

This Week in Literacy

March 20, 2009

The NWT Literacy Council is a non-profit, non-government agency dedicated to supporting the development of literacy in all official languages of the NWT.

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Literacy Dates

Aboriginal Languages Month	March 2009
International Children's Book Day	April 2, 2009
World Book Day	April 23, 2009
International Literacy Day	September 8
NWT Literacy Week	September 27 – October 3
World Teachers' Day	October 5
Human Rights Day	December 10

Community Events and Information

Post Your Literacy Event or Activity Here!

Are you planning a literacy event or activity for your community? You are welcome to send us the information and we will include it in our weekly enews. What a great way to get the word out!

The Great Northern Canada Writing Contest 2009

Deadline for entries: April 30, 2009

Above & Beyond magazine is sponsoring the Great Northern Writing Contest. To enter, submit a piece of prose (fiction or non-fiction) up to 1,000 words about life in the Yukon, Northwest Territories, Nunavut, Nunavik or Northern Labrador. First Prize is \$500 with a Special Emerging Writer Prize of \$250, and publication in Above & Beyond magazine. This is for writers who have never been published for payment. For more information, visit

<http://nationtalk.ca/modules/news/article.php?storyid=18128>.

Call for Proposals for projects that remove barriers for people with disabilities

Deadline: April 6th, 2009

The Honourable Diane Finley, Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development, announced a multi-year Call for Proposals (2009–2012) focusing on projects that will improve services or accessibility for people with disabilities to fully participate in society. The overall budget for this call is \$9 million in funding over 3 years. Proposals will be accepted from February 23, 2009 to April 6, 2009. For more information go to:

http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/community_partnerships/sdpp/call/disability_component/page00.shtml.

4th Annual National Symposium of the Adult Learning Knowledge Centre

Linking Communities / Overcoming Barriers is the theme for this year's event. This national, bilingual symposium will be held in Montréal, Québec on June 8-10, 2009. Please visit the website for details <http://www.ccl-cca.ca/AdLKCSymposium>. In keeping with the Adult Learning Knowledge Centre's commitment to making information on adult learning widely available to all Canadians, there is no registration fee to attend the symposium. For details, please visit the website:

<http://www.ccl-cca.ca/AdLKCSymposium>.

Centre for Literacy's Summer Institute 2009

The Centre for Literacy is pleased to announce this year's topic for Summer Institute 2009:

Workplace Literacy & Essential Skills - What Works? and Why? This three day event will take place from June 25-27, 2009 in Montreal and will bring together policy-makers, providers and researchers from across Canada and abroad to consider issues of Workplace Literacy & Essential Skills. For more info go to <http://www.centreforliteracy.qc.ca/whatsnew/sli2009/index.htm>.

The 17th National Conference on Learning Disabilities

"Minds of Gold" September 24 – 26, 2009 Whitehorse, Yukon

The 17th National Conference on Learning Disabilities is shaping up to be one of the most exciting ever. It is anticipated that some 450 delegates will meet in this pristinely beautiful part of our world to listen, learn and share. The host organization for this conference, LDAY, has engaged some 30 speakers from across Canada, the United States, England and Australia to meet here in Whitehorse in September 2009. Emphasis will be on four major themes: Effective Instruction/ Advocacy/Research & Technology/Community Partnerships

Presenters include: Barbara Wilson, Richard Lavoie, Dr. Gabor Mate, Dr. Martin Brokenleg, Ben Polis, Dr. Fraser Mustard and Dr. Geoff Bateson. Visit <http://lday.leafsolutions.ca> for full conference details and to register. Registration opens February 16th. Register early to take advantage of discounts and availability!

