Western Quebec Literacy Council
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Annual Report
2014 - 2015

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Greetings and welcome to our 31st Annual General Meeting,

While I'm sure we can all think of a few things we'd like to have, whether physical, material or spiritual, we are lucky to have enough that we feel we can GIVE. As volunteers we give our time to help our community become a better place. There are many ways to do this and I'm sure that if I asked around the room right now we'd find as many ways as there are people, because those who volunteer often do so for more than one cause.

For the Literacy Council, our cause is helping people on a one-to-one basis to improve whatever literacy and numeracy skills they need to work on in order to improve their lives. Human needs are often put in a hierarchy, with food and shelter placed at the top but it doesn't take a lot of pondering to realize that basic life skills such as literacy and numeracy are essentially inter-related to the achievement of even those basic needs.

One person at a time, Literacy Council volunteers work to help members of our community improve their skills, developing the tools that can help them improve their lives. This is great work and I'd like to thank our volunteers for their time and dedication. Thanks as well to our staff, Marilee and Debbie and outreach agent, Melissa and members of the board and to all of you who have come out to the AGM to support the WQLC.

Peace,
Western Quebec Literacy Council
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The **vision** of the Western Quebec Literacy Council is to help and encourage members of our community to develop the skills needed for life-long learning.

The **mission** of the Western Quebec Literacy Council is to help English-speaking adults, families, and youth improve their reading, writing, listening, speaking, numeracy and other life skills through programs adapted to the needs of the individual. As a charitable volunteer organization, Western Quebec Literacy Council recruits and trains committed volunteers as tutors and support personnel. We are dedicated to promoting community awareness with sensitivity throughout the region of West Québec.

**Who we are**

The Western Quebec Literacy Council (WQLC) is a charitable organization that offers free individual lessons in reading, writing and mathematics. Volunteers are trained to tutor one other English-speaking adult with the goal of improving literacy skills. We recruit students and tutors in the region of West Quebec—from Chapeau to Gatineau to Buckingham to Kazabazua and points in between. WQLC was formed in 1984 in association with the Western Quebec School Board. Since 1992 WQLC has functioned as an independent, community-based, charitable, volunteer organization.

### Board of Directors

- **President** Deb Powell, Norway Bay
- **Vice-President** Michel Chabot, Bristol
- **Treasurer** Peter Gauthier, Shawville
- **Secretary** Rick Valin, Shawville
- **Member** Monica Dodson, Sand Bay
- **Member** Norma DesRosiers, Luskville
- **Member** Nancy Arniotis, Shawville

### Staff

- **Marilee DeLombard** Executive Director
- **Deborah Gauthier** Office Assistant
- **Melissa Lamothe** Outreach Agent

### Tutors trained in 2014-2015

- Audrey Belsher, Campbell’s Bay
- Debbie Nadeau, Aylmer
- Doris McCann, Sheenboro
- Melissa Lamothe, Otter Lake
- Nora Duncan, Bristol
- Sandie Dale-Bernard, Bristol
- Tracey Smith, Bristol

“The greatest gift is the passion for reading. It is cheap, it consoles, it distracts, it excites, it gives you knowledge of the world and experience of a wide kind. It is a moral illumination.”

Elizabeth Hardwick
I Provide individual lessons to adult literacy students

Student-tutor teams are the number one priority of Western Quebec Literacy Council. Individual lessons encourage adult students to advance in their chosen subjects at their own pace. Free weekly lessons held in the home community make continuing education accessible to everyone. The student, tutor and Executive Director develop the learning plan following a placement interview. Workplace material and other topics of interest are incorporated into lessons, reinforcing motivation. Text-books and materials are supplied by the Literacy Council. Computers and on-line learning are increasingly important adult education tools.

