

The Centre for Family Literacy is dedicated to helping Alberta grow and prosper.



The Centre for Family Literacy Centre Page

December 2004, Volume 1, Issue 2

Raising Awareness Taking the Family Literacy Message Out to the Community



“Raising awareness about the importance of literacy and its impact on individuals, families and communities is one of the key goals that the Centre has identified in its new three year strategic plan,” said Board Chair, Jason Randhawa.

It might surprise you to know that the International Adult Literacy Survey found that 15% of Albertans have extremely poor literacy skills and would not know how much medicine to give their child or what the right ratio of baby formula to water would be.

The survey also found that an additional 21% of Albertans can only read material that is very simple and very simply laid out. So roughly one third of adults in Alberta are below the minimum desired literacy level or about 800,000 people – that represents the population of the City of Edmonton.

Literacy tends to be a key determinant of educational achievement, health, employment, as well as income levels. Imagine the challenges for the 36% of Albertans who struggle with literacy and imagine the cost to society.

“15% of Albertans have extremely poor literacy skills and would not know how much medicine to give their child.”

These were the key messages delivered by Jason Randhawa, Board Chair, and Kimberley Onclin, Program Manager, in their addresses to three Rotary Clubs over the past two months.

If you know of an organization or group that would be interested in hearing about the Centre's work, please give us a call. We are committed to building awareness of this important issue and helping Alberta families achieve what they imagine – improved education, jobs and health.

Holiday Greetings

“Without literacy there can be no justice.”

Burt Galaway
John Howard Society
1997

Books and More

Aboriginal Family Resources Project

Continued on next page

Over the past several months, we have been involved in the mammoth task of researching, ordering and distributing 36,000 Aboriginal sensitive children's books.

Colleen Crozier, the Centre's Aboriginal Family Literacy Coordinator, conferred with Aboriginal organizations and individuals during this project to determine the best

Contact us

#201 - 11456 Jasper Ave.
Edmonton, AB Canada
T5K 0M1

780.421.READ
www.famlit.ca



Help Your Child to Read and Write And this program really does!

"Michael was seven years old in Grade 2 last year, and his spelling and reading skills were falling behind the rest of his class. As his performance lagged, so did his self-confidence.

No more. A year later, thanks to a reading assistance program, there's been 'big time' improvement. Michael feels good about himself, his grades have improved and he's taken to spontaneous reading to his six-year-old brother Joshua.

Teachers say he's putting up his hand to ask questions, something he would never do last year. The school librarian says Michael walks down the hallway these days with more assurance than ever." - Excerpted from the *Edmonton Journal*, Friday Sept 17, 2004

Help Your Child to Read and Write works with students like Michael and their parents in an 8-week program. Together they learn new strategies, practice them and then use them at home to lessen stress and improve school success.

Working with Edmonton Public and Catholic Schools, the program is delivered in inner city or high-needs elementary schools at no cost to the families. The program receives funding from AON Reed Stenhouse, Edmonton Journal Raise-a-Reader, ECALA, Region 6 and Success by 6®.

“He was doing really badly. You could get him to spell a word, and within five or ten minutes you would ask him to spell that word again and he could not remember it,” says his mom, Jennifer.

Books and More

Continued from page 1

resources for Aboriginal families. Topping the list of favourite books were *My Kokom Called Today* and *My Mom is So Unusual*.

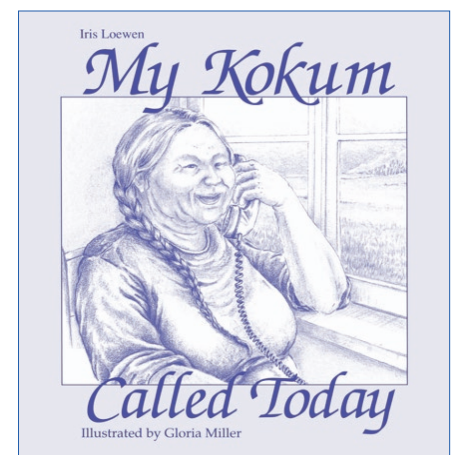
The long-term goal of the project is to help Aboriginal parents understand the importance of early literacy development and have them engage in positive interactions based on reading and writing with their children.

The books were distributed to Aboriginal families and to home visitation workers who provide support to some of Alberta's most vulnerable families.

The Centre developed and delivered literacy workshops to eight regional Home Visitor groups and provided their staff with support materials that enable them to assist families in their language and literacy development.

