

# Tri-Cities District/Community Literacy Plan

## *2015 – 2016 Action Plan and Progress to Date*

Communication

Collaboration

Access for All

Public Awareness

*Written by Barb Mancell, Tri-Cities Literacy Outreach Coordinator*

*Submitted to Decoda Literacy on behalf of the Tri-Cities Literacy Committee*



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***Pictured above is one of the many Little Free Libraries that was built in the last year in the Tri-Cities. This Little Free Library was built at the Port Moody Arts Centre after they received a grant from our Literacy Committee.***



## 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

Paul McNaughton, (*co-chair*) Director of Instruction – Learning Services, 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 three to four months throughout the year. From July 1<sup>st</sup> 2014 to June 30<sup>th</sup> 2015 **the Steering Committee met 3 times**.



*Barb Mancell, Tri-Cities Literacy Outreach Coordinator, along with the Mayor of Port Moody, Mike Clay, and other Tri-Cities residents, hawked newspapers to raise funds for literacy very early in the morning of Sept. 24, 2014.*

## The Task Group *(cont'd)*

We also have **Three Working Groups**:

### Adult Literacy

Alison Whitmore	SD43
Janice Williams ~ chair	Coquitlam Public Library
Mary Daniel	Douglas College
Maryn Ashdown	Port Moody Library
Hope Taylor /	
Nancy Walker	Douglas College
Kimberley Constable/	
Sarah Dearman	Terry Fox Library, Port Coquitlam
Barb Mancell	Tri-Cities Literacy Outreach Coordinator

From July 1<sup>st</sup> 2014 to June 30<sup>th</sup> 2015 the **Adult Literacy Working Group** met 6 times.

### ESL

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

From July 1<sup>st</sup> 2014 to June 30<sup>th</sup> 2015 the **ESL Working Group** met 4 times.

### Family Literacy

Alison Whitmore	SD43
Maryn Ashdown	Port Moody Library
Barb Mancell ~ co-chair	Tri-Cities-LOC
Susan Foster ~co-chair	Tri-Cities ECD Committee (MCFD)
Dana Ionsen/Sarah Dearman	Terry Fox Library, FVRL
Silvana Harwood/Anthea Goffe	Coquitlam Public Library
Andrea Hunter	SD43
Arshia Bakshandeh	SHARE Family & Community Services
Lynn Heinrich	Community Volunteer Connections
Firouzeh Peyvandi	ISS of BC
Eunju Kim	SUCCESS

From July 1<sup>st</sup> 2014 to June 30<sup>th</sup> 2015 the **Family Literacy Working Group** met 5 times.

## The Task Group *(cont'd)*

### **External Partner Committees**

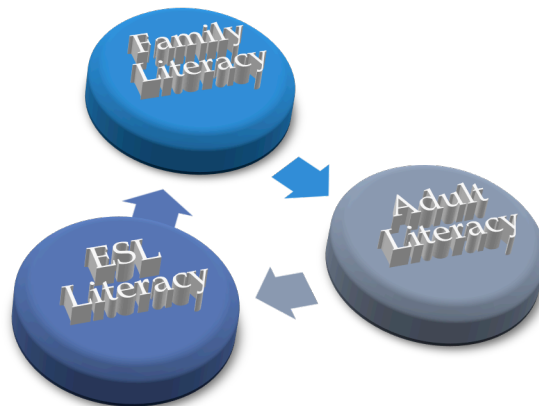
Barb Mancell, LOC, sits on the following community committees as a representative of the Tri-Cities Literacy Committee:

Tri-Cities ECD Committee (*and two Sub-Committees*)

Tri-Cities Middle Child Matters Committee

Family Play and Learn Planning Committee

My Neighbourhood/My Future Trail Blazers Committee (*completed in Dec. 2014*)



## Community Context

The Tri-Cities: Port Coquitlam, Coquitlam, Port Moody and the two villages of Anmore and Belcarra have a population of 218,509. Thirty seven percent of the total Tri-Cities population was foreign born (2011 census).

