



The
SGB
Youth
Literacy

Letter



Volume 1, Issue 2

Newsletter of the South Grey Bruce Youth Literacy Council

July 2007

In This Issue

Summer is here, and we have much good news to share and many new projects to tell you about. As writer of our Community Letter, we are pleased to welcome Cathy Vassiliadis, who reports on the successful workshop on Guided Reading which she led for our tutors in March. We are glad to have Kaitlyn French, tutor and student at John Diefenbaker Secondary School, to contribute the Youth Letter. And Elizabeth Hahn, our new resource acquisitions advisor, is also contributing a guest column.

As always, we welcome contributions for the next issue for our Community Letter and Youth Letter. If you have something you would like to share with readers through this column, please let us know. 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. We also note updates to our website: do check out our new links (and we are open to suggestion for more).

Summer Opening Hours for Literacy Office

Opening hours through July and August will be:

Saturday, Sunday and Monday: Closed.

Tuesday through Friday: 9 AM to 5 PM

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 Opening Hours
- 2 Community Letter
- 3 Spotlight on Family Literacy
- 3 Youth Letter
- 4 Friends of Youth Literacy
- 4 Tutor-Learner Matches

New Developments in Our Office

New Learning Resources Advisor and Summer Student



Two new developments in our office are greatly enhancing our capacity to help our tutors maintain their enthusiastic service to the children of our community.

First, we are extremely lucky to have retired children's librarian Elizabeth Hahn volunteering her help in office with learning resources every Wednesday. She has been using this time greatly to our benefit with her expert management of resource acquisitions.

Thanks to her labour, the resource centre is now better able to offer reading matter more suitable for those readers who are not yet fluent but who are older and have a broader interest range than the "easy readers" normally target. Tutors and parents who have not explored our new range of reading materials and learning games are invited to check out our resource centre any time during our opening hours.

Second, through the support of the Ministry of Citizenship, Tourism and Culture, we were able to hire Katie Barclay of Chepstow for a seven week internship. Katie is currently a student at Fanshawe College. Katie will be active in our collaboration with The Hanover Parks and Recreation Department's Summer Reading Camp, and will also be working to create additional learning materials for our tutors. Katie was chosen from among many highly qualified youth candidates for her combination of keen motivation and extensive volunteer experience. Her administrative help will enable our co-ordinator Dyan Jones to maintain longer opening hours this summer (see schedule opposite).

Fresh from our AGM, we are again supported by our enthusiastic and dedicated Board of Directors.

View from the Bookshelf

I have enjoyed becoming part of the Youth Literacy Team and I am pleased to help with building a suitable collection of reading and math materials for our South Grey Bruce Resource Centre. Now retired, I have worked most of my career as a teacher for students with learning disabilities, an elementary school teacher-librarian, and most recently as a children's librarian with West Grey Public Libraries.

Thanks to generous donations and grants from Energizer Canada and the Hanover Rotary Club gifted for this purpose, we have been able to select appealing books for challenged readers. Resources purchased with boy readers in mind include a great selection of non-fiction picture books, graded readers, chapter books, and a few graphic novels. A variety of games and flash cards for reading and math are ready for use. These are available to assist our tutors with their weekly tutoring sessions or for families to access for further home support.

Our goal is to build a fun collection of interesting and appealing reading and math materials that will help students achieve their potential to 'sail into reading.' We are on the lookout for good resources. If you have a request or know of a sure winner, please let us know.

Elizabeth Hahn



Upcoming Fundraising Events

B is for B.B.Q.- July 21, 2007

Thanks to Grants Value Mart for the opportunity to hold our Charity B.B.Q. event on Saturday, July 21, 2007 from 11am to 3pm. Please come out, treat your family to lunch, and support Youth Literacy. Volunteers are welcome. (Who can resist the opportunity to play hotdog vendor for an afternoon?)

B is for Blossoms- Vesey's Bulbs – Order Now!

We will again be selling Blooms for Literacy. Through Vesey's Bulbs we are selling flower bulbs for autumn planting. As you are beautifying your garden, you strengthen the Youth Literacy Council with this fundraising initiative.

And B is for Books-

Queen's Bush Book & Author Fair, July 14, 2007

Nature's Millworks in Paisley is hosting the 7th Queen's Bush Book and Author Fair on Saturday July 14th from 10am to 4pm. Local authors, small presses, publishers, book artisans and readers will abound. The South Grey Bruce Youth Literacy Council is being honoured as the charitable recipient of all entrance donations. Plan to come and participate in this lovely summer literacy event.

Community Letter

I am a recent arrival in Grey Bruce County and loving every minute of it. I spent my working life as a teacher, administrator and curriculum writer on the west coast, but I am truly finding paradise in my rural retirement home just north of Durham.

