

Western Québec Literacy Council

Annual Report
2006 -2007

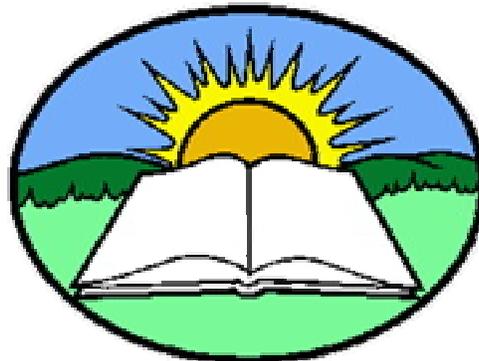
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Western Québec Literacy Council 2006—2007 Annual Report



“We cannot hold a torch to light another’s path
without brightening our own”
Ben Sweetland

Greetings and welcome to our 23rd Annual General Meeting.

For 23 years the Council has lit the torch for others and in the process lighted our own path. We have built a library of books, a series of workshops, a network of professionals, trained hundred of tutors to help as many students. We have learned and practiced good governance. From our humble beginnings as an idea more connected to social justice than education we have woven the two together and in the process created and maintained a space for learning and social change.

Along the way we have all benefited. Our Council has benefited by the resources (both human and other) we have invested in, assembled and made available. Our community is stronger and that strength has given us the ability to reach out to others and share the wealth. Our effort to help others has demonstrated time and again that we are all learners and we are all teachers.

Our AGM is a time for reflecting back on the year just passed and celebrating the achievements of our students, tutors and members. Its is also the time to imagine our future. So take a moment right now and light your torch. Imagine our future.

At this time I would like to publicly thank Sue, Shirley, Norma, Michel, Line and Jennifer, the Council’s Board of Directors, and or course the torch lighters in the office, Marilee and Debbie, without whom I doubt that we would be sitting here so brightly today. It is with pride and gratitude that I consider myself among this wonderful group of committed citizens.

Peace
Leila

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Who we are

The vision of the Western Québec 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 Québec 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 Québec 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.

The Western Québec 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 Québec -from Chapeau to Gatineau to Buckingham to Maniwaki and points in between.

WQLC was formed in 1984 in association with the Western Québec School Board. Since 1992 WQLC has functioned as an independent, community-based, charitable, volunteer organization.

2006-2007 Board of Directors

Michel Chabot, Quyon	Vice-Chair
Norma DesRosiers, Luskville	Secretary
Shirley Gauthier, Norway Bay	Treasurer
Line Lafontaine, Quyon	Member
Leila Nulty-Senf, Greermount	Chair
Sue Stewart, Portage du Fort,	Student Rep.
Jennifer Weese, Fort Coulonge	Member

Tutor Trainers

Beryl Kerrison, Cantley
Carol Pritchard, Aylmer (Apprentice)

Staff

Marilee DeLombard Executive Director
Debbie Gauthier Office Assistant



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EACH ONE TEACH ONE

- Student-tutor teams are the heart of Western Québec Literacy Council (WQLC). A person who wants to improve his or her literacy skills is teamed with a volunteer tutor for free weekly lessons.

- Following an initial assessment done with the Executive Director the student and tutor develop the student's learning plan. Additional reading and writing material from the student's interests helps to enliven the lessons.

- Text books are supplied by WQLC and second-hand computers are supplied to students who want to use them.

- All students received a copy of the "Ontario Reader" which is a book of current events that is written at 3 levels of reading difficulty.

- Students and tutors received WQLC pocket agendas for 2007 to encourage keeping track of their schedules and to encourage communication with the Council.

- During the year 28 people asked for help with their reading, writing and math skills. They are located throughout West Quebec—in such places as Chapeau, Shawville, Maniwaki, and Luskville. English-speaking adults who need our services are spread far and wide.

- Bruce Walsh, a WQLC student, won the Quebec Learners' Week writing contest. To receive the award Bruce attended the Annual Poetry Challenge during the "Semaine Quebecoise des adultes en formation" on April 24. His composition was read on stage and he received a certificate and a cash award. Bruce was also featured in an article in the Equity newspaper.



- This year Julie Sicard completed her course of study with WQLC and applied to study toward her high school diploma through distance education. WQLC received and administered the placement test to begin her registration with Formation a Distance with the Eastern Townships School Board.



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GROUP LEARNING

- Students also have the opportunity to learn in a group. WQLC's student group, TREE, organizes activities for students to learn from the wider world. TREE stands for Teamwork to Raise Education and Equality.
- Further learning opportunities are offered in the running of the student group. Students organized three TREE meetings this year.
- On March 24 the student group organized a trip to the Bowladrome in Renfrew, Ontario. 8 students and 3 volunteers attended.



- The Happy Rockers curling group is another group learning opportunity. From October to June the curlers meet for weekly games. Improvement is seen in physical and mental coordination, as well as in social skills. The team has been embraced by the curling club community. They were celebrated at a banquet on April 19 where they received trophies and participation lapel pins.

