

Tri-Cities District/Community Literacy Plan

2014 – 2015 Action Plan and Progress to Date



Written by Barb Mancell, Tri-Cities Literacy Outreach Coordinator

Submitted on behalf of the Tri-Cities Literacy Committee and School District 43 (Coquitlam)

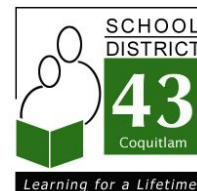


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The Task Group

Vision Statement: The Tri-Cities Literacy Committee envisions a future where all community members are aware of and have equitable access to timely, adequate, effective and affordable literacy programs. Literacy is a right, enabling individuals to participate fully in our community.

Our Task Group currently includes:

Steering Committee

Reno Ciolfi, (*co-chair*) Assistant Superintendent, SD#43

Todd Gnissios, (*co-chair*) Director of Coquitlam Public Library

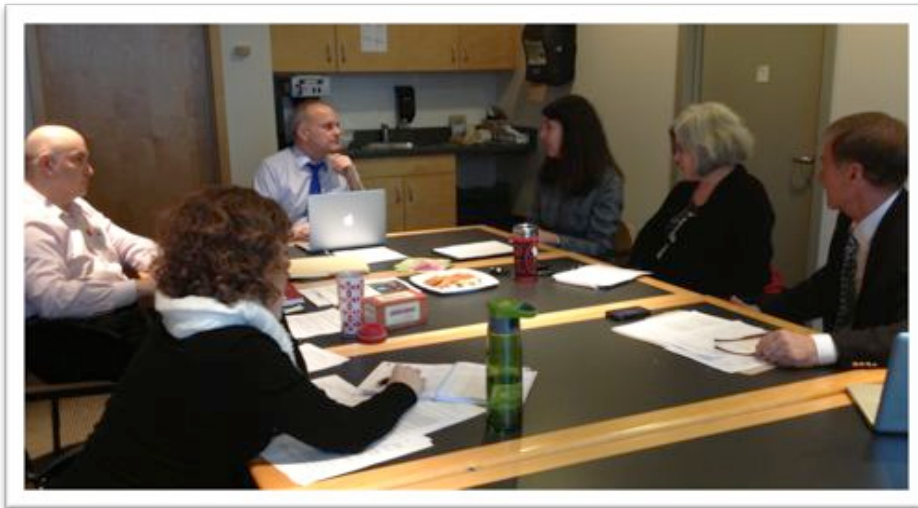
Susan Foster, Tri-Cities Early Childhood Development Committee (MCFD)

Alison Whitmore, School District #43

Janice Williams, Coquitlam Public Library

Barb Mancell, Tri-Cities Literacy Outreach Coordinator

The **Steering Committee** meets every two months throughout the year. From July 1st 2013 to June 30th 2014 **the Steering Committee met 6 times.**



At the January 2014 Steering Committee meeting, Mayor Richard Stewart of Coquitlam was welcomed as a guest.

The Task Group *(cont'd)*

We also have **Three Working Groups:**

Adult Literacy

Alison Whitmore	<i>SD43</i>
Anthea Goffe	<i>Terry Fox Library, FVRL</i>
Janice Williams ~ chair	<i>Coquitlam Public Library</i>
Mary Daniel	<i>Douglas College</i>
Maryn Ashdown	<i>Port Moody Library</i>
Hope Taylor	<i>Douglas College</i>
Barb Mancell	<i>Tri-Cities Literacy Outreach Coordinator</i>

From July 1st 2013 to June 30th 2014 the **Adult Literacy Working Group met 5 times.**

ESL

Alison Whitmore ~ chair	<i>SD43</i>
Mary Daniel	<i>Douglas College</i>
Virginia McCreedy	<i>Port Moody Library</i>
Claire Pinkett	<i>ISS of BC</i>
Ryan Drew/Corinne Hamel-Taylor	<i>SUCCESS</i>
Shae Viswanathan/Donna Nikl	<i>SHARE Family & Community Services</i>
Sharon Cairney	<i>Community Volunteer</i>
Barb Mancell	<i>Tri-Cities LOC</i>

