

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



The Centre for Family Literacy Centre Page

June 2007

“Outside of a dog, a book is your best friend, and inside of a dog, it's too dark to read.”

Groucho Marx



The Power of Stories

“We create and recreate ourselves and our families through stories. We come to understand, know and learn through the stories we tell and the ones to which we listen.”

– Dr. Cynthia Chambers

Family literacy is all about stories – not just the ones we read with children, but also the ones we tell our children. Among Aboriginal peoples, oral storytelling is a way to pass on language, traditions, cultural values and beliefs. The struggle to save their languages is one that Indigenous people all over the world are familiar with.

At a recent conference organized by the Aboriginal Learning Knowledge Centre, several people spoke eloquently about this. John B. Zoe, a member of the Tlicho First Nation, explained how places are named in his culture. For example the name of a lake would embody the fish most commonly caught in it and how to catch that fish. Likewise a place at which caribou gathered would have caribou within its name and how to hunt them.

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One Giant Step for Training

Six years ago the Centre for Family Literacy, in collaboration with practitioners and academics from across the country, developed Foundational Training in Family Literacy. It was the first comprehensive training of its kind in the country that addressed the wide range of knowledge required to work in the area of family literacy.

Since that time training sessions have been delivered across the country, and twice offered in an on-line format. We are now moving this training to the next level through a new project funded by the National Office of Literacy and Learning, HRSDC. We are currently revising the training package, adding new modules and training more trainers.

In addition, Maureen Sanders, Executive Director of the Centre, has worked with groups in BC to develop the Family Literacy Certificate Program, comprising an introductory

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The name then gives valuable information to the people who live on the land and holds this information for centuries.

Narcisse Blood, from the Blackfoot Confederacy, spoke about the importance of language in defining place and said, "We do not have range roads and townships. We identify our territory by the stories, songs and ceremonies that are told in a given place. Stories are always tied to particular people, animals, events, and places."

Blood states, "The words of songs remain the same, even over centuries of change. By encoding history in songs, the Nitsitapi (Blackfeet) remember their history from generation to generation." Interested readers can find more information on this topic at www.trailtribes.org/greatfalls/home.htm.

For Aboriginal families, the challenge is to honour and pass on the languages and culture they have inherited from their ancestors, while also preparing their children for the mainstream school system. The Centre's programs encourage parents to use their mother tongues, or any of the languages in which they are fluent. Our programs promote reading, singing, rhyming, and telling family stories that help children gain and adults retain language as well as a strong sense of self.

As the Centre's Aboriginal Family Literacy Coordinator, Colleen Crozier delivers Aboriginal family literacy programs in Edmonton and supports Aboriginal family literacy across the province. Colleen states "I am privileged to be able to travel to Aboriginal communities – First Nations and Métis - for visits that are rich with new ideas and new stories."

One Giant Step for Training *Continued from page 1*

course, 6 main courses, and a practicum. The program will be delivered through Vancouver Community College in partnership with Centre for Family Literacy, Literacy Now, and Literacy BC.

The course is designed for those who currently work in or wish to work in the family literacy field. At the present time the prerequisite course Introduction to Family Literacy is being piloted in 6 locations across BC and the full Foundational Training will be delivered in the fall in Vancouver.

Once the pilot phase is completed, other colleges and post-secondary institutions across the country will be approached to implement similar initiatives. It's very exciting to see the interest, enthusiasm and support this project has received and the enormous strides that have been made in the development of training in the family literacy field.

Supporting Literacy

Our adult program is built on the tireless efforts of over 150 volunteer tutors. Tutors meet each week with their students, striving to help them achieve greater heights in their literacy skills. Our volunteers have the chance to see first hand the difference a tutor can make in a student's life.

A special thanks to our Long Service Volunteers

5 – 10 Years

Keith Anderson
Sheila Deswarte
Justin Elbrink
Sylvia Galbraith
Ruth Graham
Earldene Kryz
Phyllis McFadden
Joe Quible
Lois Schmidt
Judith Tomlinson
Mary Wright
Margaret Runnells
Beryl Radulski

10 - 15 Years

Diana Seeman
Louise Cox
Tammy Irwin

15 + Years

Mary Ayres
Monica Yeats

Centre Pilots Family Literacy Regional Network



Family Literacy practitioners have expressed the need for ongoing training and program support that can be provided on a regional basis. They have also expressed a need to be able to connect more regularly with others in their region – both

family literacy practitioners and partners from related sectors.

