



# The SGB Youth Literacy Letter



Volume 1, Issue 1

Newsletter of the South Grey Bruce Youth Literacy Council

January 2007

## Our Newsletter

We are proud to present the first issue of the SGB Youth Literacy Council Newsletter – our new way of keeping in touch with the community. The *Letter* will be issued semi-annually, in January and June, to share information on youth and family literacy with readers in the South Grey Bruce region.

Every issue will feature a short column by a guest writer, the ‘Community Letter,’ written by a tutor, parent, or other advocate for youth literacy in our area. The column in this issue was generously contributed by Carole Warren, Chesley resident, jazz singer, and performer at this year’s Words Aloud Festival. She is also a long-time literacy advocate, and now we are happy to have her with us as one of our volunteer tutors.

We welcome contributions from others to our Community Letter, and if you have something you would like to share with readers through this column please let us know. The column will be short – half a page to a page of writing to engage our readers would be wonderful.

We also want to make a regular feature of a column called the ‘Youth Letter,’ to be written by youth under 18. Content can be anything the youth of South Grey Bruce would like to share – poetry, short essays,

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## Trillium Grant Awarded

### *Cheque presentation and Open House*

On December 4, 2006, the South Grey Bruce Literacy Council accepted an award of \$62,700 from the Ontario Trillium Foundation to facilitate service to the public over the next three years. This is an historic moment for an organization which has struggled in the past to find funding, and board members and staff are very proud of how hard work and commitment has paid off in this alliance with Trillium.

The cheque presentation was held at the Hanover office of the SGBYLC, where the atmosphere was jubilant. There were balloons, festive flowers and poinsettias contributed by friends of the Literacy Council. There were also treats contributed by the membership, including an especially beautiful set of cookies professionally decorated with our logo and the words “thanks Trillium” in coloured icings. The cookies were the inspired idea of board member MaryAnne Beuhlow, with her dependable eye for detail.

At 3:00 PM the Trillium cheque was presented by MP Bill Murdoch to Dyan Jones, Co-ordinator, and Claire Fanger (now assistant to the Co-ordinator, then still Chair of the SGBYLC Board of Directors). Also taking part in the cheque presentation and celebration were Kathi Maskell (Hanover mayor and long time friend of literacy) and Leigh Butler (a volunteer with the Trillium grant review team and educator). There were also sundry volunteer tutors, board members, reporters, and many friends and well-wishers of the SGB Youth Literacy Council.

The Trillium grant represents a huge labor of love on all sides. The SGBYLC is happy to be allied with such a distinguished funding body as the Ontario Trillium foundation, and looks forward to our positive future.



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helpful hints ideas about teaching and learning. This issue's column was written by Julian Coyne, a student at John Diefenbaker Secondary School. We seek contributions from those who may once have struggled with school as well as the crackerjacks who always aced every test. We would like contributions of writing limited to a page or less.

We hope that the people of the South Grey Bruce region – both youth and adults – will take advantage of the opportunity offered by the *Letter* to link up with others interested in the challenges of teaching and learning.

## New Opening Hours

Thanks to our Trillium funding we are now able to provide regular office hours. Since both our coordinators are juggling more than one job, hours available are limited; however from January 3<sup>rd</sup> 2007, the office will be open at the following times:

Sunday, Monday and Tuesday: Closed.

Wednesday: 12 PM to 5 PM and 7 PM to 9 PM

Thursday: 9 AM to 5 PM

Friday 12 PM to 5 PM

Saturday 9 AM to 12 PM

In the future we look forward to being able to extend our opening hours. If anyone would be interested in volunteering a few hours to sit in the office on one Tuesday per month, day or evening, please contact us and we will begin to set up a schedule. The volunteer would answer the telephone, take messages, check out materials from our resource library, and talk to those who drop in. Callers are often heartened to hear a live voice on the phone. ❖



## Community Letter

*Great "little" show raises money for literacy*

In 1989, I was working as a producer for CBC Radio's Morningside, hosted by the man whose name is synonymous with that show – Peter Gzowski. One morning, after the show, Peter made a rare trek back to my corner cubicle.

