

# Vancouver Board of Education

## Annual Literacy Plan



July 2014

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# Vancouver District Literacy Plan

## I. Introduction

*Literacy: the broad set of skills that enable people to participate more fully in social, economic, family and community.*

School Districts in British Columbia are required annually to submit a district literacy plan to the Ministry of Education, and to Decoda Literacy Solutions, the provincial organization that supports community based literacy programs. The district literacy plan reports on the literacy work in communities within the geographic boundary of the school district. It is not meant to represent the board's approval of the plan or ultimate responsibility for the work. Instead, it is a demonstration of the board's commitment to understand and support learning outside of the work traditionally done by the K-12 system; the recognition of the value of literacy work taking place across the community; and the value of collaborating and sharing to build more successful learners and communities.<sup>1</sup>

*Literacy remains the foundation of all other learning. It is the path to success for individuals, families, communities, and the province. For example, 75 per cent of people with high literacy levels report that they are in good health while only 30 per cent of people with low literacy make that claim. Inmates who participate in basic education in correctional facilities are significantly less likely to offend again. People with strong literacy skills are more likely to vote and participate in community groups. These are just a few of the benefits that higher literacy levels bring to individuals, to communities, and to the province (ReadNow BC Final Report).*

The purpose of this Vancouver District Literacy Plan is to provide an update on the work and goals outlined in the 2013 Literacy Plan. It will provide a context for Literacy Planning in Vancouver, an update on Community Plans, the Vancouver School District, and the Vancouver Public Library.

### Vancouver – Context

Vancouver is the eighth most populous city in Canada with a population of 603, 502 people. It is one of the most ethnically and linguistically diverse cities in Canada, with 52% of the population speaking a first language other than English. Growth in the city is largely due to immigration. Half of Vancouver's population is made up of immigrants. Of this group 50% settled prior to 1991, 33.4% arrived between 1991 and 2000, and 16.7% arrived between 2001 and 2006. One quarter of Vancouver's population have Chinese as their mother tongue followed by Punjabi, Tagalog and Vietnamese.

In terms of literacy, this diversity is significant. According to Decoda Literacy Solutions, immigrants with

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<sup>1</sup> Excerpt from Decoda *Community Literacy Planning Guide: Working Together for Literacy*, page 17

a first language other than English have significantly lower literacy than other Canadians, with 60% below Level 3 according to the International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey. This proportion does not improve with time and those immigrants who are here for 10 years or more have the same literacy profile as new arrivals. Two thirds of BC's working-age people at Level 1 are immigrants (Decoda Literacy Solutions, Library, <http://decoda.ca/resources/library/>).

Vancouver includes some of the most affluent and impoverished urban neighbourhoods in the country. This setting provides wonderful opportunities as well as serious challenges for literacy planning. On the one hand, many living in this urban environment are able to take advantage of opportunities to experience and learn from diverse cultures and reap the benefits of involvement with highly sophisticated and experienced arts and recreational groups that you would expect to find in a world-class city. On the other hand, many people, due to poverty and other inhibitors, are excluded from the choices and opportunities that a city the size of Vancouver can offer.

The City of Vancouver identifies 23 distinct neighbourhoods or areas that make up Vancouver. As the City notes on its website, there is not always agreement on the names or the boundaries of the areas, but there is agreement that there are distinct characteristics and cultures in each area. This will be evident in the literacy planning undertaken in each of the communities in this report.

## **II. Vancouver Community Literacy Planning Overview**

Literacy planning in Vancouver is focused in eight neighbourhoods at different stages of implementation. Decoda Literacy Solutions, working in partnership with the Vancouver Board of Education, Vancouver Public Library, Vancouver Community College and neighbourhood representatives identified the eight neighbourhoods using criteria that included need, current levels of resources, and a community development model of planning within the neighbourhood. Need was determined by population trends, EDI scores, immigration patterns, languages spoken in the home, and the education and poverty levels of the residents. The communities that are part of the Literacy planning are Collingwood-Renfrew, Downtown East Side (DTES), Hastings North, Kensington Cedar Cottage, Kitsilano (now West Side Vancouver), Marpole, Mount Pleasant, and South Vancouver.

For each of the eight neighbourhoods, there is a:

- Host agency that receives, manages, and stewards the funds, and has an agreement with Decoda Literacy Solutions
- A local literacy coordinator hired by the host agency who acts as a facilitator, animator, researcher, program developer, and advocate
- A task group or series of task groups of local citizens and service providers to ensure local perspectives and local ownership of the literacy work.

## **Coordinating Committee**

Representatives from all the communities as well as Decoda Literacy Solutions, the Vancouver School District, the Vancouver Public Library, and Vancouver Community College sit on a Coordinating Committee that meets to share ideas and celebrate successes.

In June 2012 the Coordinating Committee was involved in a visioning exercise with a goal, ultimately, to bring more cohesion to literacy planning across the City, and this resulted consensus on the following statements:

- *Literacy is the broad set of skills that enable people to participate fully in social, economic, family, and community life.*
- *Literacy skills enable each of us to listen, view, communicate, represent, and evaluate knowledge in many different ways.*
- *Literacy is about the skills to be engaged with others, to be full citizens.*
- *Literacy includes: reading, writing, communicating, using technology, understanding finances, being able to navigate community resources, and essential skills in the workplace.*

## **Common Principles and Beliefs**

The following common principles and beliefs have been identified:

- Local collaboration is important to create synergies and efficiencies in existing literacy and learning resources, to promote access for learners of all ages, and to avoid duplication of effort and resources
- Embedding literacy and learning in the everyday life of individuals, families, and communities, and in the work of all local organizations (public, private, and non profit), is essential
- Connecting literacy closely to all forms and ways of learning is important as literacy needs to be understood as a diverse set of skills required for functioning well in today's society
- Embedding attention to and action on literacy and learning issues in the work of all local service providers is essential
- Literacy and learning need to be based on an asset model, where the work always builds on people's strengths and gifts.

## **Building a Common Framework and Vision for the Next Five Years**

There is agreement that, while each neighbourhood has its own unique characteristics and literacy priorities, much can be gained by working together and supporting each other, sharing learning about good practices, and creating appropriate city-wide approaches that might increase efficiency and effectiveness.

## Literacy Pathways

Two core literacy pathways were noted.

- For many people, there is a natural learning curve where, starting at birth, they learn the full range of literacy skills, and are able to function well in families, workplaces, and communities<sup>2</sup>.
- For some people, literacy and learning challenges occur at different ages, their learning slows, and they begin to fall behind their peers in the natural development of their literacy skills<sup>3</sup>.

Along the first pathway, literacy work is more about prevention; it is about enhancing natural literacy development and learning for people of all ages. Along the second pathway, literacy work is more about intervention, it is about identifying and reaching out to those people who face barriers to learning, and who have not been able to identify the full range of literacy skills required to function in today's society.

## Five Year Joint Outcomes

The following five year outcomes were identified:

- Local communities are places where learning and literacy skills are publicly valued and supported for all people of all ages through both formal and informal resources
- There is a full continuum of literacy and learning resources that is locally available and/or accessible in each neighbourhood, and the pathways between these resources are clear so that people can continue to learn and move from one place to another smoothly
- The stigma experienced and felt by people with literacy and learning challenges is reduced
- Local literacy work is present in all of the city neighbourhoods

There is considerable agreement at the Coordinating Committee that it is important that the local literacy community development work be able to demonstrate influence and positive change both locally and city-wide.

## Common Strategies

Several common strategies for building local literacy movements were identified:

- Access - Ensuring that everyone has knowledge about and access to the literacy and learning resources that are locally available
- Access - Establishing accessible and welcoming community hubs for literacy development and learning

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<sup>2</sup> This pathway can be best seen along three age groups: birth to grade 3, grades 4 to 12, and adulthood. In each age group, there are different sets of resources and responsibilities to enhance the natural learning activities (e.g. birth to grade 3 - parents, libraries, and schools, grades 4 to 12 - schools, libraries, and peers, adults – schools, colleges, and workplaces).

<sup>3</sup> The factors are many, diverse, and interconnected: parents without the skills and motivation to support the learning of their children, children with special needs and learning disabilities, families that are isolated or breaking down, lack of fit with schools and other age appropriate learning resources, lack of adult role models and trusted teachers, difficulties in making transitions (e.g. preschool to kindergarten, and elementary school to secondary school), jobs that pay good salaries but require limited literacy skills, adults with addictions and special needs, and newcomers who are literate in their own home language but challenged with English.

- Outreach - Identifying and acting together on local literacy and learning issues such as barriers to people accessing existing resources
- Embed - Embedding attention to and action on literacy issues, and the importance of opportunities for learning for all people, in all community planning tables and in the work of all community service organizations
- Embed – Including literacy and learning issues in all neighbourhood and city-wide visions statements and plans
- Advocate – Creating strong cases for increased literacy and learning resources, programs, and infrastructures, particularly targeted to those people facing significant literacy and learning challenges and barriers
- Share – Sharing learning and good practices in literacy community development work across local neighbourhoods
- Share – Building city-wide approaches, including common language and tools, for more effective, coordinated, and synergistic local action

### **Next Steps**

Several next steps were identified in the 2013 Literacy Plan and work on these continue:

- Develop a joint job description for local literacy coordinators that can be used by all of the local neighbourhoods and host agencies<sup>4</sup>
- Develop a joint “case for support” for local literacy work (why is this important, why is it separate but connected from other issues) that can be used by all: local literacy coordinators host agencies, and members of literacy task groups
- Identify those issues, resources, and approaches that need or would be better done using a city-wide approach, and create a joint infrastructure for this to happen
- Create a joint sustainability strategy (i.e. finances, shared learning, and joint infrastructures) for expanding, supporting, and sustaining local literacy community development work in more city neighbourhoods.

### **III. The Community Literacy Plans: Report on Progress**

The following table outlines the eight neighbourhoods, the stewards of the Community Literacy Plans and the Literacy Outreach Coordinators in the neighbourhoods. Following the table are the updates from each of these neighbourhoods. It is clear from the eight different reports that each area is distinct in its culture, history and approach in working in the field of literacy. At the same time, there are many commonalities, and the work is assisted in each area through the collaboration at the coordinating committee.

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## Vancouver Literacy Planning Neighbourhoods

Neighbourhood	Steward	LOC
<b>Downtown Eastside Literacy Roundtable</b>	WISH Drop-In Centre Society Kate Gibson <a href="mailto:wishdropincentre@telus.net">wishdropincentre@telus.net</a>	William Booth <a href="mailto:dtes.loc@gmail.com">dtes.loc@gmail.com</a>
Hastings North	Kiwassa Neighbourhood House Nancy McRitchie Exec. Director <a href="mailto:NancyM@kiwassa.ca">NancyM@kiwassa.ca</a>	Erin Cathro <a href="mailto:ErinC@kiwassa.ca">ErinC@kiwassa.ca</a>
Kensington Cedar Cottage	Cedar Cottage Neighbourhood House Donna Chang Exec. Director <a href="mailto:dchang@cedarcottage.org">dchang@cedarcottage.org</a>	Naomi Klinge Watt <a href="mailto:nklingewatt@cedarcottage.org">nklingewatt@cedarcottage.org</a>
Vancouver West Side (Kitsilano)	Kits Neighbourhood House Catherine Leach Exec. Director <a href="mailto:Catherine@kitshouse.org">Catherine@kitshouse.org</a>	Emily Palmer <a href="mailto:Emily@kitshouse.org">Emily@kitshouse.org</a>
Marpole	Marpole Oakridge Family Place Tracy Howard <a href="mailto:ED@mofp.org">ED@mofp.org</a>	Andrea Krombein <a href="mailto:AndreaK@mofp.org">AndreaK@mofp.org</a>
Mount Pleasant	M.P. Neighbourhood House Jocelyne Hamel Exec. Director <a href="mailto:jhamel@mpnh.org">jhamel@mpnh.org</a>	Blanca Salvatierra <a href="mailto:BSalvatierra@MPNH.ORG">BSalvatierra@MPNH.ORG</a>
Renfrew Collingwood	Collingwood Neighbourhood House Kulwant Kaur <a href="mailto:kkaur@cnh.bc.ca">kkaur@cnh.bc.ca</a>	Timothy Shay <a href="mailto:literacyrc@gmail.com">literacyrc@gmail.com</a>
South Vancouver	South Van Neighbourhood House Jessica Moerman (Programs Dir.) <a href="mailto:Jessica@southvan.org">Jessica@southvan.org</a>	Zinnia Clark <a href="mailto:foodsecurity@southvan.org">foodsecurity@southvan.org</a>



## **Downtown Eastside Vancouver Community**

### **Literacy Task Group**

During the past year, the literacy task group in the Downtown Eastside (DTES) community has been comprised of some 45 adult educators who sit on the DTES Adult Literacy<sup>5</sup> Roundtable and represent a wide spectrum of literacy/educational organizations in the DTES community.

The DTES Adult Literacy Roundtable also regularly communicates with a network of over 100 supporters, made up of individuals and organizations residing in and/or working in partnership with the community.

The DTES Adult Literacy Roundtable is unique in that it is self-organized and members have been coming together since 2005 for the purpose of sharing skills, ideas, support and information. The work of the Roundtable is organized through monthly meetings hosted by a rotation of its members. At these meetings, members share new developments in their organizations and the community, as well offer opportunities for professional development and support through workshops and guest speakers.

### **Community Context**

The Downtown Eastside is a dynamic, vibrant, low-income Vancouver neighborhood located on unceded Coast Salish Territory. Also known as ‘the Heart of the City’, the DTES has historically been a hub of rich cultural life for Aboriginal, Chinese, Japanese, Latin American, Black, working class, and low income peoples. The strong, community-driven DTES neighborhood prides itself on insider knowledge, lived experiences, volunteerism, social justice efforts, multicultural diversity, unity and support and offers opportunities for asset-based learning.

In the past year, a number of developments, issues and decisions have directly impacted people—both positively and negatively—living in the Downtown Eastside community, as well as the ability of organizations to support literacy development.

#### **Some examples of Positive Impacts include:**

- The DTES Adult Literacy Roundtable itself continued to foster important connections between educators and literacy organizations and participate in various community functions such as *Heart of the City, Alley Health Fair, Aboriginal Health Fair, etc.*
- In the face of ever increasing funding challenges Literacy Roundtable members and supporters continue to offer and provide innovative and creative programs.

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<sup>5</sup> Literacy on Downtown Eastside community goes far beyond reading and writing; rather, literacy means being able to enjoy and participate in everyday life.

- Despite relocation to other parts of the city to find affordable housing, many former residents still keep their connections strong with the DTES community through their ongoing participation in its educational programs, services, advocacy work, artistic initiatives, and social life.
- The numbers and enthusiasm of volunteers and students who support various literacy projects remain high. Various innovative approaches are used to support and show appreciation for these contributions such as professional development workshop series with support from Arbutus Rotary.
- While the number of individuals seeking opportunities for GED studies continues to increase, the capacity to provide opportunities to those most in need remains in jeopardy.
- Expanded capacity of classrooms and larger computer labs of some organizations such as UBC Learning Exchange, Union Gospel Mission and DEEC provide additional learning opportunities.

**Some examples of Negative Impacts include:**

- Budget cuts, housing shortages and gentrification, continue to rally activists and present challenges for those providing education, training and literacy opportunities and limit ability to create sustainable programs in the community.
- Some perceive continuing gentrification to result in less affordable housing and services for low-income people. Some have moved to other areas in Vancouver and beyond in order to secure affordable accommodation.
- Budget cuts from Provincial and Federal Government, while emphasizing deficit reduction and job creation, in fact impact and cut initiatives and innovation of programs offered by Literacy Roundtable members and supporters and their ability to provide necessary and much needed education, skill training and learning opportunities to the various sectors to which they provide services.
- Traditional Adult Basic Education (ABE), as offered by many organizations in the Downtown Eastside, is under renewed threat. Shifts towards austerity continue to influence decisions that make it more difficult for low income learners to access free adult literacy education.
- The centralized model of employment services continues to challenge those seeking employment. This shift into a 'one roof employment service' is problematic for those who seek computer access and support from individualized employment service programs.
- Changes to the policies around welfare and administrative procedures continue to exacerbate systematic discrimination against low income people. For example, the requirement to download more documents has resulted in increased barriers for those without regular access to computers or for those with lower digital literacy levels.

## **Community Development & Literacy Collaboration**

In the past year, some of the important collaborations that have taken place in the Downtown Eastside community to support literacy and the work of the task group have included:

- Literacy Roundtable members and community supporters met with Vancouver City Managers to provide input in DTES Local Area Planning Process
- Literacy Roundtable members and supporters in collaboration with Carnegie Community Centre hosted a meeting with Translink to discuss implications of the Compass Card system for community members wishing to access learning opportunities.
- Continuing opportunities for computer literacy training at UBC Learning Exchange, Carnegie Centre, Union Gospel Mission, Downtown Eastside Education Centre, VCC and others provide opportunities for trained facilitators from the program to support other community members/organizations in accessing computers
- With Raise-a-Reader funding, the Roundtable continues to support Books, Bags and Babies, the First Nations Languages Sharing Circle, Broadening Horizons including computer skills and family literacy, and Strengthening Community Capacity Bridging Services.
- The DTES Professional Development workshop series, with support from Arbutus Rotary, continues to involve members, volunteer tutors and educators working with adult learners across the community.