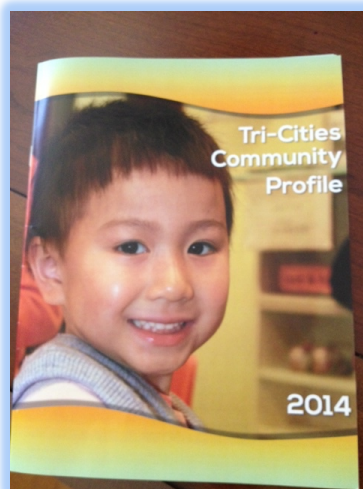
The population in the Tri-Cities continues to increase. For example, according to the 2011 census, there was a population increase of nearly 11% from 2006 to 2011. Community organizations are actively engaged in developing and delivering services to this growing community.

In 2011, Korean was the dominant non-official home language in Coquitlam and Port Moody. Cantonese was the predominant non-official language spoken at home in Port Coquitlam.

The Aboriginal population in Tri-Cities more than doubled from 2006 to 2011. The population went from 2975 to 7110 with more than half living in Coquitlam.

Statistics from the 2011 Census show that education levels are high throughout the Tri-Cities with the lowest proportion of those with post-secondary are living in Port Coquitlam at 65%.

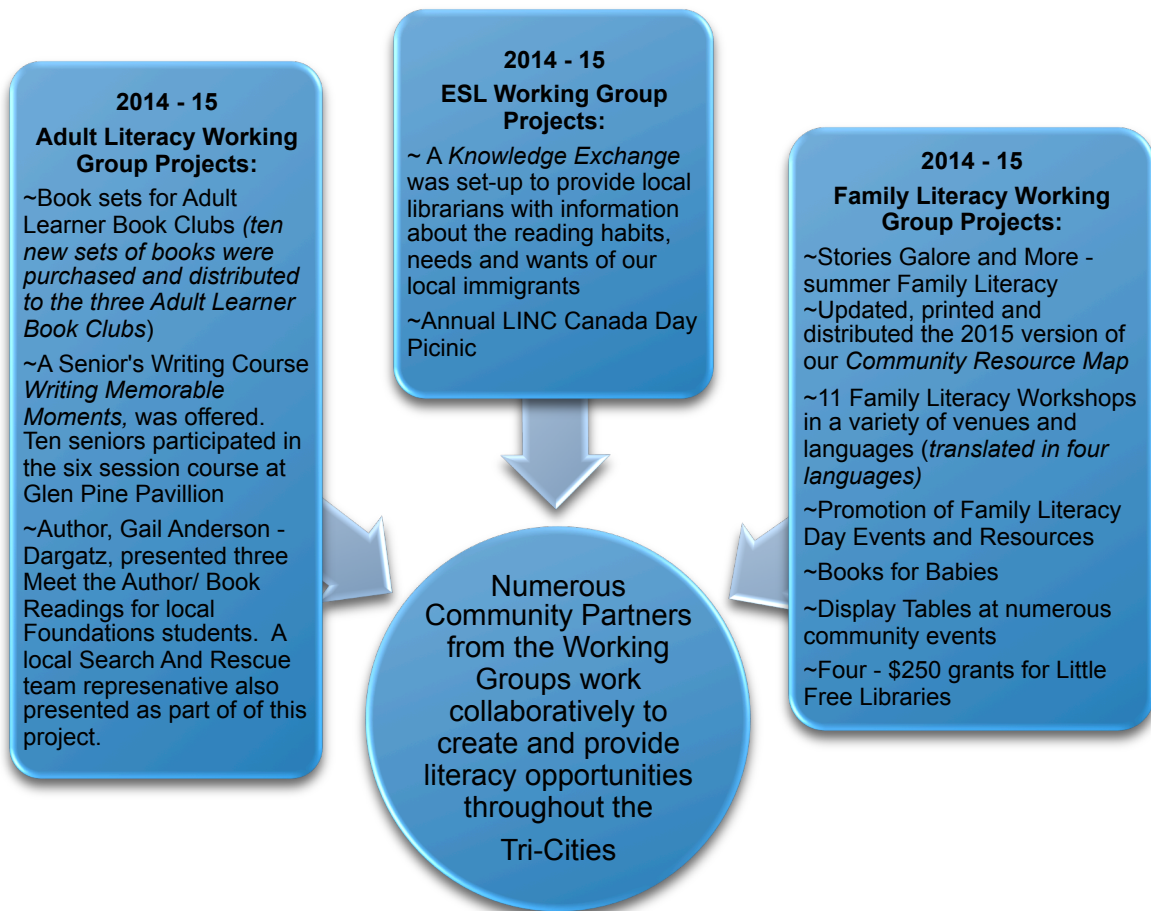
The School District, Continuing Education, Douglas College, non-profit organizations, libraries and other organizations offer a wide variety of Adult, ESL and Family Literacy programs and courses in the Tri-Cities. The funding for these programs comes from a variety of sources.