Recently I had the privilege of spending an evening talking about reading with the dedicated tutors of the South Grey Bruce Youth Literacy Council. We explored the practice of Guided Reading which is widely employed with small groups in today's schools, and which, I suggested, would be a helpful process for tutors and learners one-on-one as well.

Guided Reading is a set of practices that can be used by adults working with children to improve the child's fluency and comprehension. The first step is to choose a text appropriate for the child's reading level. As an assessment strategy, I suggested that the level is appropriate when a learner makes between five and ten errors in a one hundred word passage.

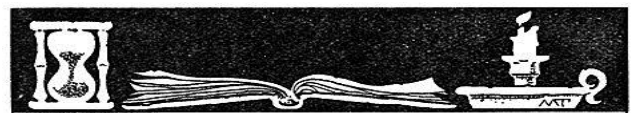
Then tutor and child look at the title and the pictures together and discuss what they think the story is about. They can chat about experiences the child is reminded of by the title or pictures, or review what the child already knows about the subject. During this discussion, the adult can present vocabulary words (on flashcards) that he or she thinks may pose a special challenge for the child. Games can be played with the flashcards to build familiarity prior to reading the story.

After reading the first paragraph together, the student reads the story by himself. The tutor and student then revisit the story to answer questions, discuss meanings, practice difficult words and talk about how the reading strategy was used. Guided Reading is a process that has worked for me in helping students of all ages to develop increased reading skills.

Cathy Vassiliadis

(Newsletter editor's note: In the time period since, three tutors who were in attendance at this workshop have commented on the effectiveness of this method in work with their learners.)

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



Youth Letter

Patience is a Virtue that Works

Being a peer tutor was the last thing I had in my mind for my grade 11 year. But it's what I ended up doing, and I have yet to regret that decision. I was so nervous on my first day, unsure of what to do. I had only met my learner once, and the only preparation I had was reading my training manual. What was there to expect? Would he like me? Would we get along? Would I be able to make this child's life better? All these questions ran through my head as I tried to get through my first day.

After the first day it got easier, but was not entirely smooth. There were times when I got very frustrated with my learner, almost on the brink of getting angry with him. But I had to control myself; I knew that it wasn't his fault. It seemed that after four months together, he was making no progress at all. That was when I learned that the process is slow, and you have to take it slowly. After time you do see progress, but you have to wait for it. Once it comes, you can only go uphill.

After that first sign of improvement, my learner just kept going and going. As time went on, we really bonded, and started having more fun while learning. I would have to say that the key to success is in these two things: practicing and having fun. Having fun is a key because your learner won't want to do anything unless it appeals to him. "Patience is a virtue" is a commonly used phrase, but truth does ring in it. I have found that patience works, and helps you achieve greater things than you could imagine. It worked for me and my learner, so it can work for you too.

Kaitlyn French

We welcome proposals from all Grey Bruce students for contributions to this column, as well as discussion and response. Contact us: info@sgbyouthliteracy.org.

Poet Elizabeth Zetlin is Patron of the Youth Literacy Council

Elizabeth Zetlin, resident of Markdale and current Poet Laureate of Owen Sound, is one of the most distinguished poets currently living in the Grey Bruce area, and we are proud to have her as Patron of the Youth Literacy Council. Her books of poetry include *Said the River* (Penumbra Press, 1995), *Taking Root* (Seraphim, 2001) and *The Thing with Feathers* (Always Press, 2003). Liz Zetlin is an experienced public advocate of poetry, and has done readings and performances all over Canada. For the last three years she has performed in the well-known public event called National Random Acts of Poetry, with the SGB Youth Literacy Council as her sponsor last year. We have also engaged her to perform poetry to high school audiences in support of our literacy enrichment activities. We were delighted to have her present at our Annual General Meeting and gathering in June, gracing our event with her poetry.

Words Aloud 4 Spoken Word Festival

Durham Art Gallery, November 1 – 4, 2007

All of Canada is taking notice! The Words Aloud Festival is returning to Durham in November with an exciting program of spoken word performances and writing workshop opportunities for adults, as well as several new and expanded satellite events for children and youth.

The Youth Literacy Council is a proud collaborating partner in organizing these events for younger community members. There will be a free children's storytelling concert on Saturday, November 2, 2007, featuring Canadian-Pakistani storyteller Rukhsana Khan, Dr. Poetry himself, Robert Priest, and local storyteller Tanya Coulter. This lively afternoon concert for families will be at the Durham Town Hall.