TRAINING



Fall 2006 Tutor Training Workshop May, Carol, Debra

- Two basic tutor training workshops were held this year: Seven new tutors completed the training at the WQLC office in Shawville in the Fall 2006 workshop. Nine new tutors completed the training that was held at the Western Quebec School Board Career Centre in Aylmer in the Spring 2007 workshop.
- An on-going assessment workshop for tutors called "Measuring Student Progress" was held on February 24 at the WQLC office. An overview of on-going assessment models was presented by Kate Strickland from Hudson, Quebec. Five tutors participated.
- A workshop in Educational Games was presented to students on February 10 at the WQLC office. Four students and 2 tutors attended and played board games and computer games.

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TRAINING (Continued)

- A student craft-making workshop was held on March 31. Four students participated.



- Professional development training was received by 4 students and 3 volunteers who attended the provincial (LLC-Q/LVQ) Annual Conference in Montreal on November 3, 2006. On November 2 the students attended the LLC-Q/LVQ Student Conference.

- The WQLC Executive Director attended “Training Session on the Reception and Referral of Adult with Little Schooling” by Patti Moore on April 12 in Montreal.

- The WQLC Executive Director attended “Best Practices in Tutor Training” on April 26-27 in Montreal. This conference was organized by LLC-Q/LVQ to help councils improve their tutor training workshops. Many innovative ideas were presented and will be shared with WQLC Tutor Trainers who were not able to attend a weekday workshop in Montreal.

- WQLC participated in the conference “Bridging the Gap” which was organized by Quebec English Literacy Alliance (QELA) on March 14 in Montreal. This conference examined ways that life long learning can be encouraged by cooperation between the school board and the volunteer literacy sectors.

- The WQLC Executive Director attended “A Practical Guide To Teaching Adults with Learning Difficulties” offered by Patti Moore on March 26 in Montreal. The information from this workshop will be shared with the WQLC Tutor Trainers who were not able to attend a weekday workshop in Montreal.



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NETWORKING

- WQLC keeps up with changes in the field of literacy by networking at the provincial level with Laubach Literacy of Canada-Quebec/Literacy Volunteers of Quebec (LLC-Q/LVQ). Working at the provincial level allows us to tackle large, on-going issues with a larger group of literacy practitioners who have similar concerns. WQLC does not have a representative on the LLC-Q/LVQ Board of Directors this year, so travelling to Montreal to attend business meetings was kept to a minimum. More business is conducted by internet and telephone.

- WQLC Executive Director volunteers on Steering Committee of LLC-Q/LVQ IFPCA project to develop communication tools.

- WQLC also networks at the regional and national levels. We belong to the Ottawa Coalition for Literacy which organizes professional development workshops and refers students and tutors to us. We are also a member of Laubach Literacy of Canada, The Literacy Foundation, Movement for Canadian Literacy, and ABC Canada.

- A WQLC Board member has attended the regional organizing committee for Quebec Learners' Week. WQLC entered photos of the "Happy Rockers"

curling team into the March 26-31 celebration of Quebec Learners' Week and entered student's names into the student award contest.

- Co-operation between W.Q.Literacy Council and W.Q.School Board

- shared materials and space
- greater communication
- two adult education students supported by tutors with reading and writing

- A Tutor Training Workshop will be held in Maniwaki on Sept. 28-29 in cooperation with the Maniwaki Adult Education and Vocational Training Centre of the Western Quebec School Board. We are pleased to be able to offer services in this part of our territory.



2006-7 Happy Rockers

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ORGANIZATION

- Western Québec Literacy Council operates under the guidance of a board of Directors made up of seven volunteer members, including one student representative.
- The Board deals with matters of planning, governance, financial and human resource management, and special project support.
- This year Board members have been involved in the following committees: finance; and intake and on-going assessment.
- The Board met six times during the July 1- June 30, 2006-7 fiscal year.
- WQLC staff consists of an Executive Director and an Office Assistant.
- Office efficiency is improving. Office Assistant, Debbie Gauthier, is condensing 4 data sources into one comprehensive data base.



-Initial and On-going Assessment Project

This year WQLC completed the Assessment project whose goal was to update the way that we evaluate student learning and progress. Procedures for initial evaluation and on-going assessment were reviewed, alternative approaches were analyzed, and new systems were designed and tested.

Our new approach is a blend of formal and informal assessment and it is applied according to the needs of the student. Formal assessment includes written placement tests and periodic check-ups and the development of the student's learning portfolio. Informal assessment includes a verbal interview. The choice of approach is up to the student.

The goal of assessment is increased student retention and success. Students are encouraged to take an active role in the design and direction of their lessons. They participate in on-going assessment by creating and adding to their own learning portfolio. The contents of the portfolio are periodically reviewed in order to gain perspective on the student's progress.

As a result of this three-year project WQLC's system has been solidified for ease of use and better communication with tutors and students. Workshops to facilitate the use of the new assessment tools will be held this year

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OUTREACH

- Public awareness activities, such as newspaper articles and advertising and the information booth at the Shawville Fair, help us to reach new students and volunteer tutors.
- We cooperate with libraries in West Quebec around events to promote family literacy. We cooperated with the Shawville-Clarendon Library to offer a Family Literacy Day event for children and their families on January 27, 2007.



