



The Centre for Family Literacy

# Centre Page

## The Alberta Prairie C.O.W. Pilot Builds Community Capacity

## Conference Makes International Connections

**Our Vision**  
*A healthy, literate society where all are able to contribute and succeed.*

Annually the Prairie C.O.W. Bus travels to over 60 communities across Alberta. Visits are short-term, averaging eight hours per community and are great at raising awareness and promoting local programs. They however are not long enough to offer workshops for parents and literacy practitioners or to do presentations to local business and community leaders.

Hosted by the Centre for Family Literacy in July, the national family literacy conference, Cultivating Connections – A Global Perspective, more than lived up to its name. The knowledge that was shared about family literacy was as diverse as its attendees—with speakers from all over the world, and delegates from Canada, the United States and even Germany.



Dr. Sven Nickel, a professor at Free University of Berlin, along with his two associates, Christina Noack and Aline Wendscheck came from Berlin to take the training and sessions offered at the conference. Dr. Nickel said, "In Germany, the idea of family literacy only recently gained broader attention. So far, approaches to family literacy primarily focused on children...our project is one of the first...with an explicit focus on the parents' literacy learning".

After taking "Introduction to Family Literacy", one of their comments was how impressed they were with our strength-based, participant directed approach and the focus on the adult in family literacy programming. All three were impressed and intrigued by the community approach used here.

Dr. Nickel showed us the pamphlet for the project they are starting in Berlin. He had underlined the word "illiterate". "In Germany," he explained, "this is the language people understand and we must use to get attention." He stated that because of the training and workshops they had attended, they may rethink this approach.

The prefix "il" literally means "not," but very few people in our modern world don't know a few letters, symbols or words in their own

The Centre decided to pilot a new model to address these challenges. Partnering with D.V. Read and Learn in Drayton Valley, a ten-month program was devised that involved the C.O.W. Bus making six visits to their community. D.V. Read and Learn selected specific communities they wished to target for the visits including three mobile home parks.

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September  
2010

## C.O.W. Pilot Builds Community Capacity

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The Poplar Ridge Mobile Home Park was one of the communities. Their event included a free barbeque, a bouncy castle, a fire truck and the C.O.W. Bus. Families were given a free book and parents discussed literacy ideas and issues with the staff from the Centre. D.V. Read and Learn were able to identify some parents who seemed particularly connected to their community who could play a key role in recruiting for future family literacy programs and events.

One parent commented that their mobile home park has a “bad reputation” and that many organizations stay away from hosting events there. She really appreciated having a family event in the evening so she could attend with her husband and children.

As part of the pilot, D.V. Read and Learn hosted a reception for the business community, town council members and other potential literacy supporters. The Centre delivered a 30-minute presentation on the benefits to society and the economy of increasing literacy levels. According to D.V. Read and Learn, “The feedback has been amazing even from people not at the event”.

Outcomes from the initial pilot were very positive and plans are already underway to take the program in its second year to Edson, with Edson and District Community Learning Society as our partner.

## Conference Makes Connections

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*Conference banquet, Shaw Conference Centre.*

language. This is why we now talk about literacy levels instead of illiteracy. Also, the word is deficit based, focusing on what people lack rather than on their strengths, the opposite of what we strive to do in strength-based, respectful approaches.

As Dr. Nickel and his colleagues embark on their new approach to family literacy, it will be interesting to see if their experiences parallel the ones we have had in Canada. We hope to be able to share more ideas and strategies with them in the future.

Conference presentation materials can be found on our website at [www.familit.ca](http://www.familit.ca).

## Lois Hole Community Leadership Award – Call for Nominations

**T**he Centre for Family Literacy is accepting nominations for the Lois Hole Community Leadership Award that recognizes an outstanding individual, business or group, whose efforts demonstrate an ongoing commitment to family literacy in Alberta.

Eligibility criteria and nomination forms are available on our website at [familit.ca](http://familit.ca). The nomination deadline is Friday, October 29, 2010.

## Literacy's Impact on Workplace Health and Safety

The Conference Board of Canada recently released the report *What You Don't Know Can Hurt You* focusing on literacy's importance to workplace health and safety. The report covers the findings of an online survey completed by employers, labour organizations, individuals in the workforce, and service providers to Aboriginal people and immigrants.

Alison Campbell, author of the report states, "The project's main objective is to demonstrate the value—including direct and indirect benefits—of investment in literacy with the expected outcome of achieving higher levels of health and safety in the workplace."