- 22 people inquired about individual lessons during this year.
- There were, on average 17 students working at private, individual lessons during the year.
- Student-tutor lessons took place in different locations throughout West Quebec: Aylmer, Hull, Shawville, Pontiac, and Ste. Cecile de Masham.
- Cooperation with adult education programs in Shawville resulted in five student-tutor teams
- 2015 magnetic calendars, note pads and pocket agendas were distributed with Christmas message to students and tutors.
- Peter Gzowski Invitational Learner Awards 2015
  - Jonathan Cameron\(^1\) received the PGI – Quebec Award for his dedication in reaching his goals. The award was presented by his tutor, Rick Valin.
- Easy to read information was sent to active students to encourage them to vote in the federal election.
- Police checks for tutors were facilitated for Pontiac Continuing Education Centre (W.Q.S.B.), Shawville; Chelsea Library

\(^1\) N.B. Student’s names are used only with permission.
II Recruit Volunteers and Students (Outreach)

Student recruitment continues to be a challenge. The scope of adult literacy has changed from “basic skills” to “essential skills”. While basic skills are common today, the standards for functional, essential skills continue to rise. Our potential students do not realize that their poor basic literacy skills actually restrict their options, limiting their job opportunities and taxing their day-to-day functioning.

A temporary Outreach Agent was hired with the help of Emploi Québec. Melissa Lamothe comes with strong ties to the local community, especially with youth and with other social services. Representation at special events and partnerships with community groups allowed us to extend the reach of our network of contacts.

- Activities designed to increase client (learner) base
  - Developed partnerships with other community groups
    - CLC Pontiac, A.C. Labbé
    - Maison de la famille de Pontiac, Fort Coulonge
    - Community Development Corporation of Pontiac (CDCP), Fort Coulonge, Quebec
    - Regional Association of West Quebecers (RAWQ)
    - Pontiac Continuing Education Centre (PCEC)
    - Table des Aînés et Retraités Pontiac (TARP)
      - WQLC representative on TARP board of directors, 3 meetings
    - Literacy Quebec (LQ)
      - WQLC representative on LQ board of directors, 6 meetings
    - Quebec Essential Learning Alliance (QELA)
      - Participated in the penultimate meetings of this coalition of literacy organizations (community groups and English School Board groups)
  - Family Literacy Day, January 30, 2015
    - Partnered with Shawville-Clarendon Library to present a children’s yoga activity.
    - Family Literacy Day books and games were given to the ten children and 8 parent participants
    - Article in Pontiac Journal newspaper
  - “Semaine Québécoise des Adultes en Formation”
    - Cancelled in 2015 due to funding cuts.
  - Outreach display presented for Family Day, May 9, 2015 at la Maison de la Famille de Pontiac in Fort-Coulonge.
II  Recruit Volunteers and Students (Continued)

- Presentation made to Shawville Rotary Club meeting on June 1, 2015 to recruit volunteers and students.

- Actions to reach more of the Region
  - Hosted meeting with Gatineau Valley volunteers regarding outreach approaches. Promotional materials were disseminated.
  - Newspapers articles
    - Family Literacy Day articles, January 28, 2015
    - “Real Reading” article in Equity, June 3, 2015
  - Radio interview: WQLC Outreach Agent and Executive Director interviewed on Radio Pontiac on June 2, 2015
  - Newspaper and radio advertisements
    - Advertisements for literacy events appeared periodically in each of the 5 regional newspapers.
    - Notices appear regularly in the classified section of the Pontiac Journal and on Radio Pontiac.
  - WQLC appears in all regional Yellow Pages under “LEARN”.
  - An advertisement for WQLC services appears on the back cover of the big print telephone directory Télé Pontiac
  - Website: www.wq-literacy.org
    - Monthly Updates
    - Newsletter posted
  - Facebook
    - Page undated weekly
    - Posts made to community organizations, promoting tutor training, student recruitment
  - Researched efficacy of joining other social media:
    - Yelp
    - LinkedIn
    - Twitter
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Activity Report

III Governance and Management

An extensive strategic planning exercise was completed in March 2015. Four areas were recognized for development: recruitment and support of students; recruitment, training and support of volunteers; tutor training; and succession planning. Regular operations of the charitable volunteer organization include a volunteer board of directors, an annual members meeting, financial management, internal communications and volunteer support.