Venetia creating a story made up by the children

- WQLC Executive Director made a presentation to seventy women at the Pontiac Women's Institute Information Day on February 21 and to twelve people at the Fort Coulonge Centre Interval on April 18.
- WQLC participated with the Pontiac Community Development Corporation in the launch of an internet-based volunteer recruitment tool (www.cdcpontiac.org).

OUTREACH

- Beryl Kerrison, WQLC Tutor Trainer, was awarded the Community Award for Education by the Regional Association of West Quebecers at their annual Community Awards banquet on June 1. Beryl was acclaimed for her 14 years as volunteer tutor Trainer. During that time she has trained 144 tutors—an exceptional achievement.



Harry and Beryl Kerrison

COMMUNICATIONS

- WQLC's newsletter, LINC's (Literacy Information Network in our Communities) is written and distributed four times per year to a mailing list of 230. Articles that appear in the newsletter include tutor tips, pictures of council activities, coming events and short readings by and for students.
- Students, tutors, staff, and other volunteers keep in touch by telephone, mail, email and face-to-face meetings.

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ANNUAL GENERAL
MEETING CONFERENCE 2006

- Our 22nd Annual General Meeting was held on September 23, 2006 at the Western Quebec Career Centre in Gatineau. Twenty two members attended.

- Members of the Board were re-elected. Reports were approved: Mission d'examen 2005-6, Activity Report 2005-6, Action Plan 2006-7, Budget 2006-7, hiring accountant 2006-7

- Armand Duchame and Venetia Crawford, regional story-tellers, appeared in historical costumes. Their stories described life in the Ottawa Valley in the 19th century.



- A workshop on creating a family picture book on the computer was presented by two tutors., Deborah Gauthier and Robert Wills.

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TUTORS ACTIVE IN 2006-2007

- Kate Aley, Luskville
- Elspeth Butterworth, Luskville
- Kim Dickinson, Aylmer
- Craig Gaston, Aylmer
- Deborah Gauthier, Otter Lake
- Shirley Gauthier, Norway Bay
- John Grant, Shawville
- Berl Kerrison, Cantley
- Maureen Martin, Aylmer
- Marleen Paquette, Aylmer
- Carol Pritchard, Aylmer
- Stella Schippers, Gatineau
- Julie Sicard, Fort Coulonge
- Ruth Steele, Masham
- Joyce Sylvester, Bristol
- Jennifer Weese, Fort Coulonge

TUTORS TRAINED IN 2006-2007

Fall 2006

- Elspeth Butterworth, Luskville
- Stan Carlson, Wakefield
- Kim Dickinson, Aylmer
- Donna Gagnon, Chapeau
- Debra Lloyd, Chapeau
- May Mallais, Calumet Island
- Joyce Sylvester, Bristol

Spring 2007

- Beverly Cloutier, Gracefield
- Nicole Kouri, Aylmer
- Jim McKenzie, Lapeche
- Paula McLenaghan, Quyon
- Nancy Ray, Aylmer
- Julie Sicard, Fort Coulonge
- Shirley Smyth, Aylmer



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Supporters

Western Quebec Literacy Council wishes 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!

The Council would also like to say “thank you” for the support we received through donations and service in kind from:

- Kate Aley, Luskville
- Access Centre Volunteer Action Centre, Aylmer
- Aylmer Career Centre, Aylmer
- Aylmer Library, Aylmer
- Jenny Bousfield, Clarendon
- Elke Bzdurreck, Ft. Coulonge
- Centre Intervale, Ft. Coulonge
- Michel Chabot, Bristol
- Bill Crawford, Ft. Coulonge
- Venetia Crawford, Shawville
- Norma DesRosiers, Luskville
- Christopher Doyle, Ft. Coulonge
- Armand Ducharme, Luskville
- The Equity, Shawville
- Marilyn Fox, Clarendon
- Tom Fox, Clarendon
- Debbie Gauthier, Otter Lake
- Shirley Gauthier, Norway Bay
- Reuben Hodgins, Clarendon
- Beryl & Harry Kerrison, Cantley
- Literacy Volunteers of Quebec
- Line Lafontaine, Bristol
- Leila Nulty-Senf, Greermount
- Petro Pontiac, Shawville
- Pierre, Clarendon
- Pontiac Adult Ed. Centre, Shawville
- Pontiac Journal, Mansfield
- Pontiac Women’s Institute
- Arleen Prost, Ladysmith
- Radio Pontiac, Mansfield
- Carol Pritchard, Aylmer
- Quebec English Literacy Alliance
- Peter Ruppel, Greermount
- Shawville-Clarendon Library
- Bob Smith, Shawville
- Sue Stewart, Portage du Fort
- Kate Strickland, Cowansville
- Marilyn Tanguay, Shawville
- Joani Tannenbaum, Cowansville
- Mary Teevens, Shawville
- Lisa Teevens, Shawville
- Bruce Walsh, Clarendon
- Jennifer Weese, Fort Coulonge
- Robert Wills, Thorne

The Western Québec Literacy Council would like to thank The Québec Ministry of Education, Sports and Leisure and individual donors for their financial support.