## **Addressing Our Goals & Priorities**

The literacy task group in the Downtown Eastside community continues to build on their literacy plan “Strengthening Literacy in the Downtown Eastside,” which has been edited and updated in 2014.

The two overarching priorities in the plan are to *work together* as a community and to value the *self-determination* of community members. Within these overarching priorities, six literacy goals and possible actions are outlined which guide the Roundtable’s efforts.

In the past year, the Literacy Outreach Coordinator, working in conjunction with the DTES Adult Literacy Roundtable, has taken steps to address these literacy goals. The following table describes each literacy goal, examples of how it was addressed (action taken), indicators of success, and any challenges that may have been encountered along the way.

1. Connect, Exchange Skills and Share Ideas
  - Continued monthly Roundtable meetings
  - Connect to larger issues that impact education, such as COMPASS, LAPP, Alley Health Fair
  - Roundtable has brought in speakers to monthly meetings for professional development. Roundtable rotates venue for meetings

- Distribution of over 1600 copies of the “Literacy, Learning, Training and Education Services in the DTES” quick reference guide through the Carnegie Newsletter and at various community events
2. Support Revitalization of Aboriginal Languages and Cultural Practices
    - Worked in collaboration with the Aboriginal Front Door to develop and deliver the First Nations Languages Sharing Circle; some of the Raise a Reader funds allocated to this program
    - Raise-a-Reader funds also allocated the ‘Books, Bags & Babies’ at YWCA Crabtree Corner; through crafts, storytelling, and drumming, program provides First Nations families with a connection to their culture in a positive learning environment
    - Reconciliation event (huge community effort here)
  3. Fund Low Income Resident Teaching and Learning Opportunities
    - Hourly living wages paid to community members for their work in the following roles: Elders leading the First Nations Languages Sharing Circle, Assistant Coordinator of the First Nations Languages Sharing Circle, Events Assistant Coordinators for the 2012 DTES Professional Development Workshop Series
    - Raised funds through Arbutus Rotary Club for professional development.
    - Supported programs with Raise a Reader funds in 2014
    - WISH donates admin fees back to Roundtable
  4. Increase Awareness of Literacy Resources
  5. Build Capacity to Support People with Learning Disabilities / Differences
    - Write and submit a proposal to Rotary Club of Vancouver Arbutus for funds for professional development.
  6. Create Momentum through Neighbourhood Learning Themes and Events
    - Fostered momentum through each DTES Professional Development workshop (above) by keeping participants updated through e-mail
    - Continues to support graduates of SFU’s Community Capacity Building Certificate program
    - Participated in various Health Fairs
    - Participated in Reconciliation march
    - Get directory printed out on bright coloured paper at UGM and YWCA
    - Distribute guide at Word on the Street

**Indications of success**

- Roundtable website is expanded to include current events and programs
- Roundtable membership increased; lively participation

- Funding family programs in the DTES through Raise a Reader
- Roundtable has brought speakers to two monthly meetings for professional development
- The Aboriginal Front Door has been facilitated by the same 2 Elders since it started in Sept. 2011; average attendance of 8 to 10 families on average.
- First Nations participants have shared that it's a safe place for them to remember and share their language.
- Books, Bags, and Babies is offered twice at the YWCA Crabtree
- Programs are supported by the Raise a Reader funds for 2014.
- More community members are aware of Aboriginal languages and cultural practices in the neighbourhood. Partnerships are formed; languages and cultures are nurtured in ways that Aboriginal groups define; participation rates have steady increase over time.
- 40% of implementation funds spent funding low income resident teaching and learning opportunities in the community
- Literacy Outreach Coordinator has written references letters for these community members as they seek further/additional employment
- WISH Roundtable financial steward donated administration fees back to Roundtable
- 1600 copies of "Literacy, Learning, Training and Education Service in the DTES" are distributed both electronically and throughout the community
- Community members and organizations have repeatedly commented: "We need more of this!" and "Can I have a few more to share with others?"

### **Challenges**

- Keeping the Website up to date
- Members finding the time to attend meetings and participate in the work that needs to be done when they are teaching and have to do it off the side of their desks
- NewSTART employment program had incorporated the Circle into their schedule; when they closed in March 2012, participation in Circle dipped for a while
- need for more programming that feeds into this
- need for sustainable funding
- So many opportunities to employ people from the community, but not enough money
- Keeping the guide current and everything else current – responsibility often falls on those who attend meetings
- Identify and apply for additional funding
- Provide training and professional development for Roundtable members and volunteer tutor/mentors
- Finding appropriate space to accommodate all who wanted to attend

- Identifying appropriate resource people
- Due to lack of time, non-resident based steering committee was initiated

### **For the Coming Year**

- Organize professional development Re: Methods of being a resilient adult educator. How to sustain this kind of work. Work-Life Balance – compassion, fatigue etc.
- Post URL links on website to facilitate sharing
- Develop website and use list-serve to access educational opportunities
- Expand Roundtable website to include information on current events & programs
- Clarify where the Roundtable is connecting, exchanging skills and sharing ideas. There is a great deal of work going on with members working with members and other organizations. Partnerships are happening
- Keep track of the work on the website and in other reports to recognize and share resources with the many skilled and talented residents in the DTES who want to be teaching and learning and are currently underfunded.
- Create learning opportunities for volunteers in order to create more partnerships and opportunities
- Create more partnerships and partnership opportunities
- Review the DTES Adult Literacy Roundtable definition of literacy
- Access assistance from Learning Exchange for distribution of guide
- Hire a person for social media
- Investigate what type of social media to use to give more educational access to students
- Have a workshop on social media with support from Arbutus Rotary Club as it is important to reach DTES students through easy access to Face-Book, Twitter, etc. (Is twitter the way to go?)
- Access grant writing opportunities through VPL data-base
- Investigate Learner Assessments; Cost, Location. Assessments at Open Door – Work BC? Criteria? Find out more. Assessments at UBC? Assessments at Simon Fraser?
- Arrange for the new Vancouver Public library on DTES to house software and other resources related to helping people with learning disabilities/differences so all organizations can use it
- Plan and host community forum “Strengthening Community Capacity” at VCC in September, 2014. The Roundtable and Forum Steering Committee with host over 170 service providers in the DTES and discuss practice, gaps, referrals, needs etc. at VCC

### **Programs (some examples of DTES Literacy Roundtable members)**

**Vancouver Community College**, in addition to offering a full range of certificate, diploma and continuing education classes, is the largest college provider of adult literacy programs in Vancouver. It has a long and proud history of collaborating with a wide assortment of community constituency groups. Some recent partners include: the Lookout Society, the Salvation Army, the Vancouver Public Library, the Vancouver Board of Education, Safeway, Coast Mental Health and the YWCA.

*The Basic Education Department* is the Adult Literacy Fundamental Level program at VCC. It encompasses beginning skills up to approximately Grade 9. Currently, the department offers classes in fundamental level English, Math and Computer Studies. It offers both group-based and self-paced continuous intake classes at the Broadway Campus. Basic Education has well-established adult learning centres at the Vancouver Public Library's Downtown Branch and at Salvation Army's Harbour Light, a drug and alcohol rehabilitation centre in the Downtown Eastside. More recently, we have started adult learning centres at First Place, a residence operated by the Lookout Society, and at the Coast Club House, operated by Coast Mental Health. First Place offers a combined literacy/numeracy/basic computer skills class. This friendly small-group class offers reading, writing, mathematics and basic computer instruction up to the grade nine level.

*College and Career Access - Adult Upgrading* courses are offered at the Intermediate (Grade 10), Advanced (Grade 11) and Provincial(Grade 12) levels for students wishing to earn credit or obtain academic prerequisites leading to high school completion and the BC Adult Graduation Diploma. Students can complete prerequisites: (1) for entry into institutions such as BCIT, Langara, Kwantlen, etc., (2) in preparation for entry into other VCC programs (e.g. Pharmacy Technician, Practical Nursing, or Electronics) or (3) for entrance into academic, career, or technical programs.

*Intermediate Program for Youth: Broadway Youth Resource Centre* offers an Intermediate ABE Certificate Program (Grade 10) and Advanced ABE courses (Grade 11) at the Broadway Youth Resource Centre. The ABE Youth Program offers individualized and self-paced instruction in English, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies in a structured and supportive educational setting that allows youth to achieve their academic goals to develop the skills to be productive and responsible individuals. The Youth Program prepares students to enter adult graduation programs, public secondary schools, career and skills training programs and/or employment.

*Essential Skills for College and Career Success* at the VCC Downtown Campus (250 West Pender) offers: (1) Education and Career Planning; Self-Assessment, Career Explorations and Interview Skills, (2) College Success: Active Learning, Study Skills, Goal Setting, (3) Computer skills: Word, Excel, and Windows. These courses are being offered in a flexible format that includes self-paced study and scheduled courses at various times to suit the student. Courses are tuition free (college application, student association and college initiative fee are charged).

**Union Gospel Mission's Hope Learning Center** offers a free GED program for residents of the DTES community. Classes are held in the mornings on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday. The class runs year round and is constant intake, so prospective students can apply at any time. Students can enter the class at any grade level and the teacher and volunteers will work alongside them in a bright, relaxed setting to help them achieve their GED.

**The Writers' Exchange** makes literacy exciting and accessible for inner-city kids through free mentoring and creative writing projects. All of our free after-school and summer programs take place at the Writers' Exchange home-base, located at 881 East Hastings Street.

**Aboriginal Front Door** Cultural Language program is for all cultures with a big emphasis on First Nation languages. We bring in elders from around Vancouver who know their language, to teach their language in a community setting. Those in attendance sit around a table and learn their language from the elders. Snacks and refreshments are offered. The program uses audio CDs. Also, when the individual languages are available, we make them accessible to the ones who show great interest in learning their language. A fair amount of our native languages is lost or dying. Bringing back our languages is bringing back our identity. Each session includes people from all cultures and walks of life and all ages including children.

**The Downtown East Education Centre** is a small storefront school offering tuition-free courses to eligible adults. We are part of the Vancouver School Board and offer courses in a variety of subject areas such as English, math and computers. These courses range from lower levels to high school graduation.

**The Simon Fraser Faculty of Education** supports adult and community literacy education by training undergraduate students in literacy education methodologies, offering supervised practicum placements in community organizations, carrying out research projects on issues related to adult literacy and learning, and collaborating with literacy organizations to offer workshops and events that support their work.

**SFU Community Education** “Working with communities to create positive social change through access to education”

Community engagement and capacity building are central to work in the Community Education Program. They work with diverse communities, partners, and faculty members to co-create and offer a wide spectrum of programming.

The goal is to help people strengthen their communities and establish new pathways to the university while maintaining academic excellence; and value diverse ways of learning.

Community Education brings together community-based experts and leading academics in our programs, projects, and workshops to focus on a number of topic areas, including the following: Aboriginal community leadership, Aboriginal health and wellness, Community capacity-building, Community leadership, Community health, Community literacy, Civic engagement, Dialogue, Facilitation skills, University transition skills, Workplace training and advanced English for newcomers.

### **Capilano University**

*Carnegie Learning Centre* is a community-based learning centre operated in partnership between the Community Development and Outreach Department of Capilano University and the Carnegie Community Centre. They offer one to one and small group tutoring in reading, writing, ELL, math and computer skills for community residents. They also assist community members with emergency literacy tasks such as resumes, job search computer skills, online welfare applications, reading and



understanding official letters and documents, etc. This program also does literacy outreach at Oppenheimer Park and at community events.

*The Strathcona Family Literacy program* has been working with immigrant parents and grandparents in the Strathcona community for eleven years. They offer a weekly class with language instruction, computer workshops, presentations by community groups and service providers, cooking demonstrations and field trips. Childcare is provided. The program is a partnership between Capilano University, Strathcona Community Centre and the Vancouver Public Library, Strathcona Branch.

*WISH Learning Centre* is open three nights a week at the WISH Drop In Centre, a resource centre for women working in the sex trade in the DTES. Capilano University and the WISH Drop In Centre Society have partnered in this outreach literacy and upgrading centre for over 14 years. The WISH Learning Centre provides support to women maintaining and developing their literacy and community participation skills and assists women to bridge to further educational opportunities.

### **University of British Columbia**

*The UBC Learning Exchange* was created to make mutually beneficial connections between the Downtown Eastside and UBC. Literacy programs at the Learning Exchange include ESL and computer workshops led by local residents, and a wide variety of volunteer and informal education opportunities.

*Humanities 101* offers three non-credit university-level courses at UBC for people living in the DTES and surrounding areas who have a lust for knowledge and education, especially those whose economic situation, academic experience, financial and social well-being are compromised. With respect to their low incomes, all students receive course materials, bus tickets, meal vouchers and childcare, as well as student cards which give access to UBC amenities. These courses offer Writing, Critical Thinking, Philosophy, Music, Art, Sociology, Popular Culture, First Nations Studies, Literature, History, Politics, Gender Studies, Law, Architecture and more.



Lifelong Learning  
**Empowerment**  
Food  
ESL  
Finances  
Employment  
Health  
Reading  
Literacy  
Relationships

Arithmetic  
Problem-solving  
Communication  
Life-skills  
Technology  
Risk-taking  
Writing  
Language preservation

Literacy and learning  
閱讀與學習

Aflbetismo y Aprendizaje

Biết chữ và học tập

Karunungan sa Pagbasa't

Pagsulat at Pagaaral

The Hastings North Literacy  
Plan is available online at:  
[www.kiwassa.ca](http://www.kiwassa.ca)  
[tillicum.vsb.bc.ca](http://tillicum.vsb.bc.ca)



Learning needs to be accessible



Learning needs to be adaptable



Learning needs to be inclusive of diverse needs, abilities and styles



Learning needs to be practical

### **Literacy Task Group**

Hastings North Literacy Steering Committee members for 2013-2014 are Sandy Dowling from the Kiwassa-Vancouver School Board Adult Education Program, Pauline Preston and Christopher Kevlahan from the Vancouver Public Library-Hastings Branch, Lucy Alderson from Carnegie Learning Centre and Capilano University, Melissa Cailleaux, Nancy McRitchie and Kahir Lalji from Kiwassa Neighbourhood House, Renee Gowdy from the Vancouver School Board-Tillicum Community Annex, Betsy Alkenbrack from Relevant Education of Adult Learners (REAL) -Capilano University and Jennifer Scott of Vancouver School Board-Templeton Community Schools.

The purpose of the Hastings North Literacy steering committee is to provide local organizations, community members and volunteers an opportunity to collaborate in promoting and enhancing the quality and effectiveness of literacy and learning programs in the community. The committee is supported and coordinated by the Hastings North Literacy Outreach Coordinator, and the group conducted four formal meetings this year. Committee members were also engaged through email, telephone and face to face phone communications. These ongoing communications enabled the LOC to keep the task group members informed and moving forward with the overall literacy plan and involved in the decisions involving funding applications, website development and provincial literacy issues/shifts.

Community organizations that provide literacy and learning related programs and services can apply to join the roundtable as long as they are within our catchment area as stated above. The following decisions and action items were made by the collective group using a consensus decision making approach:

- Develop an annual project budget
- Facilitate new membership request
- Fund allocations for Raise the Reader fund projects
- Provide direction to the Literacy Outreach Coordinator
- Provide approval of significant changes to literacy implementation plan

### **Community Context**

The Hasting North/Sunrise community is comprised of people of all ages, cultures and walks of life. Our community members are enthusiastic about sharing their knowledge and experience and they are also interested in enhancing their abilities and learning new and relevant skills.

Community members are involved in many different learning activities through a variety of formal and informal literacy activities including skill development workshops (life skills, employment skills, parenting, computer programs), community leadership and engagement training, community special events and celebrations, English as a Second Language (ESL) both group and individualized tutoring sessions, fitness and recreation, healthy living and financial literacy workshops, in addition to food security and gardening programs.

Our community has a strong commitment to creating and maintaining accessible and affordable learning programs and services. Partnerships amongst community organizations have strengthened and enriched program delivery and sharing of resources and services. Community organizations in the Hastings North region are excellent at working together to offer learning programs that are either barrier free or very low cost. Some of these literacy based programs are open to the general public, while others are designed to meet the needs of specific community groups/individuals.

Local programs use many different approaches to support learning in the community. They are creative and use a variety of tools to support the building of new skills while also fostering a sense of belonging, empowerment and confidence among group members. Many of the learning programs are created for intercultural and intergenerational groups and settings.



Preparing materials for a community event

### **Community Development and Literacy Collaboration**

The Hastings North Literacy roundtable group continued to solidify and strengthen the community partnerships and collaborations with the numerous service provider organizations. Due to staffing changes and organizational shifts, more efforts were made to connect and share information with new stakeholders in the community. This year, the main focus has been on maintaining the existing connections and branching out with more literacy focused awareness initiatives and programming. We have also made more efforts to identify the less formalized, but very valuable, literacy and learning opportunities that occur every day in many contexts and interactions. The Hastings North Literacy Plan remains a living document that is easy to access, understand and that continues to change as community services evolve to meet the changing needs and demographics of the neighbourhood. The literacy plan has been used as an easy to access resource for local service providers and interested community partners and members.