*The Tri-Cities Early Childhood Committee developed the Tri-Cities Community Profile. It offers valuable community information for community developers, government and businesses.*

# 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 2014 to June 2015, 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. Some community organizations drop by and share information about the programs they have available for families. The average number of participants in 2014 was 225 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. The Coquitlam Public Library is a main partner for this program by offering in-kind administration, support of materials and storage availability.

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



*Linda and Tazeen lead a group of adults and kids in some fun yoga poses to go with their story (left). The Port Moody Library organized a book swap at one of the Stories Galore and More sessions (right).*



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

- **Family Literacy Workshops** – *Eleven* Family Literacy workshops have been delivered in the past year. These workshops were delivered to practitioners working with families in their own organizations, adult family members from the Tri-Cities and students at Douglas College enrolled in an ECD course. The Tri-Cities LOC, Barb Mancell, gave all workshops. Four of the workshops were translated into four different languages for the participants: Korean, Cantonese, Mandarin and Farsi. Approx. 200 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. The Tri-Cities Literacy Committee was also represented at several other community events sponsored and organized by other community organizations: **Healthy Kids Fair**, **Pop-up Play** (*three venues*), **Ready Set Learn** (*two venues*), and **Welcome to Kindergarten** (*one venue*).



*This is an aerial shot taken at the monthly Family Play and Learn Event at Coquitlam Centre Mall*



## 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 Social Media**

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 180 community subscribers each month. Many of these contacts forward the newsletter to others in the community. For example, twenty-four hours after the June 2015 Newsletter was sent out – **537** people had already opened it.

*The monthly newsletter is sent out through Mail Chimp* 



A Tri-Cities Literacy Facebook page is also set up.

**Coverage in local Newspapers and Magazines** *The Tri-City News* published one article about Family Literacy during Family Literacy Week in January 2015. They also advertised our Seniors Writing Course in September 2014. *SNAP'D Coquitlam* featured many photos from our LINC Canada Day Picnic. *What's On Port Coquitlam* wrote a feature story about the Little Free Libraries that were granted by our committee and are in Port Coquitlam.

## 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 2014 was 225 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 sixth annual LINC Canada Day Picnic took place on June 25, 2015. This year's event included one local mayor, three MLAs and approximately 500 participants, representing all four of our local LINC providers (ISS of BC, SUCCESS, Douglas College and SD43 Continuing Education). This full day of activities provided an opportunity for learners to connect with students from other sites and to explore and celebrate Canadian culture while practicing their English speaking skills.