To support these needs the Centre is piloting a Family Literacy Regional Network in three areas of Alberta. Three Regional Coordinators have been contracted to provide training and support in each region: Holly Handfield (Northwest), Wendy Peverett (Central) and Shawna Johnston (Southeast). Each coordinator will provide regional training and support to projects and communities in their region. In addition, the Aboriginal Family Literacy Coordinator, Colleen Crozier, will work closely with the regions to provide on-going support to Aboriginal programs in Alberta.

The decision to move forward with this initiative came after the Centre conducted a needs assessment that included research into similar existing networks, a focus group of potential network participants and solicited responses from family literacy practitioners across the province. There was strong consensus on a need for regional supports for people working in the family literacy field.

The pilot will officially be launched June 1 and the Centre is excited to have this opportunity, under the Parent-Child Literacy Strategy, Community Programs, Alberta Advanced Education and Technology, to build regional capacity in support of family literacy.

For more information on the project, or to contact a Regional Coordinator, please contact the Centre for Family Literacy.

Staff Picks for the Summer



Babies to preschoolers

The Going to Bed Book – Sandra Boynton, board book
But Not the Hippopotamus – Sandra Boynton, board book

Ages 3 -8

Stanley's Party – Linda Bailey
My Little Sister Ate One Hare – Bill Grossman
Edward the Emu – Sheena Knowles

Preteens

Holes - Louis Sachar
An Undone Fairy Tale - Ian Lendler
How I Survived My Summer Vacation and Lived to Write the Story – Robin Friedman

Teens

Alice, I Think – Susan Juby
My Sister's Keeper – Jodi Picoult

Adults

The Ladies Lending Library - Janice Kulyk Keefer
Desolation Island - Patrick O'Brian
Of This Earth - Rudy Wiebe

Mark Your Calendar

Sunday, August 26 - Friday, August 31 – Family Literacy Training Institute – Fantasyland Hotel, Edmonton

Saturday, September 8 – International Literacy Day

Wednesday, September 12 – Dave Hancock Charity Golf Classic, Edmonton Petroleum Club

Wednesday, October 3 – Raise a Reader Day

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



Making a Difference

Philanthropy is one of those multi-syllabic words that often leaves us tongue-tied when we try to say it. But Canadians are certainly not averse to practicing the word in their daily lives.

Results from the 2004 Canada Survey on Giving, Volunteering and Participating conducted by Statistics Canada found that over 22 million Canadians donated more than \$8.9 billion to charitable and nonprofit organizations. And 11.8 million Canadians volunteered their time contributing almost 2 billion volunteer hours to organizations.

When participants were asked why they donated or volunteered, they saw it as a way to express important social values such as compassion for others and a desire to contribute to one's community.

The business community is part of this philanthropic culture. With 85% of Canadians making donations and 45% volunteering, there is a substantial number of business people personally involved in their communities. They don't leave this interest at home. They take it into the workplace where it translates into employee volunteer programs and community investment strategies.

Couple that with the knowledge that many Canadians make a conscious decision to support companies based on their reputation as good corporate citizens and it becomes good business to invest in their community.

Support for the Centre and our work has been growing over the years. The generosity of individuals, corporations and foundations has played a key role in allowing us to expand the scope of the programs and services that we provide to Alberta families.

Donating to Charities gets a Boost from Alberta Government

In an effort to encourage Albertans to give more to registered charities, the Alberta Government increased the tax credit in its April budget. Donations over \$200 will be eligible for a credit of 21 percent. When combined with the federal credit, Albertans will receive 50 cents in tax credits for every dollar donated over the \$200 threshold.

If you would prefer to receive the Centre Page newsletter via email rather than by mail, please send us an email at info@famlit.ca. Please reference Centre Page in the subject line.

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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