"I have something to ask you," he said. "I want to put on a little show to raise money for Frontier College. Would you produce it?"

By that point I'd learned it was next to useless to say no to Peter, so I took a big breath and said "Sure, I'd love to."

For the next seventeen years that "little" show, held annually at the Red Barn Theatre in Jackson's Point,

raised one heck of a lot (as Peter would say) of money for Canada's oldest adult literacy institution. After Peter left us, the wonderful Shelagh Rogers carried on his legacy. I still shake my head in amazement when I remember the many remarkable performers and performances – Ben Heppner singing with the Bare Naked Ladies; Loreena McKennitt taking our collective breaths away; W.O Mitchell holding us spellbound with his stories; David Peterson turning pages for Bob Rae at the piano only a month after the Liberals lost the provincial election to the NDP (O.K.... that was more "odd" than the anything). Not only was it a coveted ticket, but some pretty amazing performers used to actually call us to see if they could "do the Barn this year."

Flash forward to November 2006. I'm sitting in a quiet corner of the Hanover Public Library taking turns reading a "Garfield" comic book with a lively nine year old boy who needs some extra help with reading and writing. I look forward to our weekly sessions and I think he does too. It just makes sense to get the help to kids early on, as soon as their needs are identified, instead of waiting till they're struggling as adults. And as proud as I am of my association with the Red Barn, there's something truly exciting about working in the trenches.

I think Peter would agree.

Carole Warren  
Chesley

*We welcome proposals from Grey Bruce readers for contributions to this column dealing with personal experiences related to literacy. We also welcome discussion and response. Please contact us: [info@sgbyouthliteracy.org](mailto:info@sgbyouthliteracy.org).*

## Spotlight on Family Literacy

- **A**sk your child questions about the story you're reading to ensure comprehension.
- **B**ook family time to read with your children every day.
- **C**reate a special reading place in your home, with your child's favorite books within reach.
- **D**onate funds to the literacy cause!
- **E**ncourage children to read words on TV, street signs, mugs and T-shirts.
- **F**ind new stories to read with your children every week. Vary their length and subject matter.
- **G**ive your time to read aloud to a child.

From ABC CANADA's Family Literacy Tips from A to Z, <[http://www.abc-canada.org/flid/about\\_fld.shtml](http://www.abc-canada.org/flid/about_fld.shtml)>

## Youth Letter

*The Gifted Learner: Another Voice Speaks Out*

The trials of the intellectually gifted rarely figure in people's minds, but I can assure you that they exist. Those with learning disabilities have fought for the right to have certain aspects of school programs modified to serve their needs, and the general public sees the need to make certain these people get the education that is right for them. However there seems to be very little focus on the problems of gifted students, in the media or elsewhere.

There is in fact a gifted program in Bluewater District – the TRAIL program – and I am very grateful for the benefits it has provided. The school is visited by a person with whom gifted children can discuss classes and activities, and once each term the opportunity comes along to participate in a TRAIL-related event. These activities are very important to me. And yet I wish more could be done for gifted learners to improve the school experience on a daily basis. A child with learning difficulties may be withdrawn from particular classes if it is agreed that the class is not meeting the child's needs, but the needs of gifted students are not approached in this way. Gifted learners are left alone in the classroom to deal with problems they may have.

There are probably plenty of people who would think that when so many more apparent problems exist with children's learning, the gifted ones don't need extra help. Indeed there may be worry that anything we do might be diverting needed funds for remedial literacy programs. Funding is not my specialty; however, I would love to be able to learn things in a way suited for a gifted person. Those who have a concern with literacy need to be aware of these problems too.