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

### *Collaboration (cont'd)*

#### **Author Presentation – Gail Anderson – Dargatz**

In February 2015, Gail Anderson- Dargatz visited our three libraries to present to local Foundations students and members of the public. The Foundations students prepared for the presentation by reading her novel, *Search and Rescue*. A member of the Coquitlam Search and Rescue team also helped prepare the students by presenting to each of the classes before the author visit. The presentation was a collaboration of three libraries, SD43 Continuing Education, Coquitlam Search and Rescue, and our Adult Literacy Working Group.



### **Access for All**

#### **Free Senior's Writing Course**

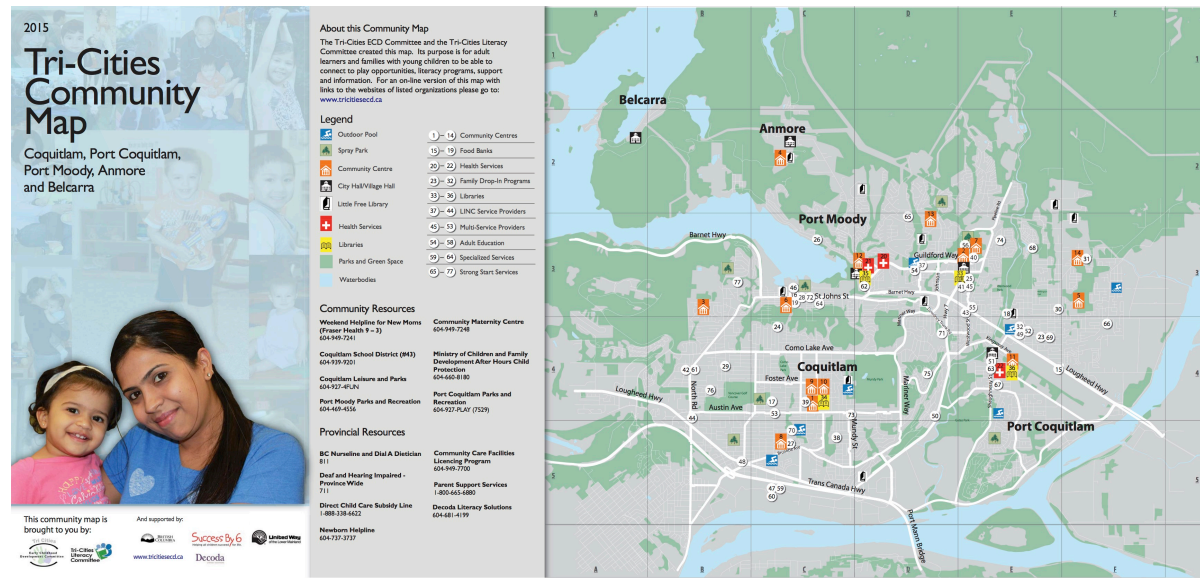
In September 2014, The Adult Literacy Working Group collaborated with Glenpine Senior's Centre to provide a free Senior's Writing Workshop titled: *Writing Memorable Moments*. The teacher, Sharon Cairney, provided six writing lessons for ten seniors.





# 2015 Community Resource Map

The 2015 Community Resource Map was developed and distributed in four different languages in February 2015. The 2015 map is an updated version of the 2012 map and features a guide for community members to find resources and programs for both children and adults. The map was a partnership of the Tri-Cities ECD Committee and the Tri-Cities Literacy Committee.



### **Tutoring for Refugee Women**

This valuable program, which was started in April 2013, continues to operate with three volunteer tutors working with three refugee women, while child minding is provided. SHARE Family & Community Services has provided the space and child minding service at New Beginnings.

**Knowledge Exchange** The ESL Working Group and the Adult Literacy Working Group collaborated to provide a Knowledge Exchange between the two groups and local librarians. The Knowledge Exchange was an opportunity for LINC Service Providers to share information about their students' concerns and preferences of reading materials so that the local libraries can better serve their newcomer and immigrant patrons.



### **Adult Learner Book Clubs**

The Adult Literacy Working Group started monthly Book Clubs at the three local libraries in 2012. In the fall of 2014, the Adult Working Group funded the purchase of ten additional book sets to all three public libraries in order to sustain this valuable program.