251 Aboriginal families have received quality children's books through this program. These families now have the resources to support home reading and other family literacy activities.

This program is funded by Alberta Advanced Education.



“Homes that might otherwise not have had them, now have quality children's books.”

Celebrate Family Literacy Day January 27th



Declared in 1999, National Family Literacy Day highlights the importance of literacy in the lives of Canadian families.

Family literacy refers to the reading and writing that occurs naturally during routines of daily family living– shopping lists, phone messages, recipes, newspapers, family discussions, greeting cards, email and internet.

Research demonstrates that it is more difficult for parents with low levels of literacy to support their children's literacy development and to pass on positive attitudes about schooling and the importance of learning to read and write. The result is a tendency for low literacy levels to be repeated from one generation to the next.

It has also been shown that parents who are involved in family literacy programs improve their own skills while supporting the literacy development of their children. All family members benefit!

On January 27th, read with a child or try some of these other literacy activities with your family:

- Write down some family stories or look through a family album and talk about the pictures
- Listen to a favourite song and figure out the words
- Find your first or last names in a daily newspaper or magazine – now read about those people!

For additional family literacy tips, activities and information, visit the ABC Canada Literacy Foundation website at www.abc-canada.org.



Staff Picks for the Holidays

FEATURE BOOK:

The Polar Express – Chris Van Allsburg – ages 4 – 8. Released this holiday season as a movie. There is also a website www.polarexpress.com.



Babies to preschoolers

Hug – Jez Alborough, board book

Big Fat Hen – Keith Baker, board book

The Mitten – Jann Brett, now available as a board book

Ages 3 - 8

Bear Stays Up For Christmas -- Karma Wilson

Hershel and the Hanukkah Goblins – Eric Kimmel

My First Kwanzaa Book – Deborah M. Newton Chocolate

Chicka Chicka 123 – Bill Martin

Under the Bed – Paul Bright

* *The Day My Butt Went Psycho* – Andy Griffiths

Pre-Teens

A Series of Unfortunate Events – Lemony Snicket

The Breadwinner – Deborah Ellis

Hoot – Carl Hiaasen

Teens

Never Mind! A Twin Novel – Avi and Rachel Vail

Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants and others in the "sisterhood" series – Ann Brashares

* *How Angel Peterson Got His Name and Other*

Outrageous Tales About Extreme Sports – Gary Paulsen

Anyone

What Are You so Grumpy About? – Tom Lichtenheld – a book for children or adults – anyone in need of a cure for grumpiness!

Adult titles

Funny You Don't Look Like One – Drew Hayden Taylor

The Lovely Bones – Alice Sebold

No Great Mischief – Alistair MacLeod

* Particularly popular with boys



Graham Colwell, Operations Manager, Centre for Family Literacy (left) and Frank Bruseker, President, ATA

ATA Donates to Centre

In the spirit of the season, The Alberta Teachers' Association made a donation in support of family literacy programs. The ATA decided that instead of sending Christmas cards, they would make a donation to an organization that was supporting literacy throughout the province.

"It seems like a natural fit," said Graham Colwell, Operations Manager for the Centre. "We believe that parents are a child's first and most important teacher and our programs focus on helping parents build their children's literacy skills – preparing them for success at school."

Literacy Develops in Families First

The Centre for Family literacy is dedicated to helping Alberta grow and prosper. Our innovative programs, training and research help Alberta families achieve what they imagine - improved education, jobs and health.

Contact us

#201 - 11456 Jasper Ave.
Edmonton, AB Canada
T5K 0M1

T 780.421.READ (7323)
F 780.421.7324
www.famlit.ca
cfla@elit.ca

Raise-a-Reader Doubles Total Funds Raised

The 2004 CanWest Raise-a-Reader campaign raised over \$60,000 for family literacy initiatives in Edmonton, double the amount raised in 2003.



The campaign saw a similar increase nationally with a total of \$1.66 million raised in 13 cities across Canada. "We are absolutely thrilled with the incredible success of this year's national Raise-a-Reader campaign. This would not be possible without the dedication and contributions made by our volunteers, sponsors, donors and staff. Together we are working to change the landscape of literacy in Canada," said Leonard Asper, President and CEO of CanWest Global Communications Corp.

Introducing Our New Website

It is at the same address – www.famlit.ca – but it has a new look! Check it out for information on our programs, projects, volunteer opportunities and literacy resources.