As part of the study, 10 Canadian workplace literacy and learning programs were analyzed and the case studies are part of the report. The companies represent large, medium-sized and small businesses including three from Alberta (Keyera Energy, Lilydale Inc., and Omega 2000 Cribbing Inc.).

The case studies explain the barriers and challenges that each of the companies was experiencing in their attempts to introduce or maintain learning programs. The unique and innovation solutions they found to overcome the barriers demonstrates that there are many options for delivering health and safety information.

The benefits and safety impacts of these programs ranged from "a clear link between an increase in literacy and basic skills and a decrease in accidents on the job" to "employees feel there is a corporate commitment to their safety and well-being".



The report concludes that organizations that take action realize benefits in the form of lower costs, increased efficiencies and healthier and safer workplaces. To read the full report go to the Conference Board of Canada at [www.conferenceboard.ca/documents.aspx?did=3661](http://www.conferenceboard.ca/documents.aspx?did=3661)

Raise @Reader Wed., Sept. 29

Reading is a gift. You can give it. On September 29 volunteers will take to the streets and trade a special edition of the Edmonton Journal for donations in support of family literacy programs in our community.

## READ IN Edmonton

Oct. 4 – 8

The theme of READ IN 2010 is **Ready, Set, Read!**

**Ready...** Find a good book, magazine or computer screen.

**Set...** Choose a comfortable spot and block out any distractions

**Read...** Enjoy yourself. Have fun. Learn!

Check the READ IN website at [www.epl.ca/readin](http://www.epl.ca/readin) for recommended books for different age groups.

Online donations to the Centre can be made through [CanadaHelps.org](http://CanadaHelps.org)



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



Government of Alberta

Human Resources and Social Development Canada

SUCCESS BY 6



## Fall Programs Announced

### Dollars and \$ense (Financial Literacy)

#### English Language Learners

**Schedule:** Wednesdays 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm

**Start and Finish Date:** Sept 22 to Nov 10

**Location:** Centre for Family Literacy

This program is for English Language Learner adults who wish to improve their vocabulary around money topics, learn idioms and more.

#### Level 3

**Schedule:** Wednesdays 7:00 pm - 8:30pm

**Start and Finish Date:** Oct 20 to Dec 8

**Location:** NorQuest College Main School

This program is for adults who wish to learn about mortgages, loans, accounting on the computer with Excel and more.

### Books for Babies

This 4 week program encourages parent of infants between birth and 12 months to share books with their babies. Each family is provided with a book bag, books and support material.

**Schedule:** Wednesdays 10:30 am to 11:30 pm

**Start Date:** October 6

**Location:** Penny McKee Library

**Register:** Call 780-496-7839

**Schedule:** Thursdays 1:30 pm to 2:30 pm

**Start Date:** October 14

**Location:** Woodcroft Library

**Register:** Call 780-496-1830

**Schedule:** Mondays 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 am

**Start Date:** October 18

**Location:** Millbourne Tenant Centre

**Register:** Call 780-413-4521

**Schedule:** Wednesdays 11:00 am to noon

**Start Date:** November 3

**Location:** Strathcona Library

**Register:** Call 780-496-1828

**Schedule:** Tuesdays, 10:00 am to 11:30 am

**Start Date:** November 16

**Location:** Edmonton Military Family Resource Centre

**Registration:** 780-973-4011

### C.O.W. Classroom on Wheels Family Literacy Program

The Classroom on Wheels is a free drop-in family literacy program for parents and their children from birth to 6 years old that helps support family learning.

#### Schedule and Location:

Tuesdays 8:30 am – 10:00 am  
Youngstown Community

Tuesdays 10:30 am – noon  
La Perle Community

Tuesdays 1:00 pm – 2:30 pm  
Athlone Community

Wednesdays 10:30 am – noon  
Sakaw Community

Wednesdays 1:00 pm – 2:30 pm  
Richfield Community

Thursdays 9:30 am – 11:00 am  
Edmonton Garrison

Thursdays 12:00 pm – 1:30 pm  
Bannerman Community

Fridays 8:15 am – 10:00 am  
Caernarvon Community

Fridays 10:30 am – noon  
Dickensfield Community

**Start and Finish Date:** Week of Sept 14 to Dec 10

For more information on these programs, check our website at [www.famlit.ca](http://www.famlit.ca) or call the Centre at 780.421.7323.

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](mailto: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.

### Privacy Policy

If you do not wish to receive Centre Page or information about the Centre for Family Literacy, you may call, write or e-mail us. A copy of our privacy policy can be found on our website at [www.famlit.ca](http://www.famlit.ca)

