Coordinator Trainee
jill@nwtliteracy.ca
Karen Leyk, Administrative Assistant and Promotions Coordinator
nwtliteracy@nwtliteracy.ca

How can you reach us?

NWT Literacy Council
Box 761
Yellowknife, NT X1A 2N6
1-866-599-6758 -toll free
(867) 873-9262 -phone (867) 873-2176 -fax
www.nwt.literacy.ca