## Specific examples of our collaborative process

### *Building and improving on existing programs*

The Hastings North Roundtable group continued to recognize the importance of supporting both individual and group learning goals in safe, welcoming and healthy community-based settings. One example is the Seniors ESL program at Kiwassa Neighbourhood House. This well-established and well-attended program began as a traditional classroom structure, but has developed into small group sessions, one to one tutoring and ongoing computer literacy classes. The ESL classes are instructed by both staff and trained volunteers and the computer workshops are the result of a new partnership with volunteers from the Chinatown community. The Seniors recently received training and support in brainstorming and creating small neighbourhood projects funded through the Vancouver Foundation. They successfully drafted and submitted six small grant applications and will engage in project promotions, financial management and final reporting.



ESL small group session

### *Enhancing learning based partnerships*

The partnership between the Hastings North Literacy roundtable and Community Development and Outreach Department at Capilano University has continued to develop into a mutually supportive and innovative relationship between a postsecondary institution and a not for profit organization. Together we were able to help community members recognize learning opportunities and participate in a variety of literacy and educational experiences.

- The Hastings North Community Leadership workshop series relied heavily on the Capilano University's community literacy and development resource "Everything Present in the Seed." In a positive cross-referral process, some of the participants came from the Capilano University's *Community Capacity Building (CCB)* training and two of the Hastings North Leadership participants have applied to the fall CCB program.
- This spring, Kiwassa Neighbourhood House also hosted the ongoing professional stakeholders input sessions regarding the *Community Leadership & Social Change* diploma program being developed at the university. The first community information sessions will take place in June at Kiwassa and Cedar Cottage Neighbourhood Houses.



Community Leadership training participants

### *Expanding family literacy programming*

This year, the increased Raise the Reader funding allotment helped us strengthen our collaborations with three existing and established family literacy programs and to assist with the implementation of one new family literacy program and one new family literacy event:

- two six-week family literacy **Tales for Tots** sessions delivered by Vancouver Public Library-Hastings Branch in partnership with Kiwassa NH with focus on parents/caregivers and children under the age of 4. Literacy activities include songs, rhymes and storytelling circles.
- three family literacy support groups delivered to immigrant families through Tillicum, Hastings and A R Lord schools in partnership with Capilano University's **Relevant Education for Adult Learners (REAL)** program. This year, the REAL program continued the expansion of the roles of their Parent Leaders to serve as leadership, literacy and parenting/care-giving role models.
- three weekly family literacy sessions delivered by the **Warriors Against Violence** society. Aboriginal children and their parents/caregivers will create drums and then together they will learn and perform a variety of aboriginal songs and drumming patterns.
- (pilot) **Hastings Racetrack Learning Centre** will provide weekly opportunities for their adult participants to engage in literacy activities with their children and grandchildren and to learn how to stay connected to family members with written communications and storytelling.
- (pilot) **Camp Read A Lot** is a school based event hosted at Tillicum Annex elementary school. The gymnasium will be transformed into an outdoor setting with tents, fairy lights and simulated campfires. The students, parents and school staff will convene in different areas and share stories, literacy based activities and food.

### **Goals and Actions for current year**

#### 1. *Strengthen the capacity of network services providers*

Coordinate ongoing regular meetings of the Hastings North Literacy Roundtable for continued planning and implementation of the Hastings North Literacy Action Plan Organize two networking and professional development events for service providers and volunteers.

*We coordinated four roundtable meetings in September, December, February and April with solid representation, input and sharing from all of the stakeholder organizations. The fall networking event was held at the local branch library with over 20 participants*

*representing 12 different community service based organizations. The April 2014 networking event consisted of “Clear Language and Design” training session for a group made up of local service providers and volunteers. Hosted at the Templeton Pool complex, participants learned how to make ease of reading a top priority when writing and formatting agency communications.*

2. *Enhance awareness of literacy and learning activities*

Continue the development of a literacy web site and local directory of literacy resources and launch the website through a large celebratory event.

*We renewed and revised our working partnership with KAPOW Creative and engaged in planning meetings and consultations. Website details such as the name, specific categories, tracking details, social media, responsive design... were all shared, captured and finalized.*

3. *Build community capacity and volunteer opportunities*

Organize two workshops related to understanding learning styles and challenges, mental health, communications skills and financial literacy and develop three more book exchange kiosks in the Hastings North neighbourhood locations.

*In November, we offered an interactive training workshop for service providers and community volunteers on “Understanding Learning Styles to Enhance Communications. “Participant feedback was very positive regarding the specific information about learning strengths/preferences and improved communication skills. The book exchange kiosks plan has provided us with some opportunities to establish partnerships with community groups offering the same structure and process.*

4. *Maintain and enhance community partnerships*

Participate in Vancouver and regional meetings of literacy coordinators and organisations and continue to consult, communicate and liaise with Decoda Literacy Solutions.

*The Hastings North LOC participated in several LOC meetings and hosted a large LOC networking event in December at Kiwassa Neighbourhood House. Recognizing the limited hours and workload associated with the literacy coordination position, the LOC meetings have provided invaluable opportunities for sharing professional successes, challenges, ideas and resources. Decoda Literacy Solutions continue to provide funding stewardship, professional guidance and training opportunities and provincial and community based information.*

5. *Support program fundraising and sustainability*

Coordinate the distribution of Raise a Reader funds for community based family literacy projects and programs. Continue to explore more opportunities to embed a variety of literacy based activities into existing neighbourhood initiatives and organizations.

*The Raise A Reader funding continued to provide the roundtable group with a funding cornerstone that has remained sustainable and consistent (see above regarding the expansion of programming).*

## Indications of Success

The literacy task group continued to recognize the importance of the numerous non-formal literacy based activities, programs and services that happen in the homes, schools, community centres, community events, libraries and parks and gardens:

- Early childhood development and parenting programs
- After school activities and programs
- Alternative secondary education supports and programs
- Immigrant and refugee learning services
- Pre-employment and essential skills training
- Seniors ESL programs
- Community leadership and volunteer training opportunities
- Aboriginal-based learning
- Arts and culture focused activities
- Food security and gardening initiatives



Sharing community information at the Multicultural Community Kitchen Program



Personal Asset Mapping – Community Leadership



### *Non-formal Learner Success Story*

I learned about the Kiwassa programs from another childcare organization and I first came to Kiwassa to volunteer in their food programs, then the childcare program and finally at the front desk. I now work here and I am very proud to be a part of the Kiwassa NH family. I always consider this community as a place of great possibility and learning. You can train to be a better person and contributor to the community but improving your literacy skills and learning to understand others. This June, I will graduate from the Capilano University Community Capacity Building program.

### *Community Partnership Success Story*

The local VSB- Hastings Branch library has worked closely with Kiwassa Neighbourhood House to develop, host and deliver the “Tales for Tots” early literacy program. This family literacy program focuses on parent and child interactions, with stories, rhymes and songs providing a fun way to instil a love a learning. Many of the program participants are new immigrants to Canada who are learning English as an additional language and this program has helped them connect to additional community based programs and the materials and resources available at the local library.



Vancouver Public Library- community event displayed

### **Challenges faced by Learning Programs and Services of Hastings North**

**Engagement:** Community members want to communicate and share resources and although some agencies and organizations participate in regular network meetings and training sessions, we continue to move towards a more cohesive literacy focused network for all stakeholders to share best practices, experiences, resources and training opportunities.

**Barriers:** Reducing the socio-economic barriers for new community members who want to participate in learning and literacy programs. Addressing the numerous challenges related to outreach and supporting those individuals who really require and can benefit from the literacy supports.

**Funding:** There is an ongoing need for sustained and consistent funding to implement new literacy initiatives and support existing programs. Applying for funding is time-consuming, competitive, time consuming and tenuous and this negatively impacts the length, quality and continuity of direct program delivery.

## **For the Coming Year**

The overall purpose and goals of the Hastings North Literacy round table initiative are to identify literacy and learning programs and services in the community, improve communication amongst service providers and organizations and increase public awareness about learning and literacy in our catchment area. The passion and commitment within the original round table group helped create literacy plan vision that was directed towards literacy awareness and diverse learning opportunities. This approach continues to define the roundtable, and while many the core group members remain, we also strive to encourage new participants.

### *Enhance the Hastings North Literacy Plan and Task Group*

We plan to recruit and support new task members representing community-based organizations and continue to ensure that involvement in the literacy task group has been an ongoing learning experience for all the members. We will create more opportunities to share experiences, ideas and resources reflected the approaches towards all learning programming, both formal and inform valuing all participants' contributions and skills.

### *Finalize and Launch the Hastings North Literacy Website*

The literacy-focused website for the Hastings North area continues to be a top priority and we will continue to refine the scope of the project, populate the website with up-to-date information on local literacy services, activities and events, conduct specific user focus groups and engage in effective website marketing strategies.

### *Strengthening the literacy capacity of community members*

We will continue to facilitate regular meetings of the Hastings North roundtable group for the continued planning and implementation of our literacy plan. We will coordinate and organize two networking and professional development events for service and front line service providers, volunteers and community members at various locations in the Fall 2014 and Spring 2015.

We plan to meet our goals through the continued and active participation, networking opportunities and collective experience within the Hastings North round table committee. The Literacy Outreach Coordinator will continue to receive support and guidance from the round table committee members, Decoda Literacy Solutions and the collective LOCs. Additional community educators, facilitators and volunteers will be accessed and hired to deliver specific workshops and ongoing literacy activities. The development of a website internship position will provide support to the ongoing website development, content population and some initial maintenance duties.

## Kensington Cedar Cottage

### Literacy Task Group

The KCC Literacy Task group is currently made up of six organizations:

- Donna Chang, Executive Director and Steward rep ***Cedar Cottage Neighbourhood House***
- Kelly Woods, Director of Operations and Community Programs, ***Cedar Cottage Neighbourhood House***
- Yukiko Tosa, Branch Head, ***Kensington Public Library***
- Lupita Boris, Manager of Early Learning Programs, ***Pacific Immigrant Resources Society***
- Lauren McGuire Woods, Coordinator, ***Cedar Cottage Food Security Network***
- Jan Weiten, Department Head, Basic Education ***Vancouver Community College***
- Chris Diplock, Lead Researcher, ***Vancouver Sharing Project***
- Sarah Maitland, Co-Director, ***Writers' Exchange***

\*\*Vancouver School Board was being represented by Marian Broadbent, Principal of Laura Secord Elementary School, until she was transferred to a school in another area in September 2013.

The Task Group meets bi-monthly to share programming updates and organize around partnerships, collaborative projects and funding. The role of the LOC is to bring together the members and ensure there is ongoing communication and continuing opportunities for collaboration. Task group members in turn are strongly encouraged to share information and look for literacy collaboration opportunities among membership and outside the task group membership.

### Community Context

The Vancouver-KCC community is 47, 470 people strong represented by a large Chinese, Vietnamese, Latino, Filipino, Aboriginal and working-class communities. 24,310 people in our community are immigrants. 7% of residents are recent immigrants, primarily from Eastern and Southeast Asia. Poverty, low literacy and more than 50% of the community who are visible minority newcomers continue to categorize our neighbourhoods.

A major change impacting literacy work in the neighbourhood is the shift in settlement funding through CIC. Two task group member organizations, Cedar Cottage Neighbourhood House and Pacific Immigrant Resources Society were not successful in applying for funding. New partnerships will need to be formed, ensuring those who are funded to do settlement work in the Kensington-Cedar Cottage community, are linked to the literacy work in the community. This is necessary to bridge residents, assist in identifying gaps and collaborating with the work of the task group.

New sites of literacy learning opportunities will be opening during 2014. Gladstone Secondary School will be opening an Adult Learning Centre in the high school, creating a new site for adult literacy education. The Cedar Cottage Food Security Network was successful in applying for Park Board land to create a new 20-plot community garden in Kings Crest Park.

**Community Development and Literacy Collaborations**

This year saw intense collaboration between the Kensington Public Library and the Cedar Cottage Food Security Network. Through Raise-a-Reader funds and a clear focus on bridging food literacy and traditional reading and writing literacy they were able to develop:

- The first seed library based in a Public Library in Vancouver where local residents can access a great variety of seeds for free
- Host a free monthly workshop series on caring for gardens at the Kensington Public Library with 30+ participants
- Successfully apply for Park Board space for King Crest Community Garden across the street from Kensington Public Library creating a hands on space for future workshops.

**Goals and Actions**

<b>Priorities, goals or objectives</b>	<b>Action taken to reach</b>	<b>Participating Organizations</b>
<i>Make Connections</i>	<p>Action orientated collaborations formed resulting in concrete literacy programming:</p> <p>-A Story Time program for 0-5 years, delivered for 10 weeks for 19 multicultural families</p> <p>-Creation of Seed Library, Garden Workshop series and new Community Garden based out of the Kensington Public Library</p> <p>-Participation of community members in gathering data on the Kensington Cedar Cottage sharing economy</p> <p>-The early learning Physical Literacy project successfully finished this project of embedding physical literacy in local childcare and preschools through staff training and the availability of gym space for preschools and</p>	<p><i>Pacific Immigrant Resources Society and Cedar Cottage Neighbourhood House</i></p> <p><i>Kensington Public Library and Cedar Cottage Food Security Network</i></p> <p><i>The Sharing Project and Cedar Cottage Neighbourhood House</i></p> <p><i>Cedar Cottage Neighbourhood House, Trout Lake Community Centre, Boat Daycare and Learning Tree</i></p>

	<p>daycares through Trout Lake Community Centre</p> <p>-Literacy Asset Mapping was a youth project based out of the Neighbourhood House during summer 2013 where youth went into the community to gather information on a range of local literacy resources. The end product was the creation of the first draft of the Literacy Resource Map, a continuing project for Fall 2014</p>	<p><i>Daycare</i></p> <p><i>Cedar Cottage Neighbourhood House</i></p>
<p><i>Nurture Culture and Languages</i></p>	<p>In a community as diverse as Kensington Cedar Cottage being able to create environments that support and nurture this diversity is seen as crucial for our literacy work:</p> <p>-King Crest Garden is allocating space for Community Organizations, e.g. the CCNH box has been identified as a space for the refugee women of Burma to plant their traditional foods</p> <p>-The monthly Family “Do-It-Yourself” Night at CCNH, is a venue for residents to share how to make cultural foods, arts and games</p>	<p><i>Cedar Cottage Food Security Network and Cedar Cottage Neighbourhood House</i></p> <p><i>Cedar Cottage Neighbourhood House</i></p>
<p><i>Celebrate and share community skills and knowledge</i></p>	<p>Celebration plays a huge role in learning and building community:</p> <p>-Seedy Saturday monthly workshops are bringing together residents to share seeds and knowledge</p> <p>-Monthly Family “DIY” Nights provide a venue for neighbours to share their skills with one another and celebrate community knowledge</p>	<p><i>Kensington Public Library and Cedar Cottage Food Security Network</i></p> <p><i>Cedar Cottage Neighbourhood House</i></p>

## **Adjustments**

The KCC Task Group greatly benefited and was influenced by the leadership of Ms. Marian Broadbent, Principal of Laura Secord Elementary. She championed the idea of creating a “community literacy hub for learning,” inside a school. From the inception, Marion was involved and was a significant leader in the development of the KCC Literacy Project.

In 2013, Marion Broadbent left Laura Secord Elementary to be the Principal at Kerrisdale Elementary. This change left a considerable leadership gap to fill. While there was some interest from school personnel to be on the task group, at this time, there was and continues to be no champion to continue the work to create school and community literacy hubs.

This change has created an adjustment of the direction of the KCC Task Group workplan.

## **Indications of Success**

The task group identifies the following as indicators of success in the area of literacy work:

- Diverse engagement of residents
- Strong collaboration relationships leading to action
- Creation of creative and unique answers to literacy based issues in the community

Using these criteria we had numerous successes over the past year.

“Seedy Saturdays” has been regularly bringing residents together in the Public Library Space to build on the Seed Library and share skills and knowledge. The Food Security Network and the Library has been actively working to find key residents to act as workshop leaders and has brought in the local seed collective members to share their knowledge. The library has also been successful in engaging the local grocery store Pricesmart to support Food Literacy programming and see this partnership continuing.

The monthly Family “DIY” Nights at Cedar Cottage Neighbourhood House has been a huge success in bringing the community together and engaging the community in learning. The March gardening-themed session had over 50 participants representing 18 different cultures. Responses of families as to why they are interested in an event like this include “I love being able to learn something new and different with my children,” and “sitting down for a big home cooked meal and getting to know my neighbours and their culture is such a gift in this community.” The Neighbourhood House is looking forward to continuing this night into the summers working with a parent planning committee.

