

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



The Centre for Family Literacy Centre Page

May 2006

B.O.O.K.S.

(Books Offer Our Kids Success)

Do you remember your favourite book from childhood? The one you had to have read to you over and over again 'till it drove your Mom or Dad crazy? Maybe it was *The Three Billy Goats Gruff* with its wonderful repetition of "Trip-trap, trip-trap" or maybe it was the gentle bedtime story *Goodnight Moon*.

Early experiences with books and reading form the foundation for our development as literate human beings. There are parents, however, who have difficulty in providing meaningful reading experiences for their children. Some may not have adequate reading skills themselves to pass on this love of books; others may not know how to make shared reading events exciting and interesting for their children. The B.O.O.K.S. program was designed to help these parents.

The program is like a book club for parents, except the books discussed are quality children's books. We know that many of the activities young children engage in - talking, imaginative play, scribbling and drawing - support early literacy development. We also

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“I think it's a great program - lots of fun interactive things to do and crafts that are easy and affordable.”

B.O.O.K.S. Participant

Have you "Herd" the News!



The Centre for Family Literacy is the proud owner of not one, but two Classroom on Wheels (C.O.W.) buses.

Both of these programs were initiatives of the Success by 6[®] Council of Partners with the Centre for Family Literacy delivering the programs on their behalf. Success by 6[®] is transitioning out of direct programming and the Centre was delighted that the United Way of the Alberta Capital Region offered to sell us the buses.



"The Edmonton Literacy C.O.W. Bus and the Alberta Prairie C.O.W. Bus are two highly successful programs that address literacy issues in two unique ways," said Maureen Sanders, Executive Director of the Centre. " We

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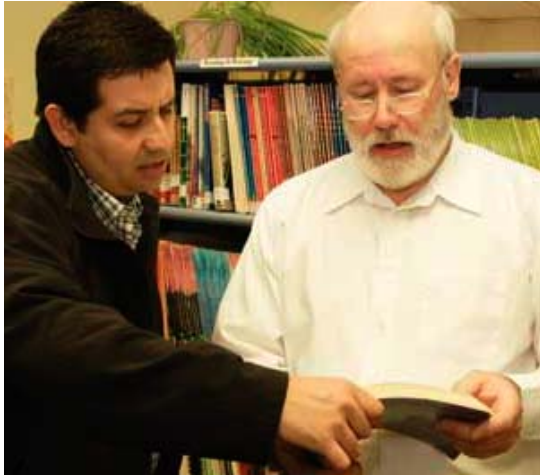
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National Volunteer Week in Canada

April 23-29



“While my husband and I knew it was important that our child learn to read, we now know it is important that our child enjoy reading...”

We wish to express our immense appreciation to our wonderful and dedicated volunteers who help us deliver free literacy services to those who need them most. In the context of Alberta’s booming economy, Tom Brokow’s words seem particularly appropriate: “It’s easy to make a buck. It’s a lot tougher to make a difference.”

Thank you to our volunteers who make a huge difference to Edmonton adults and families.

National Volunteer Week honours the millions of volunteers who contribute their time and talents to communities across Canada. Annually, the Centre makes use of the efforts of over 150 volunteers.

Volunteers have been the backbone of our adult tutor program for over 25 years. They also volunteer in family literacy programs, at special events, on committees, as Board members and at the Centre as library and office support.

We have volunteers that have been tutoring for over 15 years! The average age of our volunteer is 45, and they come from a variety of backgrounds – from engineers to students to health workers. They all have one thing in common – a desire to help and a passion for literacy.

What do volunteers get out of their experience with us?

“I am a far more patient manager, employee and wife than I was before I started working with students who really needed me to take the time and pay attention to both their verbal and non-verbal cues. Having the practical understanding that different people learn different ways has made me a much better boss.”

“I really enjoy being a tutor. I have learned so much... and when we have a breakthrough it’s like icing on the cake. I was so proud of him when he wrote his first sentence.”

Have you “Herd” the News!

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“My children’s lives have been really impacted by the weekly C.O.W. bus visits.”

Participant

believe they are a good fit with our mandate of supporting language and literacy development within a family context.”

Alberta Advanced Education also has recognized the importance of the Alberta Prairie C.O.W. project. With its financial support, this project will continue to visit urban, rural, First Nations and Métis communities throughout the province for the next year.