*Julian Coyne, Grade 11  
John Diefenbaker Secondary School*

*We welcome proposals from all Grey Bruce students for contributions to this column, as well as discussion and response. Contributions should be constructive and based in personal experience. Contact us: [info@sgbyouthliteracy.org](mailto:info@sgbyouthliteracy.org).*

## YLC Collaborates with P.E.P.P. Grey-Bruce

As part of our enrichment mandate, the Youth Literacy Council is facilitating a Journal Workshop with five teen participants from the Prevention and Early Intervention Program for Psychoses under the direction of Melanie Pfeiffer R.N. These young people will have the experience of working with local bookbinder, Timothy Dyck and artist-writer Judy Lowry in making their own journals. Literacy works in many ways.

## Recognizing Community Support for our Resource Centre

In November we received our first grant in support of our new resource centre from the Rotary Children's Fund. This money has already enabled the purchase of a Jolly Phonics set, a variety of learning games (many immediately checked out and now in use by our tutors), and several books by Barbara Colorosa. We intend to focus on building a library of books and resources directed towards a variety of reading levels, with special attention to boy readers.

In a further show of community support, Millennia Books of Hanover is creating a program where, starting in the new year, patrons may donate their Customer Reward Points to the Youth Literacy Council. This act of generosity translates into the acquisition of valued learning materials for our resource centre. We are equally pleased to have received donated gift certificates which we placed directly in the hands of our young learners to receive a book of their choice.

We appreciate as well the Chesley Public Library's contribution of shelving to house our resource collection. Throughout 2006, we have received incredible support and generous donations-in-kind from our community.

### GMAC Great Canadian Writing Contest for Grades 5-6

This contest is open to all Grade 5-6 students. These are no entry fees and great prizes will be awarded. Students are invited to enter their short stories (200 words) on the theme of Travel. You may illustrate your story as well, and have an adult edit your writing before sending. The deadline for entries runs from February 12 through April 16, 2007. The YLC is happy to help you edit or submit your stories; call us at 519 364-0008. You may also enter directly; for information see [www.abc-canada.org/gmac/en](http://www.abc-canada.org/gmac/en)

## YLC Announces Youth Board Member

We are pleased to introduce Kaylee Bonnell of Hanover as our newly elected Board Member. She is filling the position of Youth Advocate, contributing her perspective to our Board of Directors. Kaylee will be a valuable link to the area high schools. She will also serve as Youth Ambassador connecting the Youth Literacy Council with the Words Aloud Spoken Word Festival. It is her mission to encourage young people to participate and be aware of the literary opportunities in our region.

## Family Literacy Day in Canada January 27

The South Grey Bruce Youth Literacy Council is placing Family Literacy Day on the map! Mayor Kathi Maskell and Hanover Town Council are issuing a proclamation to regard January 27 as Family Literacy Day in the Town of Hanover. This gesture is being given additional spotlight by the Hanover Post, Town and Country Honda and ABC CANADA. The immeasurable value of celebrating literacy in the home is receiving the precedence it deserves,

This action spearheads the Youth Literacy Council's active roster of programming for 2007. We will be partnering with the public libraries and schools to highlight events during Literacy Week in April. We value our strong community partnerships which enhance the value of the work we perform. The Youth Literacy Council promotes family literacy and language arts enrichment as well as maintaining our volunteer based one-to-one tutoring program.

### **Tutor-Learner Matches**

*Currently there are twelve active tutor-learner matches maintained through the SGB Youth Literacy Council. Three learners are on the waiting list. More tutor applications are in process.*

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Mailing Address  
Street Number and Name  
City, State 98765-4321

UNITED WAY AND TRILLIUM LOGOS GO HERE

The South Grey Bruce Youth Literacy Council, a community-based organization, will strive to assist youth, ages 6-18, who are struggling in school, in their quest to improve basic reading, writing and math skills, so that they may enjoy full participation as citizens in the community.

*--Mission Statement*

### **Friends of Youth Literacy**

#### **Contributors in Kind**

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