In the News

Benefits to improving literacy outweighs costs

By Chris Morris, Canadaeast News Service

Canadians are just beginning to understand how important the issue of literacy is to the health, happiness and prosperity of people and communities, says Don Jamieson, CEO of the Canadian

Language and Literacy Research Network. He said Wednesday the National Strategy for Early Literacy will hold hearings in Fredericton on Friday as it gathers information to deal with Canada's literacy crisis. The research network, a non-profit Canadian corporation, is co-ordinating the consultation process that will provide solutions for policy-makers and educators. "We're only at the beginning of understanding just how big an issue this is," Jamieson said. To read more go to <http://dailygleaner.canadaeast.com/front/article/600576>.

Upgrading literacy skills imperative

By Sherry Campbell., Special to The StarPhoenix March 5, 2009

Following is the viewpoint of the writer, president of Frontier College, Canada's oldest literacy organization. In a deepening recession, greater numbers of Canadian adults are looking to upgrade their skills to find new employment or hang on to their current jobs. For those Canadians struggling with low literacy, the challenges are far greater.

More than 40 per cent of Canadian adults struggle with everyday tasks involving reading and writing, and one in six Canadians cannot read the headline of a newspaper.

They struggle with tasks that many of us take for granted: Writing a cover letter to a prospective employer; understanding new workplace or safety instructions; comprehending prescriptions or schedules, and even sharing bedtime stories with their children.

Aboriginal Languages Month Celebrations

Hon. Jackson Lafferty, Monday, March 02, 2009, Statement to the Legislative Assembly on Aboriginal Languages Month

http://www.exec.gov.nt.ca/currentnews/speechDetails.asp?varStatement_ID=806

Aboriginals making strides: report

Study cites improvements in education, employment

By: Mia Rabson , OTTAWA

Canada's aboriginal population has made significant improvements in education and employment in the last 10 years, particularly if they live in an urban area, a new report shows. The report on the state of the First Nations economy in Canada, released Monday by the Assembly of First Nations, says despite a tendency for the media and government to emphasize only the problems afflicting aboriginals in Canada, things are getting better. "We are a more educated community now and it makes it possible for us to be more effective in the economy," said Phil Fontaine, national chief of the AFN. To read more go to

http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/local/aboriginals_making_strides_report-41077487.html.

Second chance at education

Carol Goar, Mar 16, 2009

The stories that bring people to the Adult Education Centre in Brampton almost always involve pain, failure and rejection. It is one of Ontario's underfunded, undervalued schools of second chances. It doesn't look like a school. It's a warren of rooms in a suburban plaza. There are no lockers, no corridors, no principal's office. It doesn't feel like a school either. There are few rules, routines or restrictions. The people who study here don't need discipline. They need hope.

Some come timidly, thinking they're too old or stupid to learn. Some come desperately, knowing they must upgrade their skills to keep their job. Some come furtively, ashamed to admit they can't read, can't write or can't add without counting on their fingers. "They need support and encouragement," says Dalia Taylor, supervisor of literacy and basic skills for the Peel District School Board. "There's a tendency to quit in the face of failure. "You have to build their confidence one step at a time and assure them the door is always open. Three adult learners agreed to share their stories, in hopes of encouraging others to seek help.

Wendy Walker is 47. She dropped out of Grade 9 and worked as a waitress, a babysitter and a labourer in a fruit factory while raising her kids. But her happiest hours were spent helping her grandmother, who ran a home for 22 "mentally delayed" people. Her goal is to become a registered practical nurse. That requires two years of training at community college. But first she has to pass Grade 12 English, math and chemistry and Grade 11 biology. Walker has a history of starting classes enthusiastically, then giving up. "But this time, I'm here to stay," she vows. "I'm a little bit insecure but I'm going to do it. I have to. I'm not getting any younger." To read more go to <http://www.thestar.com/comment/columnists/article/602235>.