From July 1st 2013 to June 30th 2014 the **ESL Working Group met 7 times.**

Family Literacy

Alison Whitmore	<i>SD43</i>
Maryn Ashdown/Karen Sharkey	<i>Port Moody Library</i>
Barb Mancell ~ co-chair	<i>Tri-Cities-LOC</i>
Susan Foster ~co-chair	<i>Tri-Cities ECD Committee (MCFD)</i>
Dana Ionson	<i>Terry Fox Library, FVRL</i>
Silvana Harwood	<i>Coquitlam Public Library</i>
Nancy Carl	<i>SD43</i>
Arshia Bakshandeh	<i>SHARE Family & Community Services</i>
Lynn Heinrich	<i>Community Volunteer Connections</i>
Firouzeh Peyvandi	<i>ISS of BC</i>

From July 1st 2013 to June 30th 2014 the **Family Literacy Working Group met 6 times.**

The Task Group *(cont'd)*

External Partner Committees

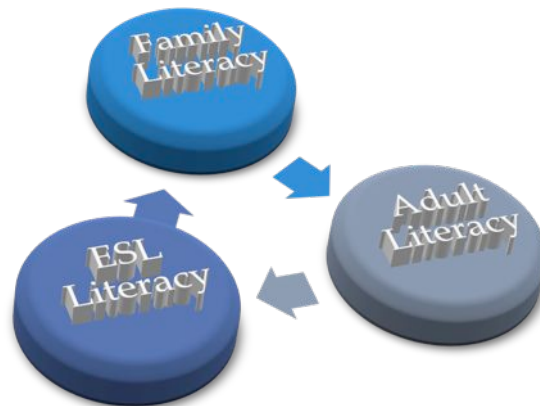
Barb Mancell, LOC, sits on the following community committees as a representative of the Literacy Committee:

Tri-Cities ECD Committee

Tri-Cities Middle Child Matters Committee

Family Play and Learn Planning Committee

My Neighbourhood/My Future Trail Blazers Committee



Community Context

The Tri-Cities – Port Coquitlam, Coquitlam, Port Moody and the two villages of Anmore and Belcarra have a population of 218,509 (2011 census). The median family income is \$71, 413. Twenty-five percent of people in the Tri-Cities have a language other than English or French as their mother tongue.

The population of immigrants and English language learners in the Tri-Cities continues to increase. Community organizations are actively engaged in developing and delivering services to this growing community.

From Jan 1st to Mar 31, 2014 the highest percentage of Government Assisted Refugees (GAR) settling in the Lower Mainland settled in the Tri-Cities (*ISS of BC GAR Bulletin*). These newcomers have diverse needs, with many entering programs at a pre-literacy level.

