

## Special E-News – Friday, September 29<sup>th</sup>, 2006

This e-news is being sent to many people in the NWT..... we hope that you can help us protest the cuts to the national literacy program. Below is some background information about the cuts and how they affect literacy organizations and programs in the NWT and across Canada. We have also outlined several ways you can help protest the cuts.

**Thank you in advance for supporting literacy and our organization.**

### Federal Budget Cuts

On Tuesday, September 26, the federal government announced budget cuts totaling \$1 billion – including a \$17.7 million cut to the Adult Learning, Literacy and Essential Skills Program (ALLESPP). This program funds literacy organizations and projects across Canada, including the Northwest Territories. It affects the NWT Literacy Council but it also affects everyone in the Northwest Territories.

- The full federal press release is available at: <http://www.fin.gc.ca/news06/06-047e.html>
- ABC Canada has issued a news release: <http://www.abc-canada.org>
- The NWT Literacy Council's news release is posted at: <http://www.nwt.literacy.ca>

### How Does This Affect Us?

**The NWT Literacy Council is fighting to survive.** NWT Literacy Council Executive Director Cate Sills says the Harper Conservatives have cut approximately \$300,000 from the Council's budget – a full one-third of our budget. The NWT Literacy Council is fighting to keep its doors open in order to continue our important work with communities across the NWT – but we need your support. If we cannot convince the Conservatives to reverse these cuts or find new money to replace the lost funding, the NWT Literacy Council will be forced to lay off staff and close our doors.

## How Does This Affect You?

As a result of the loss of funding:

- The Council's community outreach program has immediately been put on hold. This means we can no longer travel to communities to do workshops or offer support to community literacy workers.
- The Literacy Council has lost all of its funding for governance which includes funding for our Executive Director and the operation of our board of directors.
- We have also been forced to scale back our information-sharing/promotions program although our web site and newsletter will continue for the time being.

Our Family Literacy Programming, including Family Literacy Training will continue for now, since it is partially funded by the Government of the NWT. The Family Literacy Training Institute will go ahead as planned from November 27 to December 1. Literacy Council staff will participate in NWT Literacy Week activities – although it is difficult to “celebrate” literacy when it is obvious that we are not supported by a federal government that calls our years of work in the communities “wasteful.”

## How Can You Help?

1. If you believe that literacy is a basic human right and that literacy programs are vital to the well being of all Canadians and our economy, please contact the following federal politicians and demand that funding for literacy be reinstated:
  - Prime Minister Stephen Harper: [pm@pm.gc.ca](mailto:pm@pm.gc.ca)
  - President of the Treasury Board John Baird: [president@tbs-sct.gc.ca](mailto:president@tbs-sct.gc.ca)
  - Finance Minister Jim Flaherty: [jflaherty@fin.gc.ca](mailto:jflaherty@fin.gc.ca)
  - Western Arctic MP Dennis Bevington: [Bevington.D@parl.gc.ca](mailto:Bevington.D@parl.gc.ca)
2. We are also asking you to write to the following NWT politicians and your MLA and demand that they (1) protest the Conservative funding cuts and (2) if the Conservatives are unwilling to reinstate literacy funding, that the GNWT step up and fill the gap to allow us to keep our doors open.
  - NWT Premier Joe Handley: [JOSEPH\\_HANDLEY@gov.nt.ca](mailto:JOSEPH_HANDLEY@gov.nt.ca)
  - NWT ECE Minister Charles Dent: [CHARLES\\_DENT@gov.nt.ca](mailto:CHARLES_DENT@gov.nt.ca)
  - You can find a complete list of MLA's e-mail addresses at: <http://www.gov.nt.ca/research/mla/index.html>

3. We are also looking for e-mails of support from the general public that we can use in our campaign to keep the doors open. If you value our services, please write and tell us **today** what the NWT Literacy Council means to you and your community:  
[nwtliteracy@nwtliteracy.ca](mailto:nwtliteracy@nwtliteracy.ca).

## **Postcards to the Conservative Government**

We have created postcards of protest that you can send to Prime Minister Stephen Harper, Finance Minister Jim Flaherty, Treasury Board President John Baird and our MP Dennis Bevington to demand that they immediately restore funding for literacy across Canada. You can find a PDF version of the postcards on our web site at [www.nwt.literacy.ca](http://www.nwt.literacy.ca). You don't need to put any postage on these cards.

As of Monday, printed copies of the postcards will be available in Yellowknife at the NWT Literacy Council (5122 48<sup>th</sup> Street), the Yellowknife Book Cellar, and the Yellowknife Public Library. The protest postcards will also be available at some NWT Literacy Week events. Please contact the NWT Literacy Council if you would like us to send you some postcards for your community.

## **Thanks for your support!**

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