- **Strategic Planning**
  - Researched a suitable facilitator and hired Chantale Legault, Executive Director of Community Development Corporation of Pontiac (CDCP)
  - Met with Chantal Legault, to plan WQLC strategic planning approach.
  - Developed SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Treats) analysis of WQLC
  - Phase 1: Planning meeting (WQLC President, Deb Powell; Executive Director, Marilee DeLombard and facilitator, Chantale Legault) developed the background information package.
  - Phase 2: Background information package sent to 13 Strategic Planning (SP) participants and solicited participants’ responses to “Values” exercise
  - Synthesized foundational Strategic Planning material and reproduced it for use in Strategic Planning session at Pine Lodge on March 14, 2015.
  - Notes from March 14 consultation were incorporated into Strategic Plan
  - Action Plan 2015-2016 was created using information from the Strategic Plan

- **Outreach staff position**
  - Additional funding was requested to support part-time outreach position but it was not accepted
  - Applied and received funding from Emploi Québec
    - Salary subsidy to hire an Outreach Agent for 30 hours/week for 30 weeks
    - Outreach Agent job description developed and advertised through Emploi Quebec
    - Interviews by WQLC personnel committee
    - Hired Melissa Lamothe: April 27, 2015
    - Outreach Agent position includes training
      - Introduction to WQLC
      - Introduction to adult literacy
      - Examination to outreach campaigns past & present
    - Lessons in Clear Writing
    - Monthly reports to Emploi Québec
III Governance and Management (continued)

- **Board of Directors**
  - Met 7 times during the fiscal year 2014-2015
  - Seven volunteers make up the Board of Directors

- **Emergency succession plan in place**

- **Operational procedures continue to be recorded**

- **Annual General Meeting**
  - October 18, 2014 at Café 349, Shawville, Quebec
  - Fifteen members attended
  - One new member, Nancy Arniotis, joined the board

- **Finances**
  - A mission d’examen financial statement was prepared by the firm of Smith, Porter, Hétu
  - The Literacy Council’s bookkeeping system was updated by Administrative Assistant, Deborah Gauthier
    - Revision to reconcile QST/GST refunds against expenses
  - Negotiated and signed lease with new landlord for office at 381 Route 148, Shawville
  - Prepared and submitted Charitable Return and Annual Declaration
  - Research project funding through CDE (Pontiac Economic Development) Fight Against Poverty Fund.

- **Newsletter**
  - Two issues of “Literacy Information Network in our Communities” (LINC$s$), were written and sent to a mailing list of 250 on paper and on-line.

- **Volunteer recognition**
  - Volunteer contributions were acknowledged at the AGM and the newsletter
  - Volunteer Awards Gala, Regional Association of West Quebecers
    - Gatineau gala on October 24, 2014
    - Tutor and WQLC board member, Richard Valin, received Education award

- **Funding**
  - Operational funding through Programme d’action communautaire sur le terrain de l’éducation (PACTE) was solicited and received
    - 2014-2015 activity report, statistical data, and financial statements;
    - 2015-2016 application and action plan prepared, translated and submitted before new deadline, May 1, 2015
  - PACTE Entente 2015-2018
    - Signed 3 year agreement with Ministère de l’Éducation, de l’Enseignement supérieur et de la Recherche
In addition to tutoring adult literacy students, the Literacy Council offers training to volunteers and staff. Volunteers are trained to be adult literacy tutors in a 2-day training conference. Volunteers and staff attend training sessions offered by our provincial literacy partner, Literacy Quebec (LQ). A variety of on-line courses complete the training possibilities.