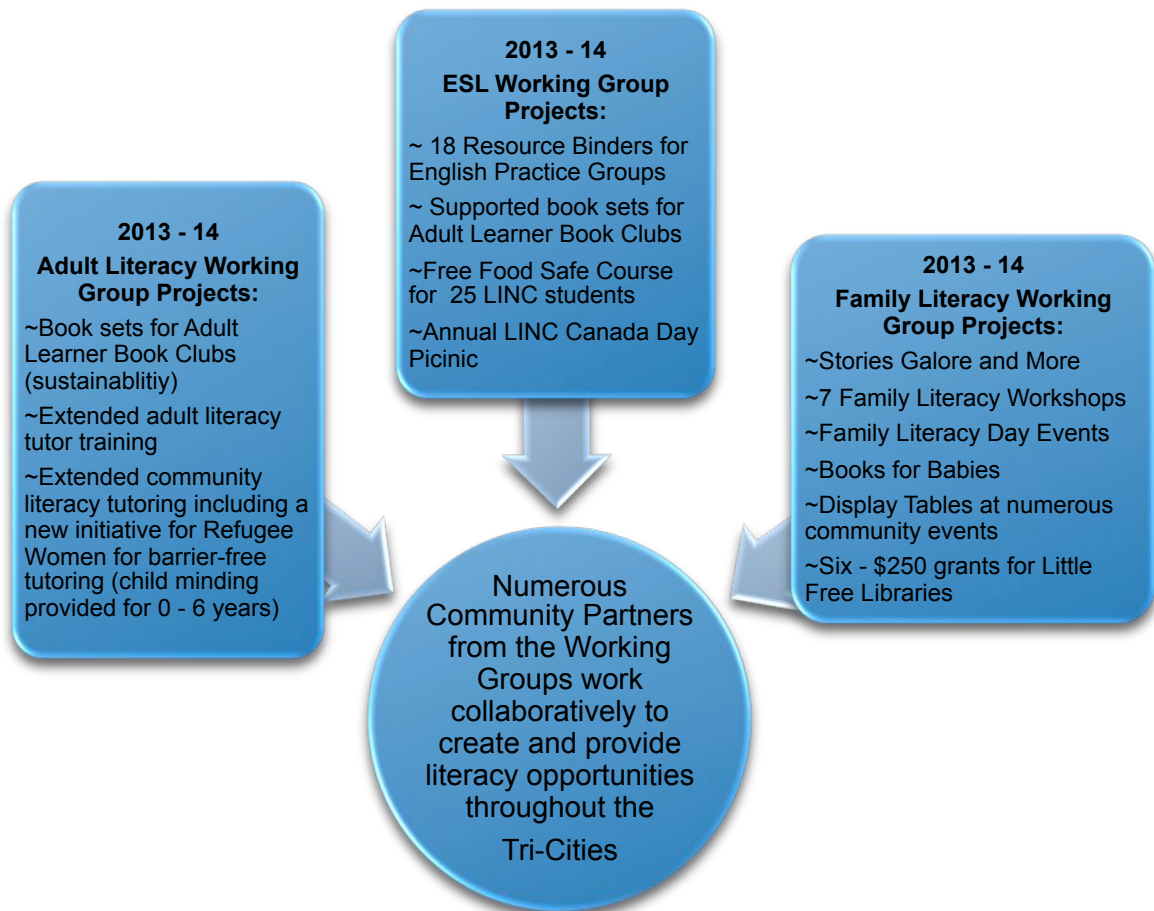
As of April 1st, 2014, there were funding changes from provincial funding to Federal funding for programs serving English learners in our community. As a result, some programs, such as the English Practice Groups coordinated by SHARE Family and Community Services, have had their funding discontinued. The program only has funding to continue this valuable service until June 30th 2014. The English Practice Groups are far reaching in our community and the absence of these eighteen groups is a huge loss for the English language learners in the Tri-Cities.

Other valuable English language literacy programs in the Tri-Cities did get their funding from the Federal government (CIC) and have been able to continue the delivery of literacy and English language instruction.

The School District, Continuing Education, Douglas College, non-profit organizations, libraries and other organizations offer a wide variety of Adult, ESL and Family Literacy programs and courses in the Tri-Cities. The funding for these programs come from a variety of sources.

Community Development and Literacy Collaboration

Over the past year **The Tri-Cities Literacy Committee** has been involved in numerous collaborations with community partners to support literacy work.



Community Development and Literacy Collaboration *(cont'd)*

One example of Community Development and Literacy Collaboration is the outreach of Family Literacy events and programs throughout the Tri-Cities. Because of the collaboration of members of the Family Literacy, Adult Literacy and ESL Working Groups and members of the Early Childhood Development and Middle Child Matters Committees, relationships and partnerships have developed to create Family Literacy awareness and knowledge in the Tri-Cities.

From July 2013 to June 2014, the following are some examples of **Family Literacy** initiatives that have been realized:

- **Stories Galore and More** – this is a Family Literacy program that takes place for six weeks in the months of July and August. Seven parks each week are visited to deliver a one-hour program that has a variety of literacy activities for families. The average number of participants in 2013 was 270 per week. This program is a collaboration of over ten community partners including Parks and Rec departments from three cities, the three libraries, Community Volunteer Connections, and several others.

This program is funded by Raise-a-Reader funding.



Community Development and Literacy Collaboration *(cont'd)*

- **Family Literacy Workshops** – Seven Family Literacy workshops have been delivered in the past year. These workshops were delivered to practitioners working with families in their own organizations and to adult family members from the Tri-Cities. Approx 140 people participated in these Family Literacy Workshops this year.