The Saturday English Conversation Class came from the recognition that many women with small children are not able to attend English classes during the week. By offering a class Saturday for residents, the class is successfully reaching out to residents who face multiple barriers to attending weekly classes such as; childcare, Canadian status, hours classes are offered, balancing the need to work etc. “Yu”, a regular student in the class, came from China to help her family look after her grandchildren. “Yu” expressed interest in learning English for

many years but due to English class eligibility requirement and the need to help her family she was not able to attend. Now with the Saturday class that being free, offering childcare and only needing to be a resident of the community, Yu is able to navigate and experience community in new ways. She has spoken about feeling safer with her grandchildren and more confident in Canada.

**Challenges**

a) What are the difficulties?	b) What would help?
Sustainable funding to continue offering key literacy programming and activities.	-Continuing advocacy at the provincial and federal level to fund community literacy.  -Increasing collaboration to apply for joint funding.
Advocating for literacy as a priority area to bring key stakeholders in the community together.	-It is a continuing struggle to bring key stakeholders, like VSB, to the task group table. Advocating community literacy collaboration to be a priority for schools is important. A great deal of hours have been put into outreaching to local area schools while trying to simultaneously be aware of their literacy initiatives, but communication is limited.  -A clear and concise messaging that all LOCs use across Vancouver to engage potential stakeholders.
Outreaching to those with low literacy and social isolation.	-Support in translation of material  -Training and information on outreaching to communities with low traditional literacy skills in reading and writing/creating print material in clear and concise language.

**For the Coming Year**

New opportunities, challenges or issues in community	How will you respond to those?
The restructuring of Settlement Funding	-Inviting organizations working in the area

through CIC, is a new challenge, to build new relationships with managers and front line workers, who are now often the first contact with families with literacy challenges and/or living in social isolation in the community.	to join the Task Group or find opportunities to collaborate and information share.  -Increasing the visibility of the work and goals of task group in the community.
The opening of the Gladstone Adult Learning Centre is seen as a new opportunity to work increase work in the area of Adult literacy and collaborate to create new opportunities	-Build connections with the Adult Learning Staff team in relation to the Task Group
The Task group recognizes that the area of Food Literacy is an area of strength as it becomes embedded in organizations and in the community, residents hold knowledge and experience and there are opportunities to grow our successes.	-Embed the work of the Task Group inside the shift of the Neighbourhood House towards a Community Food Organization model  - Support Task group members to build relationships and collaboration opportunities outside the direct work of the Task group

Goals, priorities or objectives for the coming year	What actions are planned against those goals?
Information Sharing among organizations and residents will be a focus area of the work to develop tools and mechanisms for outreach and opportunities	-Development of a Literacy Resource Map for residents and service providers  -Development of a monthly service provider eNews update  -Bimonthly Task Group meetings, providing literacy stakeholders opportunities to share information about what is happening in the community. What is creating challenges and opportunities for literacy work?
The Task Group sees the greatest strength of the group is collaboration. It increases the ability to deepen our literacy work,	-Outreach to organizations about the work of the Task group



<p>broaden our outreach and ensure literacy is a priority. Increasing collaboration opportunities among group members and other community groups is another key area of work.</p>	<p>-Identify new funding streams that create opportunity for joint programming and activities</p> <p>-Develop a service providers communication tool, eNews etc.</p>
<p>Food Literacy has been recognized as an area of strength and the task group is prepared to further embed this as an area of work.</p>	<p>-Continuing support of Seedy Saturday workshop series and utilizing the library and new community garden space as sites of literacy learning.</p> <p>-Engaging food-based organizations and community groups on the topic of food literacy.</p>

What is required to meet these three goals for the coming year is continuing the momentum of the task group. This is supported by the ongoing funding of the LOC with enough hours per week, Raise-a-Reader funds and ongoing opportunities through Decoda.

It requires clear and concise messaging about the wide range of opportunities through literacy work. It will also require the LOC and task group members to reach out to literacy stakeholders in the community and to bring together an increasing and diverse group of people under the broad banner of literacy work. It requires the VSB promoting the importance of connecting to the task group among local schools.

The indicators listed for the previous year of:

- Diverse engagement of residents
- Strong collaboration relationships leading to action
- Creation of creative and unique answers to literacy based issues in the community

These will remain our indicators of success. We will utilize varying methods and means to continue to gather feedback and input from local residents to ensure our literacy work remains relevant, timely and responsive to the Kensington Cedar Cottage community.

## Vancouver's Westside (Kitsilano)

### Literacy Task Group

Emily Palmer	Kitsilano Neighbourhood House	Literacy Outreach Coordinator; Chair of Westside Newcomers Hub
Catherine Leach	Kitsilano Neighbourhood House - Executive Director	Project Steward
Kits Public Library Staff Member	Vancouver Public Library	Westside Newcomers Hub Member
Esaine Mo	Vancouver School Board- Settlement Workers in Schools	Westside Newcomers Hub Member
Luke Liang/ Helen Su/ Suddhodan Baidya	SUCCESS	Westside Newcomers Hub Member
Qiuning Wang/ Stephanie Nesbitt	Old Barn Community Centre	Westside Newcomers Hub Member
Gabriella Scali	UBC Campus & Community Planning	Westside Newcomers Hub Member
Daisy Au, Khim Tan & Darae Lee	MOSAIC	Westside Newcomers Hub Member
Lupita Boris	Pacific Immigrant Resources Society	Westside Newcomers Hub

The Literacy Outreach Coordinator works with both the Westside Newcomers Hub & other literacy partners to move forward the work of the literacy plan. The Literacy Outreach coordinator connects regularly with the Project Steward and members of the Literacy Task Force (Westside Family Place & Kitsilano Public Library) who were part of the plan development & implementation.

The Westside Newcomers Hub helps to direct actions to support language literacy programs and enhance current literacy programs through collaborative projects and information exchange.

### Community Context

The Westside of Vancouver is a large geographic area and covers neighbourhoods such as Kitsilano, West Point Grey, Dunbar, Arbutus Ridge and UBC. UBC and Arbutus Ridge continue to see an increase in the number of newcomers with English as an additional language.

### Community Development and Literacy Collaboration

An important collaboration this year is the 'Westside Orientations Project', involving Kits House, SUCCESS, MOSAIC, Old Barn Community Centre and Settlement Workers in Schools. This project aims to build capacity of staff & volunteers supporting English Language learners and connect English Language learners to local organizations.

### **Goals and actions for the current year**

The Literacy Outreach coordinator and Westside Newcomers Hub have addressed the following goal areas in the last year.

Goal 1: To engage residents in supporting literacy programs through the recruitment, training and support of volunteers.

Goal 2: To support English language literacy programs for those in greatest need.

Goal 3: To support and enhance current literacy programs and projects through collaboration with partners, sustainability planning and awareness building.

#### **Actions taken on the goal areas this year:**

#### **Goal 1: To engage residents in supporting literacy programs through the recruitment, training and support of volunteers.**

We continued the Welcoming Neighbours Program which trains volunteers to run English Conversation Circles. This project involves Kits House, Kits Public Library and Church from the Hollywood. 3 new volunteers were trained.

#### **Goal 2: To support English language literacy programs for those in the greatest need.**

Kits House, Kits Public Library and Church from the Hollywood ran 15 volunteer-led conversation circles.

#### **Goal 3: To support and enhance current literacy programs and projects through collaboration with partners, sustainability planning and awareness building.**

SUCCESS, MOSAIC, Old Barn Community Centre and Settlement Workers in Schools partnered on the Westside Orientations Project. This projects aims to build capacity of staff and volunteers that support English Language Learners.

### **Indications of Success**

A monitoring framework was used to ensure goals and outcomes were met in relation to the community goals set in the literacy plan.

For example,

For the goal of supporting English language literacy programs there are the following success Statements: We will know we have been successful when –

- English Conversation Circles are developed and sustained over a period of two years and serve newcomer and immigrant populations in our community.
- English Conversation Circles are supported by volunteers who have been trained in literacy.

This year's indicators of success:

- 15 volunteer-led English Conversation Circles (5-10 weeks duration) were delivered this year. ECCs have been running since 2011.
- 65 newcomer participants & volunteers were involved in socials, conversation circles & training sessions.

### **Challenges**

This year, with the transition of settlement funding from the provincial to the federal government, there were a lot of unknowns about the future of funding for specific organizations. With the changes in funding, limits to client eligibility mean that many newcomers on the Westside are ineligible for settlement and language services. In addition, limited hours for the Literacy Outreach Coordinator means opportunities for program enhancements and new project coordination are limited.

Continued funding at the provincial level for both neighbourhood and regional literacy coordination would help address the challenges.

### **For the coming year**

New challenges, or issues in the community.

As mentioned above, changes in settlement funding impact who is eligible for service. The Westside Newcomers Hub will connect regularly to discuss impacts and work together to address gaps in service.

The following areas are priorities for the upcoming year:

- Working with the Westside Newcomers Hub to collaborate across organizations and creatively respond to community needs. Especially to respond to impacts in funding changes.
- Work with partners on the Westside Orientations Projects to build capacity of staff & volunteers supporting English Language learners and connect English Language learners to local organizations.

To support the upcoming goals the following are need:

- Ongoing funding for Literacy Outreach Coordination
- Commitment & openness of Westside and Immigrant service providers to collaborate to serve emerging needs
- Continued volunteer support

A monitoring framework has been developed which measures indicators of success towards the above goals.

## Marpole

### Literacy Task Group

Organizations/persons taking part in the Marpole Literacy Task Group are as follows:

- Historic Joy Kogawa House
- Marpole Business Improvement Association (Marpole Online)
- Marpole Literacy Outreach Coordinator
- Marpole Oakridge Community Centre
- Marpole Oakridge Family Place
- Marpole Place Neighbourhood House
- S.U.C.C.E.S.S
- Taiwanese Canadian Cultural Society
- Vancity - Marpole Community Branch
- Vancouver Community College
- Vancouver Public Library – Marpole and Oakridge Branches
- Vancouver School Board – Marpole Schools (David Lloyd George, Sir Wilfred Laurier and Sir Wilfred Laurier Annex)
- Work BC - Main Street Centre

The Task Group meets three times each year. During 2013/14, however, the Task Group did not meet for several reasons. The Literacy Outreach Coordinator was away for two and a half months and shortly after her return the Marpole Oakridge Family Place/Marpole Neighbourhood house premises suffered a flood and the premises were closed down until further notice. In addition, Task Group members had heavy commitments and some Task Group members were undergoing organizational restructuring so the meetings were not scheduled at alternative venues. The strength of literacy related community relationships in Marpole is clear from the fact that the absence of meetings did not stop communication and collaboration between Marpole organizations. Regular Task Group meetings will resume in 2014/15. In addition to regular meetings, the Literacy Outreach Coordinator makes direct contact in person or by phone or email with Task Group participants during the year and also participates in the meetings of all the Literacy Outreach Coordinators in Vancouver, which meetings also include the Coordinators from Burnaby, Maple Ridge and other surrounding areas. A Decoda representative usually attends these meetings.

## **Community Context**

A new Community Plan has just been approved for Marpole. The plan can be found at <http://vancouver.ca/files/cov/marpole-parks-public-space.pdf> and includes comprehensive and up to date information about the neighbourhood of Marpole.

There have been significant changes in Marpole during this reporting year. The Marpole Community Plan was passed by Vancouver City Hall in May 2014, after extensive community consultation. The plan outlines developments that will change the face of Marpole, making it a gateway to Vancouver from YVR airport and a hub of development. Over the past six months huge strides in construction have already changed the skyline of Marpole. Apartments on Granville Street are completed and shortly ready for rent, the beautiful new Marpole Safeway on Granville has opened and work is going forward fast at the development of new apartment towers and infrastructure at the site close to Marine Drive Canada Line Station. A Work BC office/centre relocated from Oak and 41<sup>st</sup> to Marpole on Cambie and 59<sup>th</sup> – supplementing the smaller satellite office operating off Main Street and providing more workplace related literacy on site in Marpole. A flood suffered by the Marpole Oakridge Family Place and Marpole Neighbourhood House – based together in the Old Firehouse on West 70<sup>th</sup> and Hudson, led to the complete closure of the building and displacement of the Marpole Oakridge Family Place. St. Augustines’ Anglican Church has housed the Neighbourhood House where a sample of programming has resumed for Marpole’s adults and seniors. David Lloyd George Elementary has kindly allowed the Marpole Oakridge Family Place – which serves families with children aged 0-6, to set up a temporary presence in their lunchroom. This has allowed the Family Place to continue to offer a home for families. However, due to space and schedule restrictions, all regular programming has ceased and attendance has dropped dramatically. This has deeply affected literacy provision in Marpole, with early years programming being most seriously affected. Families have lost 20 hours of weekly programming. All the Raise- A- Reader funded programs have been placed on hold. The Executive Director of Marpole Oakridge Family Place is currently urgently seeking a suitable new venue. We look forward to resuming full operations as soon as possible.

## **Community Development and Literacy Collaboration**

- This year, despite the temporary loss of the Marpole Oakridge Family Place / Marpole Neighbourhood House literacy hub, a community wide collaboration is under way in Marpole. The Marpole Literacy Outreach Coordinator and Marpole Oakridge Family Place obtained a small grant from Citizenship and Immigration Canada. The grant is to promote an understanding of Multiculturalism in Marpole. The Literacy Outreach Coordinator and a local artist have collaborated to deliver this grant. In June 2014 ten key Marpole organizations will come together to present Marpole Multicultural Conversations, “Tea and Talking”, a series of 12 sessions in which Marpole residents of every culture, language, age, background, lifestyle and ability will have the opportunity to talk about their views of multiculturalism through facilitated dialogue sessions. The sessions include an artistic expression project – drawing and

writing on mugs with ceramic markers to express their ideas about multiculturalism. In July the completed mugs will be presented to the Marpole community in the form of a photographic exhibition at the annual Marpole Summer Fest day which is organized by the Marpole BIA. Organisations taking part and hosting sessions on their premises are: Historic Joy Kogawa House, Marpole Oakridge Community Centre, Marpole Oakridge Family Place, Marpole Place Neighbourhood House, the Taiwanese Canadian Cultural Society, Vancity Marpole Community Branch, Vancouver Public Library – Marpole and Oakridge Branches, Vancouver School Board’s Sir Wilfred Laurier Elementary, Sir Wilfred Laurier Annex and Work BC Main Street. The Musqueam have been invited to open each session – acknowledging that this work is taking place on Musqueam land. They have also been invited to open the exhibition at Marpole Summer Fest day. In addition, it is highly likely that a Tea and Talking session will be held on the Musqueam Band land. The participating organizations will meet for a pilot Partners session before the project begins. The planned outcome of the project is a Marpole Wide collaboration resulting in a permanent exhibition of photographs that will belong to the community of Marpole and be available to all Marpole community organizations to display. The exhibition will help keep discussions and debate about multiculturalism alive and relevant in Marpole.

- Grandparents Learn and Lead is a collaboration between the Family Support Worker of Marpole Oakridge Family Place and the Marpole Literacy Outreach Coordinator. It runs weekly, drawing a group of 14 grandparents. The focus of the group is to learn English, life skills, integrate into Canadian society and build community. This group is highly dynamic and successful. Please see the photographic report at the end of this report.
- The Marpole Literacy Outreach Coordinator connects with various city wide organizations in order to be able to fully inform Marpole residents of services. Meetings attended include the BC Association of Community Response Networks for seniors at risk and City of Vancouver meetings concerning Marpole and the (recently approved) Marpole Community Plan. The Marpole Literacy Outreach Coordinator also spoke at the City hearing to support approval of the new site for Marpole Oakridge Family Place just off Marine Drive and Cambie Street – to be ready in a few years.

### **Goals and Actions for the Past Year**

Priorities addressed this year were Mental Health Literacy, Seniors Literacy and Community Building. As always there was a focus on promoting awareness of early year’s literacy programming in Marpole, mostly funded by Raise-A-Reader. There was continued support of literacy initiatives at Marpole schools who engaged with the Literacy Outreach Coordinator. There was a significant focus on the Grandparents Learn and Lead group in Marpole to grow the group in size and effectiveness.

Actions taken to reach the priorities addressed this year were as follows: The Literacy Outreach Coordinator reached out to key community leaders in the Punjabi and Chinese communities, through PICS (Progressive Intercultural Community Services) to impart information about resources of Kelty Mental Health Centre. Marpole Oakridge Family Place and the Marpole Literacy Outreach Coordinator coordinated with Family Services of Greater Vancouver to introduce FSGV curriculum for the grandparents and further new and relevant programming was introduced after discussion with the Grandparents Learn and Lead group participants. The Literacy Outreach Coordinator continued to support and promote Raise- A- Reader programming for early years literacy at Marpole Oakridge Family Place. This work has been temporarily interrupted due to the flood at the premises. The Literacy Outreach Coordinator continued to support literacy events on Marpole school calendars.

No adjustments were made to the Marpole Literacy Plan. It remains relevant as it stands. As in the past few years, more outreach is needed to isolated community members especially in the apartments around Marpole and in the new apartments available since the area was upgraded. A formal Resource Guide remains to be completed. The information for it is available and in use but has not been compiled into one resource. For now, there are links on the Marpole Oakridge Family Place website. Any unfinished work is due to the limited hours of the Marpole Literacy Outreach Coordinator.