The Edmonton Literacy C.O.W. Bus visits 10 low-income high-density areas throughout the city. “The weekly C.O.W. bus visit ... has been a very valuable activity for their (children’s) education,” said one Mom. This comment reflects the positive influence this program has had over the past 5 years. We are actively seeking funding to continue delivery of the program for the next year.

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know that books and storytelling help children manage difficult feelings and understand events in their lives.

In the B.O.O.K.S. Program, we talk about selected books and the issues they address, and the parents learn how to do activities that build on a book's theme. The parents then take the books home to share with their children.

The book, *Amos's Sweater*, by Janet Lunn and Kim LaFave, deals with anger, misunderstanding and sharing. Amos, a sheep, is tired of sharing his wool. After all, it is "mine, mine, mine!" Parents are asked if they see this type of behaviour in their children and how they handle it. They learn to extend the book through nursery rhymes such as *Mary Had a Little Lamb*, and make "Amos" from simple material found around their home.

In Margaret Wise Brown's classic book, *Goodnight Moon*, the topics of family routines and specifically bedtimes for children are raised. Parents create "good night" books for their children's routines and surroundings, and are encouraged to say good night to things with their children to help them settle at bedtime.

Through our B.O.O.K.S. program, parents are encouraged to explore a variety of experiences that build a stronger bond with their children and encourage early literacy.

Instructions for "Amos"



Using plain cardboard, such as the inside of a cereal box, cut out a simple sheep shape – side view with two legs, body and head.

Wrap a long piece of yarn around and around the body and neck of the sheep to make a big, warm "sweater". Mark eyes on the head with a magic marker, pen or crayon.

If you wish, tie a little ribbon around Amos's neck – complete with a little bell if you have one.

This program is funded by Alberta Advanced Education.

CFL Honourary Chair Opened Literacy and Learning Day

Chancellor Eric Newell addressed delegates to the Literacy and Learning Day Conference held in Edmonton on April 22. Dr. Newell's opening comments focused on the importance of parent partnerships in support of family literacy.

He emphasized that "home, school, workplace and community are all interconnected and each of us ... has a contribution to make to literacy and learning in our society."

Saving Money with our Electronic Newsletter

The Centre's mailing list has grown substantially over the last 12 months, as more and more people are interested in learning about our work and new developments in the family literacy field.

In response to this increased demand, the Centre is now offering our newsletter, *Centre Page*, in electronic format. If you are interested in receiving our newsletter electronically, please send us an email at cfla@elit.ca with *Centre Page* as the subject.

New on our Website

The Centre has recently added two new resources to our website:

1. *Family Literacy Projects in Alberta* is a listing of family literacy projects operating in communities across Alberta.
2. The Training Calendar is a great way to find information on training sessions being offered throughout the province.

The Centre for Family Literacy gratefully acknowledges the ongoing support of the following:



From Books as Coasters to Bedtime Stories:

Family Literacy in Alberta's Next Generation

Focus on the work ethic and not on literacy was the emphasis of the past generation. This information came to light in a recent research study conducted by Pivotal Research for the Centre. The study also found that today more parents are involved with their children and that they engage in more literacy activities than they experienced themselves when growing up.

Denise Armstrong, a senior consultant with Pivotal Research, managed the project that used a case study approach. "By speaking with respondents one-on-one, we were able to put faces to the numbers," said Denise, "We discovered some interesting results and corroborated much of the work that the Centre undertakes in an effort to improve family literacy."

High literacy skills are essential in today's work environment. Lifelong learning is no longer a luxury but is now a reality in our ever-changing society. Parents' increasing awareness of the impact they can have on their children's literacy development is a very positive indicator.

To read more about this study, the Executive Summary and the full report can be found on the Centre's website.

Our partnership with Pivotal Research has been extremely valuable and we look forward to working with them on future projects.

Legacy for Literacy Club

The Legacy for Literacy Club is a group of friends who are committed to supporting the work of the Centre for future generations of families through their gifts and future commitments to the Centre's Endowment Fund.

Individuals and couples qualify to become members of the Legacy for Literacy Club in one or more of the following ways:

- make an outright gift to the Centre's Endowment Fund of money, securities, property or other marketable assets
- include the Centre's Endowment Fund in your retirement fund plan
- name the Centre's Endowment Fund as a beneficiary of a new or existing life insurance policy
- leave the Centre's Endowment Fund a bequest in your will or trust.

Various gift vehicles have positive tax implications for the donor and we would be delighted to discuss these with you. If you would like more information about the Legacy for Literacy Club or would like to discuss creating a future planned gift, please contact Donna Lemieux at (780) 421-7323.

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.

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