- **Participation at Community Events:** The Tri-Cities Literacy Committee is represented each month at the Community **Family Play and Learn Event at Coquitlam Centre**. This monthly event is a collaboration of community organizations such as SD43, the ECD Committee, the Middle Child Matters Committee, the three libraries, the three cities and many more.

Goals and Actions for the Past Year

Over the past year, the Tri-Cities Literacy Committee has continued to address four “Theme for Action” areas:



These areas are **always** the priorities for the Task Group.

The following are examples of the actions that were taken to reach these goals during the past year (many of these actions overlap in several areas):

Communication

Monthly Newsletter and Website

The Literacy Outreach Coordinator writes a monthly newsletter that includes information about community literacy news, events and resources. The newsletter has a growing list of recipients and is currently sent out to over 160 community contacts each month. Literacy information is also made available through the Tri-Cities Literacy Committee website, which hosts minutes from the Working Group meetings. A Facebook page was also set up in January 2014.



The monthly newsletter is sent out through MailChimp

Meetings with Local MLAs

Members of the Task Group had two meetings with each of the four MLAs to communicate the importance of the Literacy Work that is taking place in the Tri-Cities.

Coverage in local Newspapers The two local papers: The Tri-City News and The Coquitlam NOW, published prominent articles about Family Literacy during Family Literacy Week in January 2014. The Tri-City News put their article on the front page and also attached a video to their website.

Goals and Actions for the Past Year *(cont'd)*

Collaboration

Stories Galore and More

As mentioned on page six, *Stories Galore and More* is an excellent example of community collaboration. This Family Literacy program took place for six weeks in the months of July and August. Seven parks each week were visited to deliver a one-hour program that has a variety of literacy activities for families. The average number of participants in 2013 was 270 adults and children per week. This program is a collaboration of over ten community partners including Parks and Rec departments from three cities, the three libraries, Community Volunteer Connections, and several others.

This program is funded by Raise-a-Reader funding.

Annual LINC Canada Day Picnic

The fifth annual LINC Canada Day Picnic (formerly known as the ELSA Canada Day Picnic) is planned for June 26, 2014. Each year's event is attended by the local mayors and approximately 400 participants, representing all four of our local LINC providers (ISS of BC, SUCCESS, Douglas College and SD43 Continuing Education). This full day of activities continues to provide an opportunity for learners to connect with students from other sites and to explore and celebrate Canadian culture.



Workshop Survey In the fall of 2014, the Steering Committee sent out a survey to community partners and organizations asking for their input on literacy seminars or workshops they would like to see in the future. Twenty-seven people responded to the questionnaire.

Goals and Actions for the Past Year *(cont'd)*

Access for All

Adult Literacy Tutor training

In September 2013, The Friends of Coquitlam Public Library and the Adult Literacy Working Group with the Tri-Cities Literacy Committee funded the training of 13 new tutors in Coquitlam Library's Adult Literacy Tutor Program. The library recruited tutors, hosted the training sessions with Frontier College, and then placed tutors with adult learners, to either a) work one to one with students each week, or b) work twice a week with the Tutoring for Refugee Women program, hosted at New Beginnings in Coquitlam.

Tutoring for Refugee Women

As reported last year, a pilot project began in April 2013 to support a refugee woman with low literacy in the Burquitlam corridor in learning how to read. She was provided with a tutor twice a week to help her learn how to read, while her young children were child minded. This year, the program expanded in October 2013 to three tutors working with three refugee women twice a week, while child minding is provided. SHARE Family & Community Services has provided the space and child minding service at New

Free Food Safe Course

The ESL Working Group offered a free Food Safe course to 25 adult students from the LINC classes in the Tri-Cities. The course is usually offered in one session but to allow for English literacy issues, this course was spread out over two consecutive Saturdays in May and June. The Coquitlam Public Library provided the space and set-up for the course.

English Practice Group Resource Binders

The ESL Working Group hired a contractor to produce eighteen resource binders for SHARE's Family & Community Services volunteer facilitators of the eighteen English Practice Groups. These binders were ready in Sept. 2013 so that they could be used throughout the year.

Adult Learner Book Clubs

Monthly Book Clubs at the local libraries were started by the Adult Literacy Working Group in 2012 in each municipality. Each club is attended by an average of five to twelve people. In 2014, the Adult Working Group funded the purchase of additional book sets to all three public libraries in order to sustain this valuable program.