### **Indications of Success**

- Organizations in Marpole responded to the call from the Literacy Outreach Coordinator to participate in Marpole Multicultural Conversations/Tea and Talking project (see Section 3 (a) of this report) almost immediately. Within a week of announcing the project, ten major Marpole organizations signed up for sessions, had offered their premises and were arranging to customize their session for their own members or contacts. This is an indication of how committed and focused Marpole literacy organizations are and also of their shared goals for the community.
- Grandparents Learn and Lead group grew to between 12 and 14 participants per each session. The group also began to take on a dynamic atmosphere, with grandparents enthusiastically learning together and stronger learners offering to support weaker ones. A new grandparent initiated a dance group which grandparents are hoping to formalize and do a performance at Marpole Summer Fest in July. In addition, grandparents began to socialize outside of the group, regularly visiting each other and going out to eat together.
- Mental Health Literacy, traditionally a tough area of work in Marpole as most people are reluctant to talk about mental health issues, met with greater success this year with community leaders were supportive of the initiative. PICS (Progressive Intercultural Community Services) on Main Street's leadership was particularly helpful by giving key insights and advice about how



this particular outreach might meet with success in the Punjabi community of Marpole. Ideas from this discussion are being considered as action in this area is planned for the year to come.

- Another success to highlight is the effectiveness of the support from Decoda Literacy Solutions. The support to Literacy Outreach Coordinators is always helpful but this year the Literacy Conference was an example of excellence, with grass roots issues being addressed in highly practical ways, for example, Work Place Literacy and Mental Health Literacy among other topics. The Marpole Literacy Outreach Coordinator found the conference and the web site forums to be hands on helpful for professional development and practical guidance this year.

### **Challenges**

- Main challenges remain the shortage of sustainable funding. Decoda has worked very hard this year to address this and this is much appreciated. Sustainable funding allows ongoing community building while irregular funding means that mainly short term projects with no ongoing impact have to be substituted. An example is the case of the successful and well attended weekly Grandparents Learn and Lead program where the program has become dynamic and there would be a big gap and an outcry if it was not to continue. Participants already supplement the program by paying their way for out trips and in-kind resources are used.
- Related also to funding is the amount of hours Literacy Outreach Coordinators have. Literacy Outreach Coordinators need more time to run programs, outreach and to support community initiatives. They also need more time to undertake advocacy and to compile reports and newsletters to reach people, report on their work and create visibility and impact.
- Literacy Outreach Coordinators also collectively feel that the Stewards of the Literacy funds should have greater involvement in meetings and discussions.
- In Marpole, suitable spaces for literacy work is always an issue. The flood at Marpole Place took away the key venue for the neighbourhood but the venue was already in trouble with the building having a bad odour and clearly being full of mold and allergens. In addition the building was limited in accommodation, with the Family Place constantly short of suitable space for programming. Programs are often run with the use of in-kind resources and these are now also unavailable, bringing home the strong reliance on these resources.

### **What would help**

- Assured annual funding would allow for long term planning, which is the kind of planning that provides for visible sustainable outcomes. Irregular funding tends to result in short term work. Sustained work will have the best outcome for the type of needs Marpole has.

- The Marpole Literacy Outreach Coordinator has fifteen hours per week. More hours would allow for more work to more fully meet the needs of the community, have time for grant writing and advocacy and to take greater part in community discussions and events.
- The Literacy Outreach Coordinator already enjoys a great deal of support from the Marpole Steward, the Executive Director of Marpole Oakridge Family Place. This is very important for support of the Literacy Outreach Coordinator as, like many other Literacy Outreach Coordinators, the Marpole Literacy Outreach Coordinator works alone in the role. Support from the Steward helps the Literacy Outreach Coordinator by providing a sounding board for ideas and support in planning and administration.
- Involvement of Literacy Outreach Coordinators in more planning and problem solving so Literacy Outreach Coordinators can work together to build their own capacity. The meetings with other L.O.C's and with the VSB team and Decoda are always very helpful.
- New premises are being sought for Marpole Oakridge Family Place in the interim before the move in a few years' time to the new premises opposite the Marine Drive Canada Line (outlined in the newly approved Marpole plan). The new premises is anticipated with excitement and will solve the space problems Marpole Literacy currently experiences.

### **For the Coming Year**

- The main new opportunities expected this year are related to an expected change in demographics in Marpole. New people, new immigrants and new families moving in to inhabit the many new apartments now available in Marpole on Granville Street and coming up at Marine Drive Canada Line Station will boost and change the Marpole population. It will be important to find out who these newcomers are and what they need and want. This will be time consuming and challenging, requiring research and footwork. The Marpole Literacy Outreach Coordinator will be working on planning communications and events to reach these new residents. At the same time there are still residents in Marpole apartments who have not been reached so they must be included in this outreach. Because of limited hours, the outreach will have to be limited but impactful. This response is currently in the planning and consultation phase and the Literacy Outreach Coordinator will be seeking input from Marpole Literacy Task Group members in the near future.
- Marpole Literacy will continue in promotion of Mental Health resources to community and literacy leaders, support of seniors through the Grandparents Learn and Lead program, being an information resource and a source of information referral to all residents through word of mouth and visibility, promotion of early years' literacy, connecting youth and adults in Marpole to the two Work BC offices in Marpole, connecting teens to the Historic Joy Kogawa House programming, and encouraging the Musqueam band to participate in Marpole Literacy activities. There will also be greater attention paid to raising the profile of literacy in Marpole through providing information on the Marpole Oakridge Family Place website, photographic news flashes, attendance at community events wherever possible,

and information via social media , particularly Facebook. Regular community outreach is also made possible by the Vancity Marpole branch which hosts a table of the Marpole Literacy Outreach Coordinator – among other community partners - in the foyer of the bank every few months. This outreach is also on the cards.

- What is needed to ensure that the goals are met? Continued funding for sustained or increased hours and continued support from Decoda Literacy Solutions and the Marpole Literacy steward is all that is needed for the above goals to be met.
- How will the success of actions taken to address goals be measured? Success will be measured through statistics regarding attendance at programs, written and verbal feedback from participants in their own words and through photographs depicting what is happening for residents in Marpole. In addition, specific measurable targets will be identified for each activity described in section b) above, with the help of the input from the Marpole Literacy Task Group.

**The Marpole Grandparents Learn and Lead Group (an example of how reporting will be done).**

The group is facilitated by Andrea Krombein (Literacy Outreach Coordinator for Marpole) and Carol Chu (Family Support worker for Marpole Oakridge Family Place)

Permission was obtained from all participants for their photographs to be taken.

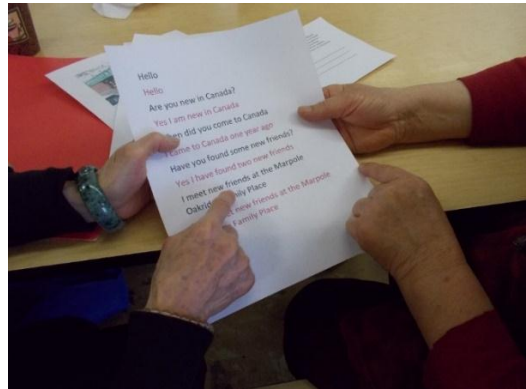
Below: Grandparents Learn and Lead: the weekly dance class initiated and led by our newest Grandparent (in the pink sweater).



Below: Grandparents Learn and Lead: Learning English together each week.



Below: Grandparents Learn and Lead: Learning English together each week.



Left: Grandparents Learn and Lead participants have developed a culture of learning together. Participants with stronger skills automatically help participants who are struggling. They sound out words together and perform charades to make concepts clearer. There is a lot of humour and laughter!

Below: Grandparents Learn and Lead: Cooking and eating together. Participants bring food each week and teach each other the recipes. Now and again they go out to eat together at a Marpole restaurant.



Left: Grandparents Learn and Lead: Out on the YVR airport field trip (on one of the coldest days) the camaraderie and growing closeness of the group was wonderful to see!



Left: Grandparents Learn and Lead: An English lesson at Starbucks in Marpole – we learned the vocabulary for ordering tea and coffee – among other words – and also enjoyed a walk through the neighbourhood to get here.



Left: Grandparents Learn and Lead: A group photograph of our regular participants during our visit to Starbucks

## **Mount Pleasant**

### **Literacy Task Group**

Members of the Task Group are:

- Vancouver Community College (VCC)
- Frontier College
- Vancouver Native Healthy Society (as Aboriginal Child and Family Services Society)
- Mount Pleasant Family Center
- Pacific Immigrant Resources Society
- Little Mountain Neighbourhood House
- Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood House
- Vancouver Society of Storytelling
- Mount Pleasant Community Center
- Native Education College
- Vancouver School Board (VSB), Sir Charles Tupper Community School Coordinator
- Langara Community College, Continuing Education

During the past year the literacy task group in Mount Pleasant consisted of about 10 community educators and programmers who represent a range of local community/ educational organizations delivering literacy programs in Mount Pleasant.

Mount Pleasant task group participants share information and resources and look into opportunities for collaboration in the development and delivery of literacy programming.

The meetings served as a platform for members to provide oral accounts on the literacy work they are doing within their agency and help inform the 2013-2014 Community Literacy Plan.

Partners attending these meetings are committed to addressing and lessening the impact of illiteracy in our community, or lack of access to literacy program. Furthermore, task group participants have great disposition to problem solving, and creative asset building in order to work in how we can best utilize or leverage current resources.

### **Community Context**

Mount Pleasant is a dynamic and diverse community, with increasing gaps in the social and economic abilities of long term residents and newcomer immigrant populations on one hand, and a rapid process of gentrification on the other hand. In large parts of the community, housing prices and rents are increasing together with private housing development; and therefore, affordable housing for low income families is becoming scarce. While the average income in the Neighbourhood increased (according to Census 2006 data), areas in Mount Pleasant, such as the north east and south east areas bordering the communities of Grandview Woodlands and Kensington-Cedar Cottage, continue to have large numbers of low income families.

In our planning process this past winter 2014, we identified our ongoing focus on programming for newcomer immigrant families, Aboriginal and long term residents. Currently, new partnerships are being explored in order to address the need for greater cohesion in addressing family literacy gaps and in sharing resources such as community space.

**Community Development and Literacy Collaboration**

Mount Pleasant’s success in supporting literacy and the task group is due to the strong relationships that have been built over the year among the various local organizations.

For example in the process of decision making about the allocation of the Raise-A-Readers program funding 7 different program will be enhanced and made possible due to collaborative work. In the process of decision making all partners were motivated and willing to share resources, staff time, space and ideas in order to make programs happen and address any gap in programming in Mount Pleasant. The programs funded ranges from family literacy programs in addressing food, emotional and physical literacy challenges families face to also supporting the engage of adult in civic and community base education programming.

A highlight have been a program to support physical literacy sponsored by Success by 6 in which Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood House, Little Mountain Neighbourhood House, Vancouver Native Health among other partners have come together in order to create a program that integrates activities for families in an outdoor setting to promote increased movement, musicality and spoken word.

A second program that now will be turn into a yearly event is the Mount Pleasant Family Literacy Summer Festival in which all partners collaborate in order to make it possible. The program was first delivered last year and over 150 participants attended. This year the event is plan for July 31<sup>st</sup> and it has already brought a board other community partners willing to put in staff time, volunteers and make it even bigger. One of the great outcomes of this event is that it created a greater bond among partners and a greater sense of pride and ownership in making the even a greater success for 2014.

**Goals and actions for the current year**

<b>Literacy Goal</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Indicators of Success</b>	<b>Challenges</b>
Task group members share literacy programming information and network to strengthen literacy	<p>Quarterly task group meetings in order to connect, exchange ideas and resources;</p> <p>Ongoing participation in collaboration and communication between the LOC and other Vancouver and Lower Mainland LOCs;</p>	<p>Quarterly meetings were maintained and additional members have joined;</p> <p>Number of collaborations and partnerships have emerged;</p> <p>LOC has attended meetings when possible; aboriginal community development project to support cultural and art initiatives; food network development; family physical literacy</p>	<p>Members finding time to attend meetings despite constrains in staff time funding;</p> <p>Very few hours to increased networking and follow up;</p>



		initiative;	
Increase sharing of resources and collaborations to deliver literacy programs/events	<p>Continue collaboration among all members to deliver a community wide literacy event;</p> <p>Deliver programs despite the cash resources being limited or not available;</p> <p>Members collaborate and share resources such as space, specific people`s skills and experiences and volunteers;</p> <p>Ongoing computer literacy for seniors and immigrant women with many barriers for accessing mainstream services</p>	<p>The second annual Family Literacy Summer Festival is being plan</p> <p>Seven family literacy programs that will be enhanced and developed due to partnership and collaborations;</p>	<p>Finding sufficient time to meet and collaborate without feeling left out of the process;</p> <p>Identifying and seeking additional funding to make programs more sustained;</p>
Partners collaborate in order to seek funding opportunities to increase program sustainability	<p>Members seek and secure funding sources in order to deliver programs/activities such as a physical literacy program for families; a cultural and art program for aboriginal families; consolidate the development of Mount Pleasant Food Network;</p>	<p>Physical family literacy activities have been develop by organizations and delivered in partnership;</p> <p>Program is supported by Raise-A-Reader funds; funding from Success by 6 has been also secured in partnership; as well as some funding from the City of Vancouver.</p>	<p>Uncertain as to how to continue to fund or enhance programs;</p> <p>(access to a directory of potential literacy program funders)</p>

### *For the Coming Year*

- Opportunity: there is a greater sense of cohesion and connection among members that leads to greater trust and potential for successful collaborations in which everyone feels empowered to problem solve and address literacy challenges within Mount Pleasant.
- Challenge: Uncertain funding sources for activities and programming limits the ability for the task group to do any long term planning; the process moves in a start and stop fashion putting pressure on staff time. It adds a level of uncertainty for partners in how best programs can be sustainable and how to make use of limited resources (i.e. space, staff time, literacy material). What would help? Allocating adequate funding yearly in order to plan ahead. Networking to problem solve and share best practices could provide a space for sharing experiences and ideas in how to improve strategies for sustainable funding.

### *Goals and Actions*

- Continue focusing on information sharing, networking and increasing the task group membership to further strength literacy;
- Develop and enhance programming that allows greater understanding of how to increase literacy awareness and education in Mount Pleasant beyond essential skills and address gaps in service;
- Ongoing collaboration and support to foster healthy partnership building and programming to newcomer immigrant families, aboriginal people and vulnerable populations;
- Look for ways to integrate basic literacy skills with emotional and physical development by bringing families together through play and fun outdoors.

### *To meet the goals and effectively employ actions for the coming year*

- Further coordination to maintain and foster healthy partnerships to develop and deliver programs as well as to seek funding as possible;
- Seek for ways to tap on skilled volunteers that can help leverage the limited resources in place;
- Ongoing advocacy and outreach for sustainable funding for literacy in BC;
- Continue collaboration not only within Mount Pleasant but also within our City or region;
- Ongoing quarterly task group meetings and activities that can help on problem solve challenges and address gaps in literacy services and programs.

### *Measures of success*

- Strategies used and new partnerships develop to address goals, engage volunteers and increase advocacy around literacy services and programming;
- Ongoing engagement in task group and collaborations in place to support literacy programming;
- Increased level of awareness about broader meaning of literacy beyond essential skills.
- Level of task group sustainability despite limited funding sources for coordination and programming.

## Renfrew-Collingwood

### Literacy Task Group

- Noni Mildenberger, Vancouver Public Library, Collingwood Branch
- Heather Brown, Collingwood Community Policing Centre
- Gavin Clark, Community Schools Coordinator, Windermere Family of Schools
- Angela Evans, BIA Coordinator, Collingwood BIA (Business Improvement Area)
- Jennifer Gray-Grant, Executive Director, CNH
- Kulwant Kaur, Director of Operations, CNH
- William McMichael, Former President, CNH, and Language Education Coordinator, UBC
- Vincent Vezina, Library Technician, Vancouver Public Library Collingwood Branch
- Marie Manansala, Office Assistant, CNH
- Janet Lee, Seniors Advisory Committee at CNH and a local resident
- Abby Pelaez, Board of Director at CNH and local youth

Service providers and active members in the community are recruited to the committee. The task group meets every other month to set priorities for the literacy plan, keep track of the current projects, and share highlights from their work. Several new members were recruited this year.

### Community Context

#### **Positive Impacts**

- The Collingwood Towers project, a weekly conversational English class for residents of the Collingwood Tower, a low-income senior's residential building, has continued successfully since September 2010. Seniors from a range of linguistic backgrounds enjoy informal English classes and conversations. The seniors take a leadership role and modify and direct aspects of the program as they see fit. Capacity development is emphasized. An example of the program's success is represented by the following participant's record of development and participation:
  - Janet arrived in Canada in from Hong Kong in 1956.
  - She speaks three languages, Mandarin, Cantonese and English.
  - She regularly attends Tai Chi and Zumba classes at Collingwood Neighbourhood House.
  - She is a member of the Senior's Advisory Committee at Collingwood.
  - In 2013 she began to attend the Towers Conversation Group.
  - She became the volunteer translator for the weekly conversation group.
  - She works on programming for the group.