Finding Our Talk – Season 3 – A documentary series about Aboriginal languages to air on APTN

March 16, 2009, Montreal, Quebec

Every fourteen days a language dies. By the year 2100 more than half of the world's languages will disappear. These are tough statistics, but it doesn't have to be that way. Indigenous people everywhere are fighting to beat the odds. It's a remarkable story told in the exciting new documentary series Finding Our Talk 3, set to premiere on APTN (Aboriginal Peoples Television Network) on Wednesday April 1st at 10:30pm Eastern Standard Time.

Finding Our Talk 3 is a continuing documentary series of 13 half hour episodes produced by Mushkeg Media Inc. that looks at the state of Aboriginal languages both within Canada and the boarder indigenous world. The series discovers and shares their successes by focusing on and celebrating the many individuals, communities and organizations that are reclaiming their language, and along with it, their culture, their stories and often, their very existence as a people. In the first two seasons, the series focused on Aboriginal languages in Canada. In Season 3, Finding Our Talk goes beyond borders to look at the state of indigenous languages like Sami, Mayan, Quechan, Maori, Gumbaynggirr, Arrente, Hawaiian, Chitimacha, as well as languages like Mi'gmaq, Abenaki and Anishnabe that are closer to home. It looks at the effects new technologies and methods play in language revitalization, as a new generation takes up the responsibilities of language preservation in their home communities.

The documentary crews spent five months traveling to various countries such as New Zealand, Australia, Norway, Guatemala, Bolivia, USA and Canada to bring these remarkable stories of language revitalization, preservation and promotion.

The first one will air on April 1st and will examine the Anishnabe in Rapid Lake. For more information go to www.mushkeg.ca.

Resources and Websites

Youthnet (a nation wide program developed by and for youth to promote mental health) has launched www.mindyourmind.ca. It's a fantastic site with tools for youth. The site benefited from input from Alana Fitzgerald, and Gilly McNaughton, as they spearheaded the organization of youth discussions on this subject in Yellowknife, Inuvik, Behchoko and Hay River.

ESPORT <http://www.esportfolio.com/ESPORT>

ESPORT and Essential Skills Online provide a suite of software and courseware tools and resources for youth and adult education, employment preparation and Essential Skills development programs. They help adult or young adult clients assess, document and upgrade their Essential Skills with specific reference to the essential skill requirements for over 250 occupations profiled by Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (see the attached list of NOC profiles). They present a solution combining self assessment and career exploration, portfolio and resume building tools, with online essential skills training and assessment tools, all aligned to Essential Skills Job Profiles created by HRSDC for the National Occupational Classification (NOC).

The primary applications for ESPORT and Essential Skills Online are programs for employment preparation, Adult Education & literacy, at-risk youth and school-to-work transition, immigrant services, workplace learning, community college and pre-apprenticeship preparation programs, job clubs and welfare-to-work programs. ESPORT and Essential Skills Online are particularly effective tools and resources for entry level job seekers, individuals with little or no employment experience, and for individuals who would benefit from literacy and essential skills training.

They offer a 7-day free guest account to explore ESPORT. The guest account is an opportunity for instructors and career counselors to see how ESPORT works. Please visit the Contact US tab on the Web page and fill in the information required and check the box requesting a free demo account. They will set it up promptly for you and email you log in instructions.

Essential Skills for Life, Learning and Work, National Version

<http://www.nald.ca/library/learning/bigpict/BigPict.pdf>

Foundations for Literacy: An Evidenced-based Toolkit for Reading and Writing

The aim of this resource is to provide teachers with a review of recent findings from well-designed research studies on the teaching of reading and writing. This kit can be used as a reference tool in daily practice. Teachers may already be familiar with some of the research findings presented here, but this resource can supplement and enhance their knowledge. Staying informed on the latest developments in reading and writing is not an easy task, given all of the teacher's commitments. The goal is to encourage teachers to continue to be research-informed. This kit is designed to review what is known about development of reading and writing skills, to identify what needs to be taught, and how it can be taught to ensure that all children succeed. To download a copy go to

<http://foundationsforliteracy.ca/pdf/ReadWriteKit08.pdf>.