Goals and Actions for the Past Year *(cont'd)*

Public Awareness

Family Literacy Day Events

The Family Literacy Working Group put on a Family Literacy “Week” contest asking for community members to tell about a favourite family literacy memory. This contest was advertised in the local papers along with articles about Family Literacy Day.

All community organization participants at the January Family Play and Learn Event at Coquitlam Centre celebrated Family Literacy Day.

Clear Language Workshop In December 2013, a free Clear Language Workshop was offered to any interested participants in the community. Forty people from over 20 different community organizations attended the two hour workshop that was given by Joan Acosta.

Family Literacy Workshops Seven Family Literacy workshops have been offered in the Tri-Cities since January 2013. Six of the workshops were offered for free at SUCCESS, SD43 Continuing Education and Coquitlam Public Library. The six free workshops were sponsored by the Tri-Cities Family Literacy Working Group.

Little Free Libraries Six- \$250 grants have been given out by the Family Literacy Working Group to individuals or groups who are building Little Free Libraries in their neighbourhood. These grants have been very popular and the concept of the Little Free Library to raise the awareness of literacy has been embraced by many.



Goals and Actions for the Past Year *(cont'd)*

Adult Learner Author visits in 2014

The Adult Literacy Working Group has planned and applied to the Canada Council for the Arts in March 2014, for funding to support three author readings for adult learners and the public to be held at three public libraries in October 2014. The Canada Council will notify the Tri-Cities Literacy Committee in the summer 2014 about receiving funding. If the committee is not successful, the Working Group will proceed with funding the author readings from its programs' budget.

Adjustments, New Opportunities or Changes to the Plans

There were few adjustments or changes to the plans that were set out for the period of July 2013 to June 2014. The Task Group had planned to proceed with a new version of the Community Resource Map. That did not happen. Also, planning for some Seniors Writing Workshops has taken longer than expected.

Indications of Success

Criteria for evaluating the Integrated Community Literacy Plan are identified as success statements for each of the four themes.

The following are examples from each of the four goal areas. These are observed as measures of success:

Communication : *Success statement for Communication: All community partners have ongoing opportunities to access information, to participate in and to lend their voices to the community development process in support of literacy in the Tri-Cities. The number of partners is increased, and participation levels of partners is sustained and increased.*

1) Readership of the monthly newsletter has increased dramatically since last year's report. The newsletter is delivered through Mail Chimp. Each month Mail Chimp gives data on the number of "clicks". Although the newsletter is sent to 170 people, when it is passed on Mail Chimp can still count the number of "opens". In Nov. 2013, the number of opens was 267. In April 2014, the number of open "clicks" was 1581.



Indications of Success *(cont'd)*

2) Literacy meetings and Working Group meetings provide an environment where connections are made, awareness is created and an understanding is developed. This reduces the tensions or competitiveness of service providers. It increases the appropriate use of our collective services and fosters a climate where the client's needs become paramount, not the needs of the individual organizations to meet their quotas.

Collaboration: *Success statement for Collaboration: The number of linkages, partnerships and collaborative initiatives has increased. A vision for an integrated system of care is emerging.*

A Collaboration of more than ten community partners has ensured that Stories Galore and More is a successful program. Stories Galore and More started in the summer of 2012. The average number of adults and children who attended each week was 170. In 2013, the average number jumped to 270 per week.

Stories Galore and More's numbers improved drastically from the summer of 2012 to the summer of 2013.



2013 – 270 Adults and Children per week

2012 -170 Adults and Children per week

Access for All: *Success statement for Access for All: A coordinated advocacy plan has been developed and advocacy is ongoing. Previously invisible individuals and groups with literacy needs have been identified and are starting to access available programs and services. More services are available in easily accessible locations throughout the community.*



Indications of Success *(cont'd)*

The first student to start in the Tutoring for Refugee Women program, started in April 2013 with almost no reading literacy in her home language or in English. After being tutored twice a week for almost nine months she was able to enroll in LINC classes in her community. Currently she is enrolled in a LINC level 2/3 class. In the Fall of 2013, the program expanded to include more Refugee women and currently the program is serving 3 different Refugee women.