- She volunteered to be interviewed for the Legacy Interviews published in the Renfrew Collingwood News.
  - She began to write articles for the newspaper on topics ranging from Citizenship to Fine Arts.
  - She also applied and auditioned to do a TedTalk.
  - She established an independent conversation group which also meets weekly.
  - As her capacity grows, she takes on roles of leadership and importance in the Collingwood community.
  - Recently she became a member of the Literacy Now Committee at the Collingwood Neighbourhood House.
- 
- A successful Reading Circle meets once a week at Collingwood Neighbourhood House. Predominantly Mandarin speaking, the group has been reading and discussing Joy Luck Club, a novel by Amy Tan.
  - Several Youth Creative Writing Sessions were held in partnership with the Vancouver Public Library, Collingwood Branch.
  - The ESL Read On! Page in the *Renfrew-Collingwood Community News* was renewed for another year. Every month, 5,000 copies of the *Renfrew-Collingwood Community News* are printed and distributed to local residents. Each monthly issue has an ESL Read On! Page with teacher resources and a podcast for learners on the website. The ESL Read On! Page is a very good resource for local ESL teachers, students and new immigrants.
  - Six Legacy Interviews have been featured in the Renfrew Collingwood Community News. Members of the CNH community are encouraged to share highlights of their lives through interviews. The published article, shared with the community, creates bridges and a deeper perspective on the diverse experience of our neighbours.
  - Renfrew-Collingwood successfully received Raise-a-Reader funds from the *Vancouver Sun* through Decoda Literacy Solutions. The grant will be used in family literacy programs at CNH. The participants in the family programs (parents and children attend together) Families Branching Out and Family Place will benefit from enhanced literacy components in these existing programs.
  - Six well attended Community Literacy Tours and Seminars were held:
    - Two Community Police Sky Train Safety Tours.
    - English Shopping trip to a local business.
    - Banking Seminar.
    - VPL Collingwood Library Tour and signup.
    - Fieldtrip and discussion – Fish Hatchery.

## **Negative Impacts:**

- Unpredictable year to year funding for Literacy is a challenge to sustaining and expanding programs and service to the community.

## **Community Development and Literacy Collaboration**

- Collaborating with our task group members and the organizations they represent, such as the school board, the library and CNH, we are able to bring out more ideas and discussions on how to support literacy in Renfrew-Collingwood.
- Financial support from Decoda Literacy Solutions, and free space provided by Collingwood Neighbourhood House and the Collingwood Towers help maintain the ongoing literacy programs.
- We highly value the support brought by our literacy task group members and the collaboration established among those organizations they represent. The task group members give us different lenses to look at literacy in our community, and bring more ideas to the table. New members from the Collingwood Seniors and a local youth member joined our task group this year.
- Our collaborations with the Vancouver Public Library, the Community Policing Agency, the CNH Youth programs and other projects at CNH are ongoing collaborations. They help to build and expand the capacity of local residents and make use of the local resources network. They are key to building accessible, sufficient and sustainable lifelong literacy programs for Renfrew-Collingwood residents.
- Our vision of literacy as a community building tool guides our steps and makes our collaborations more effective.
- Our literacy programs depend on the support of local residents and resources. The residents' capacity building and service network expansion both benefit and are benefited from our literacy programs. The Collingwood Towers Project and the CNH Reading Circle for example: they provide the opportunity to reach out to isolated, non-English speakers, the Collingwood Neighbourhood House and Collingwood Towers provide the space for activities. As the program goes on, over **260** individual seniors have attended our literacy activities, and the two groups have expanded their community connection through co-participation in Literacy tours and seminars. Many of them also became active participants in other community programs, such as the walking club, the Seniors Advisory Committee, the Literacy Now Committee and the CNH Board of Directors as well as supportive volunteerism at the CNH

## **Goals and Actions for the Current Year**

### **Goals**

#### **Priority 1: Connect Residents and Service Providers**

- Encourage the active participation among local service providers in the task group.

- Through workshops/seminars and field trips familiarize and introduce Literacy clients to community access opportunities.

#### Priority 2: Expand Capacity

- Work together to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of existing resources and reduce duplications of resources and service.
- Develop an accessible, comprehensive and sustainable set of program options.
- *Foster resident leadership and the collaborative development of local initiatives for sustainable lifelong learning.*

#### Priority 3: Maintain Existing Programs

- Address expressed needs for literacy, numeracy and social skills for Canadian-born adults and new immigrants with the initial focus on seniors, adults and immigrants.
- Sustain programs through concrete resources and in-kind support from public, private and community organizations.

#### Actions

##### Priority 1: Connect Residents and Service Providers

- New members from the Seniors groups and Post Secondary youth were recruited onto the literacy task group.
- Many local residents who participated in literacy programs are linked to programs and events offered by other service providers. Two participants in the Collingwood Tower have become Advisory Group members in the discussion around seniors at CNH. One member of the Collingwood Towers group has become a member of the CNH Board of Directors, another now sits on the Literacy Now Advisory Committee. A member of the Reading Circle has become a registered CNH volunteer and provides translation services to the group.
- Successful liaisons were maintained and developed with the Vancouver Public Library, the Collingwood Community Policing Centre.
- One individual who had never attended school and could not read was successfully connected with a CNH volunteer tutor and is now moving forward with developing excellent reading skills.

##### Priority 2: Expand Capacity

- Literacy programs for seniors like the Collingwood Tower Project and the CNH Reading Circle aim to give seniors accessible and convenient literacy activities.
- Reading Circle activity develops increased language confidence and competence in a cross section of community members.
- Literacy interviews with emphasis on the value of the personal story act to illustrate the universal human experience and to connect diverse, members of the community.
- Tours to the Library, the Community Policing Centre, local business for an English shopping trip, were well attended by local residents. These tours introduced local facility and services to the participants.

### Priority 3: Maintain Existing Programs

- With the support from many task group members we continue to publish articles and compile resources for the ESL Read On! Page in the *Renfrew-Collingwood Community News*. The ESL Read On! Page has been successfully running for over three years now.
- The Collingwood Tower Project provides local seniors with more accessible and friendly English learning opportunities. We have reached out to isolated and lonely seniors. Started in September 2010, the Collingwood Tower Project has been well maintained and attended for almost four years.

### Adjustments

- We were successful in keeping track and making progress in all the priorities we set for this year. Priorities from the previous years, such as to know our neighbourhood, and to connect residents, were also well addressed in our literacy work, because those priorities are interrelated to each other around literacy building.

### **Indications of Success**

- Improved interpersonal communication and intercultural understanding has resulted in increased participation in literacy programs. Local residents from different cultural, language, and economic backgrounds participate in our literacy projects. The seniors now organize monthly literacy potlucks at the Towers as an approach to encouraging the participation of more building and local residents. English learning provides local residents with ways to express themselves, to share their beliefs, and to build social connections. The impact of this program is indicated by the fact that members have initiated a second weekly session entirely organized and directed by themselves.
- Improved confidence of local residents in daily communication and capacity sharing. Knowing more English gives people confidence to participate in community activities, e.g. at our Christmas Party, Chinese New Year Party and local Collingwood Days celebration we are seeing higher numbers of participants from multicultural and multi-lingual backgrounds. Some seniors who participate in our literacy programs have become volunteers in other programs at the Neighborhood House. The ESL Read On! page and Literacy Outreach Legacy interviews in the *Renfrew-Collingwood Community News* also give local residents space to share their own stories and read about things happening in the community in simple English language.
- We have seen improved connections built between residents and service providers. Participants of literacy programs are introduced to services available to them. Coordinators at Collingwood Neighbourhood House, the Vancouver Public Library, the local Police, Bankers, and local businesses share highlights of their services with participants in our literacy programs. Tours and workshops were successfully organized and well attended by our participants. The Collingwood Branch of the VPL is now partnered with the Renfrew-Collingwood Literacy program to offer several youth creative writing sessions, presented by the Renfrew-Collingwood LOC to adolescents in the neighbourhood.

## **Support for literacy work**

### Local Residents

- Local residents who agreed to sit in our task group made great contributions to our discussion about the literacy needs in Renfrew-Collingwood.
- Local residents who participated in and benefited from our programs offered impulse and reward to our literacy work.

### Local Resources

- Representatives of local service providers who sit in our task group provided guidance and connection for literacy work.
- Local service providers like Collingwood Neighbourhood House, the Collingwood Towers, the Collingwood Library, provide in-kind facilities for literacy projects.

### Financial and Intellectual Support from Decoda Literacy Solutions and the Vancouver School Board

- The money we received for literacy coordination and the Raise-a-Reader funds will be used in building and supporting literacy-related projects.
- The literacy-related materials we received from Decoda, and the books borrowed from Decoda Literacy Library are very helpful in our work.
- Training sessions and meetings organized by Decoda Literacy Solutions and the Vancouver School Board give us valuable opportunities to share highlights of our work, hear stories from other communities, and reflect on literacy and community building.

## **Challenges**

- Our community was one of the first communities that started the visioning and planning for literacy. With Decoda funding we are able to sustain our current projects and also to support some new initiatives through 2013 to 2014. With the limited funding the LOC positions and questionable long term funding we are unable to enhance our program.
- A close relationship is usually formed between participants and project facilitators. While participation in the programming continues to grow funding fails to reflect the needs and desires of the Literacy program participants.
- We would love to see more funding like Raise-a-Reader to enhance our existing projects and help us build new initiatives.
- During the past year, we received many literacy-related materials from Decoda. The Decoda Literacy Library also makes finding literacy-related materials a lot easier for us. We would like to have more resources like this available to our community.
- Meetings and training sessions for Literacy Outreach Coordinators and people who work to support literacy are very helpful. We would like to see more opportunities for these kinds of gathering and sharing.
- Sustained and predictable funding for Literacy coordination is needed.



### **For the Coming Year**

- With funds received for family literacy programs, we need to collaborate with more programs. In the meantime, we will also sustain initiatives we have developed in the past. We may form new working groups to address different priorities in our literacy work.
- Our task group members understand literacy as a tool to build our community. It is very important to us that we keep people sitting together sharing ideas about literacy and guiding literacy work in the Renfrew Collingwood community. Task group building is ongoing. Our newest members bring powerful perspectives on both youth and seniors to the table and with unpredictable ongoing funding we are asking the task group to formulate and direct more low cost hands on literacy activities in the community.

#### Priority 1: Connect Residents and Service Providers

- Outreach to more service providers.
- Connect residents to programs in the community.
- Develop a more prominent Literacy profile in the community through inclusive externalized events.

#### Priority 2: Maintain and Develop Accessible Literacy Programs

- Address expressed needs for literacy, numeracy and social skills for Canadian-born adults and new immigrants with the initial focus on seniors, immigrants and families:
- Maintain and build on the ongoing success of the Towers project.
- Develop and maintain Legacy Interview project in conjunction with publication in Renfrew Collingwood Community News
- Weekly Literacy Reading Circle. “Joy Luck Club” Read out loud or listen. All welcome. Supported by ESL book selections from the Vancouver Public Library
- School seminars through the CNH Buddy After School Care Program in the Renfrew Collingwood School Catchment.
- Raise the profile and accessibility of Literacy programs to local residents.
- Sustain programs through concrete resources and in-kind support from public, private and community organizations.
- Open to new low cost opportunities to expand and improve existing programs.
- Local residents to participate and help facilitate our literacy projects. Encourage independent development of Literacy groups.
- Task group members and an LOC who support and take part in our work.
- Local facilities which provide space and resources for our activities and events.
- Financial and intellectual support from Decoda Literacy Solutions and the Vancouver School Board.

## South Vancouver

### Literacy Task Group

#### **South Vancouver Area Service Providers**

- BC Centre for Ability
- Parents as Teachers and MLA Representative
- South Vancouver Neighbourhood House
- River District Centre
- Boys and Girls Club
- Vancouver Coastal Health
- Parks Board
- Moberly Arts and Cultural Centre
- Vancouver School Board
- Parks Board
- Pacific Immigrant Resource Society
- Vancouver Public Library
- Vancouver School Board Settlement Workers In Schools
- Moberly Elementary Multicultural Worker
- Killarney Secondary Community Schools Team
- River District Centre
- YMCA
- John Oliver Secondary Community Schools Team
- South Vancouver Family Place
- Vancouver Public Library- South Branches
- Family Service of Greater Vancouver
- Progressive Intercultural Community Services
- David Thompson Community Schools Team
- Ministry of Child and Family Development
- Marpole Oakridge Neighbourhood House)

#### **Family Literacy**

- Zinnia Clark (LOC)
- Wei-Wei Siew (South Vancouver Neighbourhood House Steward)
- Jessica Moerman (South Vancouver Neighbourhood House)
- Wai Young (South Vancouver Neighbourhood House)
- Sharon Babu (South Vancouver Family Place)
- Shumin Wang (Vancouver Public Library Fraserview)
- Anne Tasker (Vancouver Public Library South Hill)
- JinderJohal (Vancouver Public Library South Hill)
- Lupita Boris (Pacific Immigrant Resource Society)
- Teri Corcoran (David Thompson Community Schools Team)

Involvement in the South Vancouver Literacy Plan takes three forms. Firstly, our long existing **South Vancouver Area Service Provider (SVASP)** meetings are the platform for the LOC to connect, share and update a wide network of service providers about literacy initiatives. Monthly meetings allow the network to stay informed and to collaborate on projects and programs.

Secondly, the **South Vancouver Family Literacy Task Group** meets specific to family literacy initiatives including the distribution of the Raise-a-Reader funding. This task groups meets quarterly to collaborate on our family literacy programs and initiatives that are operating with Raise-a-Reader funding, as well as to work to support family literacy gaps in our community. Several members are also partaking in the John Oliver Secondary Wonder of Reading Community Steering Committee.

Third, the **Early Years Planning Table for South Vancouver** is a group that focuses on services for families with children aged 0-6 yrs.

### **Community context**

South Vancouver is the second largest geographic community in Vancouver (Westside is the largest) and it is comprised of 5 distinct neighbourhoods. It is also the home to the largest population of newcomers and immigrants.

There has been increasing interest from both public partners and funders in South Vancouver as research, census, community profiles etc are showing the needs in the community and in each of the distinct neighbourhoods. As Marpole/Oakridge has its own literacy coordinator and the community is so large we have focused on the 3 neighbourhoods of Killarney (includes Champlain), Victoria/Fraserview and the Sunset communities. A newer neighbourhood that borders the 3 previously mentioned communities is the Fraserlands/River District which is going through rapid housing development and has a variety of needs/gaps etc. There are very few social services in the community and it is poorly served by a fragmented transit system and has challenging topography for families to navigate other resources.

The Early Development Index (EDI) Wave 5 continues to show there are high vulnerabilities with children in South Vancouver in a variety of domains. Other research that is now being looked at is from the Heart/Mind Index, partnered with HELP and the EDI team with a focus is on the social and emotional wellbeing of children. Last year Coastal Health produced a comprehensive document highlight the Health and Social profile of the community that is useful in the census data and other relevant information about the community. So there is a wealth of data from these 3 documents as well as a recent collaboration between city wide agencies, lower mainland and local agencies who indicated trends and gaps they are seeing in the community. The challenge is how to pull all this information together and use it to guide us in identifying the needs and gaps in the community.

The EDI is showing improvements in some of the domains (i.e. language development in the area where we are delivering family literacy programs).

- There has been a significant decrease of early years programming in South Vancouver due to many organizations reporting losses and/cuts to their funding.
- These funding shortfalls result in fewer hours being available for staff to collaborate and coordinate literacy initiatives.

## **Community Development and Literacy Collaboration**

### ***Example of a collaboration that supports literacy and the work of the task group.***

- Our Family Literacy Task Group's process of distributing the Raise a Reader funding formed many new partnerships. Multiple organizations are collaborating to offer the most valuable and successful programming. South Vancouver Family Place, Pacific Immigrant Resource Society and the Vancouver School Board are jointly contributing to run a family story time program (An Intergenerational Family Literacy Project for Immigrant and Refugee Families).
- At John Oliver Secondary an initiative is underway to increase community and student enthusiasm for reading through the campaign Wonder of Reading. There will be a special event hosted at the school with involvement from South Vancouver Neighbourhood House, South Vancouver Family Place, Pacific Immigrant Resource Society, Decoda Literacy Solutions, The Vancouver Sun, Vancouver Public Library, Vancouver Canucks, Business partners and community members.
- The partnership that has developed between PIRS, South Vancouver Family Place and the VSB in the creation of a Multicultural storytime at Tecumseh Elementary. This program was developed in response to a community need: the Tecumseh area did not have early years programs and ESL classes for parents. This multicultural, intergenerational program helps reduce the barriers and isolation faced by immigrant and newcomer families with young children, supporting children to develop kindergarten readiness,

### **Goals and actions for the past year**

- Goal 1: To improve family literacy through programming and events.
- Goal 2: To enhance existing services, programs and projects that support our literacy vision and to communicate new developments with residents and service providers.
- Goal 3: To support food literacy in the community in the areas of food security, environmental sustainability, and healthy living.
- Goal 4: To identify and enhance ways for residents and service providers to have access to community space.
- Goal 5: To inform residents about community opportunities through the development of a range of communication tools and by strengthening service provider networking and partnerships.