### **Books for Babies**

The Tri-Cities Literacy Committee takes responsibility for purchasing materials and packaging *Books for Babies* bags for the Tri-Cities' new parents. In 2014 – 15, 400 bags were stuffed and handed over to the local Fraser Health Units for distribution.

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

### **Family Literacy Workshops**

Eleven Family Literacy workshops have been offered in the Tri-Cities in the past year. All the workshops were offered for free. Workshops were offered to students at Douglas College, parents at Family Resource Drop-in programs, immigrant parents at SUCCESS (delivered in four different languages) and some LINC students. The eleven free workshops were sponsored by the Tri-Cities Family Literacy Working Group.

### **Little Free Libraries**

Four- \$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. To date, we have given out ten \$250 grants over the past two years.

One local magazine, *What's On Port Coquitlam*, published a feature article about the Little Free Libraries in Port Coquitlam.

The Tri-Cities ECD Committee has taken the lead on an upcoming project that will see several more Little Free Libraries being built in neighbourhoods across Port Coquitlam.





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

### **Adjustments, New Opportunities or Changes to the Plans**

In last year's plan, we stated a proposal to facilitate a Vision Forum in the fall of 2014. We did not go ahead with the forum.

We also did not move forward on a Canadian Cultural Literacy Fair and series of workshops.

All other initiatives that were intended for 2014 – 15 did go ahead.

## 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 continued to stay high. The newsletter is delivered through Mail Chimp which gives monthly statistics on how many times the newsletter is opened and how many links are "clicked". For example, here are the "open" stats for four different months in 2014- 15:

Nov. 593      Feb. 489      Apr. 605      June 700



## 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 our collective impact in the community. In the 2014 – 15 year, we had **18** literacy committee meetings (Steering Committee and the three working groups).

**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** is evident in the literacy work that takes place through our committee. Following are examples of how many community partners have worked together on some of the specific projects this year:

Community Resource Map: *three*

Stories Galore and More: *twelve plus*

Author Presentation: *six*

Annual LINC Canada Day Picnic: *seven*

**The number of linkages has increased over the last year.** Eleven family literacy workshops were requested by a wide variety of organizations, schools and service providers. Groups who have not had any association with our literacy committee in the past made several of these requests.

**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 Tutoring for Refugee Women program** continues. Although this is a very small program, awareness of the needs for helping these community members is evident to many.

**Literacy Committee meetings are about advocacy and communication.** Literacy projects, programs and outreach come as result of these meetings. Discussions about gaps and how to meet those needs in our community are what keep us going. As mentioned above, over the past year, the literacy committee had 22 meetings.

**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.*

The readership of the monthly newsletter, participation at community events, and coverage in local newspapers and magazines, is a true indicator that community partners and individual residents are aware of programs and services that are available.

Another example is how quickly our **Community Resource Map** has been requested by community organizations. After only a few months of the initial distribution, we only have a few hundred maps (out of 10 000) left.

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 quarter the Literacy Outreach Coordinator provides reports to the Steering Committee 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.

## 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

Barb Mancell, the LOC for the past four years, is leaving the Tri-Cities Literacy Committee at the end of July 2015. The new LOC, Ann Johannes, will be working with the Tri-Cities community and the Literacy Committee. Ann and Barb will overlap during the month of July to ensure that the connections in the community can be sustained.

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 2015– 2016 year, these include:

- Stories Galore and More (year 4)
- Sustain the monthly Literacy Newsletter
- Connect to the Literacy is Life Campaign in September by recognizing volunteers who support literacy learners
- New Website possibilities
- Continue to participate in community events
- Celebrate Family Literacy month
- Financial Literacy opportunities
- Possible expansion of Adult Learner Book Clubs
- Expansion of Little Free Libraries
- Adult tutor training – partner as a funder
- LINC Canada Picnic – June 2016

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.