On Sunday afternoon a SLAM poetry event will be featured honouring the Words Aloud Sunday tradition of pay-what-you-can. This will be an attractive event for students and teens as well as adults. The Youth Literacy Council is working with English and Drama teachers in the high schools to ensure that local students are aware of the event, to be held Upstairs Above Stedman's in Durham, Sunday November 3.

Finally, the Hanover Library is a keen partner with the Youth Literacy Council in presenting the PEN Canada Writers in Exile *Taxi Project*. This play will be performed at the Hanover Civic Theatre on Thursday November 1, and targets a high school audience as well as adults. Mosaic Magazine will run a feature article on the event, so watch for more details.



Spotlight on Family Literacy

- **H**ave fun. Make learning a delight by writing a funny story, making up a new song, or creating a new counting game with your children.
- **I**ntroduce a family board game night, where children are encouraged to read instructions, spell words, and keep score.
- **J**ust reading to your child for 20 minutes a day adds up to more than 1,450 hours of learning from infancy to the end of Grade 6.
- **K**eepteen reading by providing them with books, magazines and internet sites about things that interest them – like music, movies, TV and computers.

From ABC CANADA's Family Literacy Tips from A to Z,
<http://www.abc-canada.org/fld/about_fld.shtml>

Tutor-Learner Matches

Over the course of the year we have administered 22 tutor-learner matches of which 9 will be maintained over the summer. Help us grow!

National Poetry Month

The funding supplied by the League of Canadian Poets sparked the Youth Literacy Council's celebration of Poetry Month in April. This sponsorship enabled the Youth Literacy Council to bring three area poets to local high schools to present poetry on the League theme Future (In)Tense. In keeping with the theme, poets recited their work from a futuristic poetry booth, framed with PVC piping and decorated with streamers of aluminum foil, which was designed by Dyan Jones. During this whirlwind week, Penn Kemp, nationally known sound poet from London, Ontario, presented to students at John Diefenbaker Secondary School in Hanover; Liz Zetlin, Poet Laureate of Owen Sound and our Patron, gave a reading at Grey Highlands Secondary School in Flesherton; and Judy Lowry, a powerful poet and visual artist from Williamsford, graced students with her poetry at Sacred Heart High School in Walkerton. Judy Lowry even composed a special poem which was premiered for the students at this time. Copies of poems and books were presented to the students and teachers. We are grateful for the high schools' enthusiastic participation in this event.

Outreach Activities

The Youth Literacy Council continues to make presentations to the community. We hosted an Early Dismissal Day workshop of maximum capacity for Educational Assistants from The Bluewater & District School Board on the technique of Guided Reading. Parents at The Early Years Centre in Hanover participated in a workshop promoting Family Literacy, with another scheduled for parents of infants on August 8th. We gave a presentation to the Friends of the Hanover Library and regaled youngsters at St. Peter and Paul's Separate School in Durham during their celebrity reading series during Catholic Education Week. We are happy to extend this outreach of Youth Literacy activities.



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

Julia Ashten	Susan Lindsay
Bruce Telecom	Randy Martin
Su Cadogan	Millennia Books
Chesley Public Library	Northcott Silk Inc.
Paul Coyne	Noël Palmer
Jennifer Dimeck	Pontypridd Bookstore
Elizabeth Hahn	Rona Building Supplies
George Hahn	Yesterday's Garden
Hanover Public Library	David Zeigler
	Elizabeth Zetlin

Donors

Claire Fanger	Val McNeish
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Roseann Finlayson	Cynthia & John Power
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Hanover Rotary Club	Catherine Vassiliadis
Joan Martin	Roseanne Finlayson

Sponsors

Energizer Canada
Ministry of Citizenship, Tourism & Culture
The Municipality of West Grey
Ontario Trillium Foundation
The Town of Hanover
United Way of Bruce Grey

Affiliate Organizations & Working Partnerships

ABC Canada, Bluewater & District School Board, Bruce-Grey Catholic District School Board, Bruce County Public Libraries, Durham Art Gallery, Hanover Public Library & Friends of the Library, Keystone Child Youth and Family Services, League of Canadian Poets, Ontario Early Years Centre – Hanover, Ontario Literacy Coalition, P.E.P.P., Project Canoe, Quill Network, Walkerton & District Community Living, West Grey Libraries, Words Aloud Spoken Word Festival, Youth Roots.

Artists Donate For Youth Literacy

Local artists, Anna Green and Ken Dunn, have each generously offered the proceeds of the sale of one of their paintings to the Youth Literacy Council from their upcoming show *Art By The Falls* at Gypsy Creek, August 25 & 26. Engage your passion for art while assisting the Youth Literacy Council. This is a new fundraising initiative and we welcome other artists to come forward.

Thank you to our many Supporters, Donors, and Volunteers for helping Youth Literacy to grow.