### ***Actions taken***

Goal 1: To improve family literacy through programming and events.

- Wonder of Reading-John Oliver High School
- Punjabi Grandparents' Family Literacy Program- South Vancouver Family Place
- Mother Goose- South Vancouver Neighbourhood House
- Green-light to Kindergarten-Trudeau Elementary- South Vancouver Family Place
- Multicultural Storytime at Tecumseh- Pacific Immigrant Resource Society

Goal 2: To enhance existing services, programs and projects that support our literacy vision and to communicate new developments with residents and service providers.

- By attending area service provider meeting and sharing collected programming and community information on our literacy blog thus improving literacy awareness and connections;
- By engaging in community literacy networking, partnership development, and by organizing and attending literacy events and participating in literacy advocacy

Goal 3: To support food literacy in the community in the areas of food security, environmental sustainability, and healthy living.

- The LOC sends out a monthly Food Security E-newsletter about food-related programs, services, events, success stories, job/volunteer/funding opportunities or something neat to check out. Partner organizations contribute information each month and the newsletter is sent to a large list serve of partner organizations, service providers, residents, and volunteers.
- The LOC supported food literacy by conducting train-the-trainer food security workshops with youth who will lead food & sustainability workshops with children in BC Housing. The LOC also partnered with South Vancouver Family Place to create a community kitchen that is embedded into the ESL parents program, this is an example of how we have connected food security efforts with literacy programming in South Vancouver

Goal 4: To identify and enhance ways for residents and service providers to have access to community space.

- We maintained our Community Spaces Inventory in 2013-2014. Because maintenance is minimal we have decided to not continue to make this a literacy goal for 2014/15.

### ***Adjustments***

Goal 5: To inform residents about community opportunities through the development of a range of communication tools and by strengthening service provider networking and partnerships.

- We had difficulty scheduling our facilitator Ajay Puri and the area service providers had limited interest in the proposed workshop therefore we decided to not complete the workshop series.

### **Indications of success**

Participating parents, grandparents and caregivers feel fortunate to join the kind of literacy development that enabled their children and them to learn new knowledge, to meet other families and see new things through the program. On an organizational level, it was very rewarding to have some additional funding to run programs that benefitted the families with young children. It proved the fact that that parents and caregivers play a vital role in raising literacy levels, educating families, especially new immigrant families with children.

Parents and caregivers learned about the development needs of their young children and their role in supporting this development. They gained confidence in reading stories and singing songs with their children, shared quality time with their children.

Our Food Security blog and monthly E-newsletter have been very successful in its reach. For our blog we have many new members signed up and our newsletter has increased #s of clicks and opens. See details below.

Month	Clicks	Open	Industry Standard
August	6	0	22
October	11	8	24
November	11	5	33
December	13	7	31
January	14	7	32
February	12	10	33
April	20	19	33

### ***Other Examples of successes***

- The Multicultural Story time at Tecumseh has been a major success in that it created new children’s programming space and new early year’s program. With limited resources and some important partnership development (between VSB, SVFP and PIRS) a portable at Tecumseh was outfitted with all the necessary furniture and resources for a children’s programming space.
- Another success was the Wonder of Reading Day at John Oliver. The RAR funds that were allocated to this project provided the seed money for this very successful project.

### **Challenges**

- Programs need to be offered more frequently, consistently, with staff members who can build relationships with families.
- There is much uncertainty about funding amounts and duration. This is relevant to the Raise-a-Reader funding as well as the coordination and implementation funds. The result is that initiatives are short-term and commitments need to be annually renewed.
- Many service providers are doing more programming with less money, which means that service providers do not have the resources to identify gaps and fill them.

What would be helpful in maintaining our task group numbers is the guarantee that our literacy efforts will have long-term support. Focusing on each year with limited funding and uncertainty of continuity limits our efforts and continued support from task group members.

While children are showing some improvements in EDI in areas where we have delivered literacy programming, because this programming is short-term and piece-meal the important work of developing relationships and trust with parents is not happening to the extent that is needed to significantly impact EDI outcomes.

We need to be able to offer ongoing and consistent programming in order to impact outcomes in EDI. This would require more funding to be available to fully support these programs. Also, the hiring of staff that represent community ethnic groups and speak their mother tongue is always helpful in building connections and being able to explain the steps needed to develop literacy.

## **For the Coming Year**

New opportunities for program development:

- Young children are showing improvement in language and communication in Sunset (much of our literacy focus has been in this neighbourhood)
- Children overall are not doing well in the areas of social and emotional wellbeing
- In Champlain (part of Killarney) community agencies have identified the need for more family support and community services as families they are working with are struggling
- Victoria/Fraserview continues to have high vulnerability in the areas of social/emotional well-being
- Funders have indicated an interest in supporting projects that focus on the social/emotional well-being of families with a focus on immigrant families, and grandparents and grandchildren.
- Community agencies have identified a need for more targeted services to support immigrant families with programs offered in a multitude of languages and in various offsite locations.

Recommendations from the HMI Community developer:

- For communities to start and maintain conversation about the importance of Heart-Mind well-being
- Increase awareness of the importance of Heart-Mind well-being of children
- Identify areas where children are doing well or experiencing challenges
- Provide evidence to support community initiatives toward Heart-Mind well-being
- Strengthen relationships between researchers and communities
- Provide communities with information to support future planning and service development

Challenges: The funding from Decoda does not allow for enough hours to effectively build literacy in the neighborhood. The funding we receive is only enough for short programs and there aren't funds to properly evaluate the projects. This makes it difficult to build momentum in the development of literacy in South Vancouver. There is also a lack of stability in the LOC positions. The increased competition for a limited pool of resources puts pressure on already strapped community literacy resources and their staff. To respond to these challenges, we combined food security funding with Decoda funding to create a more substantial and sustainable position. We will also look at ways that the task groups can enhance existing programs and build off what is already happening rather than starting new programs that might not be able to be sustained.

Goal 1: To improve family literacy through programming and events.

The Family Literacy Task Group has chosen to focus its energy and resources towards the following programs:

### **South Vancouver Family Place**

*Punjabi Grandparent and grandchild family literacy program*

- *New mom & baby program*
- *New mom & baby program at South Vancouver Family Place.*

### **South Vancouver Neighborhood House**

*Health Literacy for New Immigrant Parents*

- *Family Resource Program*
- *Story Time in the Park*

### **PIRS**

- *Multicultural Story time at Tecumseh*

Goal 2: To enhance existing services, programs and projects that support our literacy vision and to communicate new developments with residents and service providers.

- By attending area service provider meeting and sharing collected programming and community information on our literacy blog thus improving literacy awareness and connections;
- By engaging in community literacy networking, partnership development, and by organizing and attending literacy events and participating in literacy advocacy

Goal 3: To support food literacy in the community in the areas of food security, environmental sustainability, and healthy living

- The LOC will continue to send a monthly Food Security E-newsletter.
- The LOC will continue to support food literacy by continuing to offer food skills training and continuing to look for opportunities to partner and embed food literacy into literacy programming

Goal 4: To attend and share information and best practice with the Early Years Table for South Vancouver

- The role of the YET is to look for trends and gaps in early years programming.

What is needed to maintain literacy efforts in South Vancouver is guaranteed multi-year funding in order to develop our literacy efforts. Focusing on limited and yearly funding limits our efforts and the ongoing involvement of members in the task group.

As mentioned above, this year the food security and LOCS positions have been combined at the South Vancouver Neighborhood House. This provides an opportunity to integrate food security and literacy programming. SVNH envisions using the existing structures of the Family Literacy task force and SVASP to strengthen existing food security and literacy efforts.

How we measure the success of our literacy programming will be based on the goals:

Goal 1: The Family Literacy Task Group

- conversations with parents
- questionnaires
- observation of children

Goal 2: The Area Service Providers

- the # of meetings held



- the # of program notifications shared

Goal 3: The Food Literacy Strategy

- the # of clicks and open from our newsletter
- the # of workshops/food skills trainings held

Goal 4: The Early Years Table for South Vancouver

- the # of meetings held
- a description of the types of connections, partnerships etc that were developed from the table

## IV. Summary of Community Plans

As the visioning exercise confirmed, while each community is clearly unique, there are at the same time similar areas to celebrate and similar challenges to face. All communities are now in the implementation phase of literacy planning. Communities have given literacy the broadest definition possible to support a wide range of the people living in the area. Most have made strides in making current resources more accessible. They have created tools and resources to help connect people in their communities to resources they need. New programs have been identified to fill in gaps. Different populations have been identified as needing support.

One common area for celebration is the collaboration this work has generated. Every community mentioned the value of the new connections made and the additional supports available as a result. Many talk about the capacity building and the expansion of volunteers and peer supports.

At the same time all mentioned the challenges of time to do the work and the funding to continue. This kind of community development is labour intensive. The funds currently allocated are stretched. Nonetheless these funds have permitted a rich array of programming that would not otherwise have been available to people in the communities. All communities have acknowledged the great support they have received from Decoda Literacy Solutions to engage in this important work effectively. The funding the agencies have received from Raise a Reader have also been acknowledged as both helpful and important for building connections.

### Approaches in Neighbourhood Literacy Planning

There are some clear commonalities among the eight neighbourhood action groups.

- All groups see literacy and learning as being closely connected to community development and engagement.
- All groups have focused on the literacy and learning interests and needs of adults.
- Most communities have literacy and learning resources, but these are not necessarily well known and connected, or easy to access for local residents.
- Most groups have developed or are developing local resource guides, or resource maps.

- The literacy and learning issues of newcomers (i.e. immigrants and refugees), and the connections with building culturally inclusive communities, are common themes.

There are also differences, for example, in:

- The composition of the local task groups (e.g. the balance of citizens, service providers, and adult educators, and the active participation of city-wide service delivery agencies; or, the engagement of people from city-wide agencies or community centres)
- The level of direct programming (i.e. intentionally none in some communities, and more in others) versus supporting the existing programming of other agencies
- The focus on a range of literacy dimensions (e.g. food literacy, financial literacy, and computer literacy)
- The focus on different adult target groups (e.g. Aboriginal people, newcomers, seniors, people with addictions, people with learning differences)
- The focus on recruiting and training volunteers and peers to support adult learning and literacy development
- The focus on acquiring other financial resources through grants and partnerships

### **Common Challenges**

The following common challenges have been identified:

- There are numerous socio-economic and cultural barriers that prevent participation in community programs and events. Outreach is required and this means intensive work in the community. Effective communication is an ongoing need.
- The need for on-going sustainable funding to carry the local literacy work forward, and to support the salaries and work of local literacy coordinators, is an ongoing unmet challenge. While there are grants available, the time to write the proposals, and the competition between communities this creates, make grant funding problematic.
- It is difficult to maintain, over time, the websites, guides, and other resources developed.
- Collaboration is critical and yet the time to meet, share and work together is limited. Increasing workloads of staff of all local service providers, resulting in difficulties getting people to attend additional meetings and/or to make literacy and learning issues priorities in their already crowded agendas
- It is difficult to make connections with city-wide service delivery agencies that work closely with some of the identified target populations (e.g. newcomers and Aboriginal people)<sup>6</sup>
- Changes in the way new immigrant settlement funding is allocated has meant some people are no longer eligible for resources.
- Advocacy for literacy as a priority throughout the city is necessary and a challenge given the community based work. Decoda is working to address this issue with the communities.<sup>7</sup>
- Lack of community spaces to expand existing local programs is a problem in most communities.

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<sup>6</sup> Unlike city-wide agencies such as the Vancouver School Board and the Vancouver Public Library, these city-wide service deliverers do not have local branches.

<sup>7</sup> The challenge is that literacy and learning is and needs to be part of everyone's work. The rationale for having a separate literacy planning table is unclear. The common message needs to focus on the benefits for individuals, families, workplaces, and communities of a stronger, neighbourhood based literacy and learning movement.

## V. Partners in Literacy

Working with the eight communities and Decoda Literacy Solutions, there are three major public institutions that support literacy work in Vancouver. They are Vancouver Community College, the Vancouver Board of Education, and the Vancouver Public Library. Each of these partners makes its own contribution to literacy in the city.

### Vancouver Community College

Vancouver Community College, in addition to offering a full range of certificate, diploma and continuing education classes, is the largest college provider of adult literacy programs in Vancouver. It has a long and proud history of collaborating with a wide assortment of community constituency groups. Some recent partners include: the Lookout Society, the Salvation Army, the Vancouver Public Library, the Vancouver Board of Education, Safeway, Coast Mental Health and the YWCA.

The following is a snapshot of adult literacy programming at VCC.

**The Basic Education Department** is the Adult Literacy Fundamental Level program at VCC. It encompasses beginning skills up to approximately Grade 9. Currently, the department offers classes in fundamental level English, Math and Computer Studies. It offers both group-based and self-paced continuous intake classes at the Broadway Campus. Basic Education has well-established adult learning centres at the Vancouver Public Library's Downtown Branch and at Salvation Army's Harbour Light, a drug and alcohol rehabilitation centre in the Downtown Eastside. More recently, we have started adult learning centres at First Place, a residence operated by the Lookout Society, and at the Coast Club House, operated by Coast Mental Health. This year, the department re-invigorated our Community Engagement Group and received internal funding for two Curriculum Development projects – one to bring a social justice context to our mathematics program and the other to develop a basic handbook for new IT users.

#### **Adult Upgrading**

Courses are offered at the Intermediate (Grade 10), Advanced (Grade 11) and Provincial (Grade 12) levels for students wishing to earn credit or obtain academic prerequisites leading to high school completion and the BC Adult Graduation Diploma. Students can complete prerequisites: (1) for entry into institutions such as BCIT, Langara, Kwantlen, etc., (2) in preparation for entry into other VCC programs (e.g. Pharmacy Technician, Practical Nursing, or Electronics) or (3) for entrance into academic, career, or technical programs.

#### **Intermediate Program for Youth: Broadway Youth Resource Centre**

The ABE Youth Program offers an Intermediate ABE Certificate Program (Grade 10) and Advanced ABE courses (Grade 11) at the Broadway Youth Resource Centre. The ABE Youth Program offers

individualized and self-paced instruction in English, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies in a structured and supportive educational setting that allows youth to achieve their academic goals to develop the skills to be productive and responsible individuals. The Youth Program prepares students to enter adult graduation programs, public secondary schools, career and skills training programs and/or employment.

### **Essential Skills for College and Career Success**

Our Essential Skills Centre at the VCC Downtown Campus (250 West Pender) offers:

- Education and Career Planning; Self Assessment, career Explorations and Interview
  - Skills
- College Success: Active Learning, Study Skills, Goal Setting
- Computer skills: Word, Excel, and Windows.

These courses are being offered in a flexible format that includes self-paced study and scheduled courses at various times to suit the student. Courses are tuition free (college application, student association and college initiative fee are charged).

### **Harbour Light Learning Centre**

Since 2007, VCC has offered the Harbour Light Learning Centre program in partnership with the Salvation Army Addictions and Rehabilitation Centre on East Cordova in the Downtown Eastside. Students are residents of the Rehab Centre and are referred by their counsellors. Students meet with the VCC instructors to discuss an education plan before being assessed and placed into the Learning Centre Program. Harbour Light Learning Centre offers upgrading from beginner level reading, writing and math up to the grade 12 level. It is operated by both the Basic Education and CCA Departments.

### **English as a Second Language**

Renowned for its English as a Second Language training, VCC offers ESL classes to citizens, immigrants and convention refugees living in Canada as well as to international visa students and visitors. VCC also offers one of the largest English language teacher training ([TESOL](#)) programs in Western Canada.

Unfortunately, because of changes to the way in which ESL is funded in BC, all of our literacy level and beginner classes outside of LINC have been cut, as well as most of our intermediate classes. As of June 2014, VCC ESL offers the following programs:

- LINC – Language Instruction for New Canadians - Broadway Campus (Levels 1 – 6)
- English Language Skills – Upper Intermediate and Advanced classes – Broadway and Downtown Campuses
- College Preparatory English – Broadway Campus
- PACE (Professional and Career English) – Downtown Campus
- ESL Outreach – Upper Intermediate and Advanced classes – community and Downtown Campus
- ESL – Homefront Learning: Homebound adult ESL students living in Vancouver or Burnaby can receive two free hours of English instruction per week in their homes by a trained volunteer

tutor. Students can study at any level: Literacy, Beginner, Intermediate or Advanced. Students can stay in the program as long as they are eligible and a tutor is available.

- ESL Learning Centres in the Libraries
  - In partnership with the Vancouver and Burnaby Public Libraries, VCC operates nine
  - ESL Learning Centres. Eight are located in Vancouver and one in Burnaby. Learning
  - Centres in Libraries provide free one-on-one and small group tutoring in ESL to adults.
  - Each Learning Centre has various operating hours and is staffed by experienced Instructional Assistants with ESL training.