Another Refugee Mom, working with a tutor since Oct. 2013, was shy and wary (reports her tutor), having left school at age 11 and 'facing upheaval in a refugee camp'. Since attending tutor sessions she 'has changed a lot. She trusts me now, and has learned how to put her feelings into words and how to laugh'.

Public Awareness: *Success statement for Public Awareness: Community partners and individual residents are more aware of what programs and services are available and how to access them.*

After providing a free Clear Language workshop in December, the words "Clear Language" are often used in meetings and discussions. This has been an observation from the LOC when she has attended various community events or committee meetings.

According to SD 43's Continuing Education's coordinator, awareness of the **Foundations Programs** amongst other providers of services in the Tri-Cities has certainly helped with increased enrolment over the years. This awareness comes about through regular interaction with other providers at our Literacy Working Group meetings.

In addition to these Success Statements, each month the Literacy Outreach Coordinator provides reports to the Steering Committee bi-monthly to ensure the work remains on track. Also, Steering Committee members periodically revisit the Plan to ensure that the work is moving forward. Community partners and the Working Groups are consulted to ensure an accurate understanding of progress toward the goals.

Actions, targets and baseline data for literacy development of school-age children are identified and reported on in the School District 43 Achievement Contract, Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement and the Superintendent's Report.

Challenges

Sustainable funding is the most significant ongoing challenge. Without the position of Literacy Outreach Coordinator, the Tri-Cities community would be unable to sustain the level of progress and success we have achieved. Ensuring continued financial support for the position of Literacy Outreach Coordinator is essential. Additional funds allow a variety of community initiatives and collaborations to get off the ground and are necessary to the continued development of community literacy.

Time is always a challenge when collaborating with community partners. While the Committee has been very fortunate that organizations and individuals have recognized and committed to this process, it is a reality that everyone is stretched to the limit.

Partnering with government and business is increasingly a focus in order to improve awareness of, and responsiveness to, literacy issues. This can be challenging in the Tri-Cities because of the multiple municipal governments.

Access to services is another ongoing challenge. Community partners are proactive in strategizing and exploring ways of ensuring services and resources for all, and there continues to be a sense that we are reaching new communities and individuals through our variety of initiatives and methods of delivering programs. Accessibility to literacy skills training for developmentally delayed individuals continues to be a concern of our Literacy Committee.

Bureaucratic challenges remain in supporting ESL learners in our community. Many immigrants, particularly those who have lived in the region for a number of years, are not eligible for LINC programs. Accessibility is a challenge as we try to develop creative ways of supporting those who fall through the cracks.

Changes in the community and on the Committee provides challenges as well. As our community continues to change, it is a challenge to be aware of and understand the literacy needs of our most vulnerable citizens. New community representatives involved in the Committee means the inclusion of additional experiences and expertise but also changes in the level of historical knowledge.

For the Coming Year

Due to the change of funding for the Literacy Outreach Coordinator for the coming year and the uncertainty of sustainable funding for future years, the Literacy Committee feels it is time to have a facilitated “**Visioning**” forum in the Fall of 2014.

The Literacy Outreach Coordinator is essential to ongoing progress of Community Literacy. The forum will look at ways to ensure that literacy can continue to be “front and centre” in all aspects of community life.

Although the Visioning forum will not take place until the fall of 2014, a number of potential opportunities are being explored by the Working Groups to continue to address the current Action Plan and also to respond to changes in the community. For the 2013 – 2014 year, these include:

- Stories Galore and More (year 3)
- Author Visits for Adult Literacy Learners
- Expansion of Little Free Libraries
- Writing Workshops for Seniors
- 2014 Community Resource Map (an updated version of the 2012 map)
- Canadian Cultural Literacy Fair and series of workshops
- Provide more Adult Tutoring opportunities

In order for these goals to be met, the Steering Committee and the Working Groups will need to continue to meet and set priorities. The Literacy Outreach Coordinator will be vital to ensure that planning is coordinated, important details are executed and relationships are made with community partners.

Criteria for evaluating the success of the future actions identified in the Literacy Plan have always been recognized as success statements for each of the four themes. After the Visioning Event in the fall of 2014, this may change.