- **Tutor Training Workshop**
  - Workshop to train volunteers as literacy tutors was held June 12 & 13, 2015
  - Tutor training seminar was held in Shawville, at Pontiac High School
  - Trainer, Kate Strickland, was brought from Hudson, Quebec
  - Advertisements: in five regional newspapers and through partner organizations
  - Training materials were created and disseminated
  - Pre-workshop study packages were posted on-line for participants
  - Seven tutors successfully completed the training

- **On-line webinar participation**
  - “Essential Entrepreneur and Marketing Skills” CEDEC, Nov. 25, 2014
  - “Mental Health Awareness”, by Wendy Stanyon, Community Literacy of Ontario, Feb 18, 2015

- **Literacy Quebec (LQ)**
  - Literacy Quebec Conference, Sept 25-26, 2014, Montreal
    - “Discovering Apps for Adult Learners” by Amanda Marzilli, RECLAIM
    - “Practice Working with Live Webinars using ‘Anymeeting’ software”, by Keith Fyckes
  - Literacy Quebec Conference, February 12-13, 2015, Montreal
    - “Accelerating Change through Collective Impact Leadership Training” by Liz Weaver, Tamarack Institute for Community Engagement
    - “Public Relations” by Alanna Blackie and M.T. Beveridge
    - “Social Media Workshop” (including Nonprofit Social Media Policy workbook) by Alanna Blackie and M.T. Beveridge
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Tutors Active In 2014-2015

Louise Carisse, Aylmer          Kathleen Lemieux, Gatineau
Venetia Crawford, Shawville    Linda McCrea, Aylmer
Deborah Gauthier, Otter Lake   Martha McGinn, Aylmer
Peter Gauthier, Shawville      James McKenzie, Masham
Janet Intscher, Chelsea        Brian Ray, Chelsea
Douglas Kent, Nicabau          Margaret Ruppel, Kazabazua
Christine Larin-Sabourin, Aylmer Richard Valin, Shawville

Thank you - you are life-changers!

Supporters

Throughout the year we received donations and services in-kind from the following people and organizations. Thank you for supporting literacy in W. Quebec!

Nancy Arniotis, Shawville
Shane Baldwin, Otter Lake
Michel Chabot, Bristol
Jonathan Cameron, Bryson
Venetia Crawford, Shawville
Jennifer Davies, Shawville-Clarendon Library
Muriel Davies, Clarendon
Marilee DeLombard, Thorne
Norma DesRosiers, Luskville
Monica Dodson, Sand Bay
Anne-Chantale Fontaine, Sutton
Cathy Fox, Bryson
Deborah Gauthier, Otter Lake
Peter Gauthier, Shawville
Louise Grenier, Calumet Island
Peter Haughton, Bristol

Tracy Judd, Clarendon
Margo Legault, Literacy Quebec (LQ)
Leila Nulty-Senf, Greermount
Pontiac Journal, Mansfield
Deb Powell, Norway Bay
Radio Pontiac, Fort Coulonge
Quebec Essential Learning Alliance (QELA)
Kate Strickland, Hudson
Heather Stronach, Regional Assn. of West Quebecers
Richard Valin, Shawville
United Way donors
Bruce Walsh, Clarendon
Richard Wegner, Bristol
Robert Wills, Thorne
Heartfelt thanks!

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We also wish to thank all our volunteers for taking time from their busy lives to help WQLC carry out its work. You provide valuable help, support, guidance and inspiration!

We especially thank our students. Your determination to make learning a priority in your busy adult lives is an inspiration to us all!

Photo Highlights of the Year

2014 Annual General Meeting
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Photo Highlights of the Year

Tutor training workshop, June 12 & 13, Shawville

Debbie Nadeau, Aylmer; Melissa Lamothe, Otter Lake; Doris McCann, Sheenboro; Kate Strickland, trainer; Tracey Smith, Bristol; Nora Duncan, Bristol; Audrey Belsher, Campbell's Bay (missing from photo: Sandie Dale-Bernard, Bristol)
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Photo Highlights of the Year

Strategic Planning session, March 14, 2015, Pine Lodge, Bristol
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Photo Highlights of the Year

Literacy Quebec Award presentation

Jon Cameron & Rick Valin

Family Literacy Day

Kids do yoga in the Library - limber up and learn!