### **Moving Ahead Program (MAP) at VCC**

Vancouver Community College (VCC) provides a 12-week life skills group program for vulnerable immigrant youth and adults. The program is part of the Moving Ahead Program (MAP), administered by SUCCESS, which supports vulnerable immigrants in their settlement process. The VCC group program focuses on life skills, literacy and essential skills development. There is a youth stream (15-25 years old) and an adult stream. Each stream attends VCC from Monday to Thursday for 2.5 hours either in the morning (10:00 am – 12:30 pm) or afternoon (1:30 pm – 4:00 pm). The program uses creative approaches to engage participants in authentic and project-based learning to enhance their settlement capacity. Music, art and photography are modes of learning that permeate the program. Enquiries can be made with Michael Yue, Senior Project Coordinator, at [myue@vcc.ca](mailto:myue@vcc.ca).

### **Initiatives focused on Aboriginal Learners**

Vancouver Community College is committed to increasing the participation and success rate of First Nations learners and provides First Nations learners with academic and cultural support. Aboriginal academic advisors assist with liaising with band administration, elders, sponsoring agencies, and referral to community resources, pre-admission advising, orientation to VCC facilities and resources, and advocacy. Recognizing that Vancouver Community College serves a large Aboriginal population that is under-represented in postsecondary education, priority registration will be given to qualified Aboriginal students in all courses and programs at VCC.

VCC is a partner of the *Coastal Corridor Consortium (C3)*. The goals of the Consortium are:

- to create better cultural connections between and among the C3 post- secondary
- institutions and the Aboriginal partners
- to ensure a strong and consistent Aboriginal voice
- to remove barriers for Aboriginal learners to access quality higher education with focus on enhanced learner services and supported outreach programs
- to offer programs that meet the needs of Aboriginal learners and their communities,
- providing pathways to employment and/or further learning.

## **Courses for Students with Disabilities**

These programs are designed to meet the specific needs of students with disabilities.

VCC provides opportunities for students by offering skills and learning that will enhance career opportunities, personal potential and academic success. Adult Special Education courses and programs are designed for students with a disability, who wish to establish and/or upgrade prevocational skills that would enhance entry into further education or employment. The Community & Career Education Department includes part-time literacy courses in; Reading and Writing for Every Day Use, Managing Your Money, Computer Applications and full time programs include Career Awareness, Retail Food & Hospitality Careers; and Food Service Careers. The Deaf & Hard of Hearing Department offers Job Readiness and Deaf and Hard of Hearing courses, and the Visually Impaired Department offers Office Administration for the Visually Impaired, and Visually Impaired Adult Courses including computer applications, adaptive technology, braille and GED preparation.

## **The Vancouver Board of Education**

### **Literacy K – 12**

The Vancouver School District is a large and complex organization with 75 elementary schools, 17 elementary annexes and 18 secondary schools, and over 60 district programs and Adult Learning Centres connected to the schools that address a wide range of student needs from enrichment to remedial. Over 56, 000 children youth and adults are served through these structures.



The Board of Education annually submits to the Ministry an Achievement Contract, the “District Plan for Student Success”. The overall goal of that plan is success for each student with a focus on literacy as a key determinant of school success. Specifically, early intervention is a focus is essential for meeting with success in literacy. Maintaining this focus has been important for making long term gains and this has been a challenge with budget cuts annually.

Nonetheless, there is good evidence to show that more students are experiencing more success in the early grades.

Areas of ongoing work and adjustments were identified as important to supporting success in the classroom and for each student in literacy:

- The District continued expansion and implementation of the Early Intervention Initiative to 48 elementary schools in 2013-2014. In spite of budget cuts for 2014-2015, the Board has maintained the momentum in this initiative.
- Both staff and Board members are continuing to focus on the development of social emotional learning and social responsibility to ensure schools are safe and supportive environments in which to learn and work. The recent passing of a policy for students who identify as LGBTQ is a good example of the work at the governance level.
- As part of its Strategic Plan, the District continues to focus on strong relationships with parents and caregivers.
- The Board's commitment to supporting the expansion of the Aboriginal Focus School has created a new learning opportunity for Aboriginal students, and others.
- The District restructured the district delivery model of academic support for Aboriginal students based on the 2012 -2013 pilot project and the model is proving to be successful with more Aboriginal students graduating each year.
- The Multi-Interdisciplinary Support Team model introduced for the current year has been successful. The teams and will continue to provide timely resources and support to schools in areas related to Resource services, psycho-educational assessments, speech and language assessments/interventions, counselling, and positive behaviour supports.
- The District continues to support teachers in differentiating instruction for all students according to their learning and behaviour needs. Specifically, ongoing support for assessment for learning as part of each classroom is continuing.
- The District is committed to strengthening of district-wide assessment practices and development of district data reporting and collection.
- Support for inquiry-based professional development and networking opportunities for staff and students to share their learning and successes continues to be a commitment of the District staff in spite of budget shortfalls.

### **Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement**

The Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement provides direction for the district focusing on three main goal areas: Belonging, Mastery, Culture and Community. The goals align with the district initiatives strengthening literacy skills, social and emotional learning conditions and using assessment for learning to ensure positive educational experiences for all learners. Action Plans have been developed through consultation with the Aboriginal Communities to provide a framework and a shared commitment. Each school has included a goal focused on developing cultural awareness in their School Growth Plans. The 2014-2015 year will bring the adoption of a new five year agreement.

## School Libraries

Teacher librarians continue to be integral to the literacy goals both within the school community and the community at large. Teacher librarians contribute to the development and promotion of literacy in many ways. They work collaboratively with classroom teachers to develop programs that build in literacy skill development, promote reading for pleasure and information, integrate strategies to build multi-literacies in students, and engage in and support school-based, school-wide and district initiatives that promote literacy.



Over this school year, the District continued to support the development of a Learning Commons, characterized by the creation of a flexible space with access to print and digital resources and up-to-date technologies, and supported by a service-oriented, tech-savvy, collaborative and qualified teacher-librarian. The Learning

Commons provides accessible resources and custom-designed learning opportunities that enable students and teachers to develop sophisticated information and technology skills.

E-resources are available to students and staff to allow for 24/7 access to reference and research databases.

## Early Learning

The VSB maintained a strong commitment to the importance of early learning in the district, and worked closely with school librarians and public librarians to support families and children in the pre-school years, and with transitions to school. Through the support and supervision of our Early Learning Coordinator the following events and programs were provided:

- Welcome to Kindergarten events in 72 elementary schools and annexes
- Ready Set Learn in every school
- Continuation of StrongStart Centres



## Adult Literacy

The VBE operates six Adult Learning Centres in Vancouver providing adult learners with educational opportunities ranging from beginner literacy levels in English, Math and Computer Technology to high school completion. The Centres provide courses to an estimated 7,000 students annually. The student population reflects the cultural, linguistic and economic diversity of the city and the students' ages range from sixteen to over seventy-five years old.

The Adult Education program also provides outreach programs at elementary school sites to provide access to adult education for the adult family members of the students attending the school.

## Vancouver Public Library

***Vision – An informed, engaged and connected city. Mission – A free place for everyone to discover, create, and share ideas and information.***

2013 – 2014 has been eventful for Vancouver Public Library (VPL). Through our extensive offerings of free programs, we support the development of 21<sup>st</sup> century digital literacy, help prepare children to succeed in school, welcome and support newcomers to Canada, and provide a wealth of information, reading materials, and media in 16 languages.

Public libraries reflect the values of the communities and residents they serve. In 2013, Scholars at Heinrich Heine University Dusseldorf named Vancouver and Montreal as the No. 1 libraries in world cities – topping a lengthy list that includes libraries in New York, Boston, London, Barcelona, Los Angeles and Toronto. The University analyzed the services and spaces – digital and physical – of public libraries in 31 major centres around the world, exploring how they support the digital, learning and creative fabric of their cities. In 2014, VPL also received special mention from Library Journal as Library of the Year.

Recognition like this is not received without the collaboration from our partners at the Vancouver School Board and in the community. VPL values its relationship and partnership with the VSB. Staff from both organizations work together. Children's and teen services librarians work directly with teachers and teacher-librarians. The Manager of Services for Children and Teens is a member of the School Library Resource Centre Consultative Committee and communicates regularly with key VSB staff including the Supervisor - Early Learning.

With the launch of our strategic plan for 2013 – 2015, we continued to focus our efforts in community engagement activities and developing partnerships to provide collaborative programming and service delivery.

Some highlights from 2013-2014 include:

- 2300 more opening hours were added so that all locations are open Sundays
- The Vancouver Inspiration Pass was introduced
- Welcome Back Week encouraged patrons to come back to the library
- New staffing model for services to Children, Teens and Families was implemented through neighbourhood areas using data from EDI and MDI to inform the model
- Increased emphasis on teen engagement & middle years services and programs
- Increased emphasis on engaging and offering programs for early childhood educators, parents and caregivers
- “Your Creative Lab” a VPL/VSB middle years after school pilot program held in a south east Vancouver school for 12 weeks in early 2014
- Pop libraries and VPL presence in non-traditional places
- Year of Reconciliation
- Annual report highlights: 78% of Vancouverites use the library; over 8000 free programs were offered with over 235,000 attendees; and 9.5 M items were borrowed; and over 244,000 eBooks were borrowed

### **More hours – more access**

Nearly 2300 more operating hours were added system wide and by doing so, we enhanced access to library collections, staff expertise and VPL’s community space. Now that 83% of check outs are self-serve, some staff hours previously dedicated to traditional circulation tasks were transferred to enable VPL to open all branches on Sundays. Working families and students have especially benefitted from this value added service.

### **VIP**

The Vancouver Inspiration Pass (VIP) is one year old. Vancouverites can borrow a pass to visit over 20 attractions and cultural venues free of charge, thanks to an innovative collaboration with organizations such as the Vancouver Opera, Vancouver Aquarium, Maritime Museum, Vancouver Art Gallery and many more. The pass is an excellent example of collaboration at work.

[http://www.vpl.ca/news/details/backgrounder\\_about\\_the\\_vancouver\\_inspiration\\_pass](http://www.vpl.ca/news/details/backgrounder_about_the_vancouver_inspiration_pass)

### **Welcome Back Week**

Welcome Back Week was a major initiative to re-engage patrons who were staying away from VPL due to having long overdue materials. Over 900 patrons were welcomed back 98% of patrons who came back said they would use the library again.

## **New staffing model to serve & support kids and families across the city**

In the fall of 2013, we implemented a new staffing model to support services to children, teens and families. This was based on the recommendations of the review conducted in 2012 which examined our service delivery model (staffing structure), and determined how to optimize it to support our patrons, families, educators, child care workers, community workers and position the library as a critical asset. Service planning and delivery is neighbourhood-based with children's librarians working in neighbourhood teams to provide service to preschool and school-aged children. Communication and service to public partners is coordinated by cohort leads for early years, middle years and teens. Program development and delivery is also coordinated by teams focussing on these three age cohorts.

Children's librarians are spending more time in the community connecting with children, caregivers and service providers. Library technicians in branches are also supporting service for children and teens. By reallocating existing staff we have increased capacity to provide services to teens. New relationships have been developed with community partners including Yankee 20 (VPD Youth Patrol Car program), CART (Child/Adolescent Response Team) and Multicultural Helping House.

In 2013 VPL delivered a total of 6,613 programs for children and teens to 198,583 participants.

## **Support for Early Years**

VPL continues to invest in services for young children, with an increased focus on education and support for parents, caregivers and Early Childhood Educators (ECE's).

Children's librarians delivered many popular early language and literacy workshops for groups of adults who work with young children, including: VSB StrongStart staff, Early Childhood Educators, Family Childcare Providers, and ECE students from the Native Education College and Sprott-Shaw College. Workshop topics included: Storytime Basics, Felt Story Make & Takes, Puppetry, Storytelling and Great Picture Books.

Parents were invited into our Branches and Central Library to participate in fun and informative *Parents' Night Out!* programs. In these sessions, parents have the opportunity to learn about new ways to support their child's learning.

The Children's Services team continues to provide popular in-library programs for young children and their parents and caregivers, such as: Babytime, Toddler Storytime, Preschool Storytime and Family Storytime sessions. VPL staff continues to connect with vulnerable children and families through programs such as: Mother Goose, Man in the Moon, foodbank storytimes, and other community-based family programming.

## Support for Middle Years

VPL is committed to expanding services for middle years children and providing education and support for parents, caregivers and educators in a broad range of library, school and community settings.

After school, weekend and evening programs have been added at branches in all neighbourhoods in order to reach school-age children and families at times that are convenient for them. To target vulnerable neighbourhoods as identified by the MDI, two new programs were piloted in the South East sector of the city. Weekly After School Drop-in literacy and craft program is being offered at two branches throughout 2014. *Your Creative Lab*, a digital literacy program funded by the Vancouver Public Library Foundation and Libraries and Literacy with in-kind contributions from VPL and VSB, was offered in partnership with VSB was provided for 12 weeks at Champlain Heights Community School.

Additional new programs were developed and delivered. These include:

- Reading Buddies, a program which provides an opportunity for children to practice reading with a teen volunteer. (January – April 2014).
- Tween Advisory Groups (TWAGS) and Advance Reading Copy Book Clubs were added in every neighbourhood.
- Digital literacy programs have been developed and will be delivered system-wide throughout 2014
- A broad range of literacy and play-based learning programs including Book Clubs, Reel Reads for Kids and Family Board Games continue to be offered at multiple locations.

## Support for Teens

Programs and services for teens have been expanded and enhanced. Staff liaised with other youth services professionals from a variety of agencies to build connections in the community and to learn about issues and best practices. Some of these professionals were invited to make presentations at staff meetings.

Highlights include:

- Relationship-building - especially in the high-needs Grandview-Woodlands neighbourhood, where teen librarians are collaborating with groups like the Urban Native Youth Association and the Britannia Teen Centre to find ways the library can support at-risk youth.
- Interest and participation in Teen Advisory Groups (TAGS) across the city is high. Since 2011 the number of TAGs has grown from 1 to a total of 10 in 2014.
- Teens from the Central Library TAG, in cooperation with the West End Seniors Network, hosted a Teens & Seniors Literary Tea. The teens had a strong interest in making connections with seniors through traditional print books.
- Regular teen programming has been established at 12 branches. By the end of 2014 a teen program will have been offered in every branch in the city.

## **Pop Up Libraries**

In the late summer/fall of 2013, VPL “popped-up” at the West End Farmers Market and Davie Village and brought the library to the people: loaning books, hosting programs, answering questions and offering a welcoming community space. In early 2014 we have popped up at neighbourhood houses and community centres and in the summer we are planning to pop up in Stanley Park and other green spaces. Stay tuned to VPL social media feeds for more information.

## **Year of Reconciliation/Aboriginal Story-Teller in Residence**

The City of Vancouver declared June 21, 2013 – June 20, 2014, the Year of Reconciliation. . The goal was to promote understanding of the historical events that shaped the current conditions and experiences for Aboriginal People, promote an inclusive future, and improve city services for Aboriginal people. As the heart of community learning, VPL played a special role in reconciliation. Much of that involvement was through storytelling and public dialogue. Among the programs that reached out to the entire city were story-teller-in-residence programs, speaker series, literary programs and children’s initiatives.

VPL’s Aboriginal Storyteller in Residence Columpa C. Bobb focused her efforts at strengthening the links between the library and Aboriginal communities through engaging stories and engagement in branches across the city and in various community venues.

Children participated in the Tiles project; which brought school kids together to learn about “Namwayut” – “we are all one” and to the history of residential schools. The kids created Tiles which demonstrated their understanding.

In honour of Chief Robert Joseph, the 2014 recipient of SFU’s Jack P. Blaney award for Dialogue, five diverse and distinguished poets joined together at the Central library in February 2014 to unveil newly commissioned works exploring the concept of reconciliation. This powerful program was hosted by VPL & SFU.

## **Summary**

VPL is many things to many people and our success is supported through collaboration with our community partners such as VSB. Access, discovery, and community are hallmarks of our library system. VPL’s unique combination of accessible public spaces, programs and training sessions, expert information staff, public technology and high-quality collections contribute to personal learning and a stronger, more inclusive community.

To learn more about VPL’s accomplishments in 2013 and glimpse at what is ahead in 2014, visit: [http://www.vpl.ca/about/details/annual\\_report\\_2013](http://www.vpl.ca/about/details/annual_report_2013)

## **VI. Conclusion**

Members of the Coordinating Committee once again have made a commitment to continue to meet to support the literacy initiatives in the various communities of Vancouver. As the individual area reports indicate, there is a need for continued collaboration among the groups involved in the literacy initiative, as well as for stable, reliable funding sources to allow expansion of the program. It has now been several years since this particular collaboration began – initially with just two communities and the three partners. It is remarkable to see the growth in the work. The breadth of the work, and the reach of the work are particularly noteworthy. Years ago as this work began, the group had only imagined the possibilities. Now, with eight committed neighbourhoods engaged with such high levels of involvement and support, even more possibilities can be envisioned. The partnerships with the School District and the Library have grown through this process. The links with the community have been extremely important and valuable for the growth of literacy and for other important engagements. The Coordinating Committee will continue to move the visioning process forward in planning for the future.