

## **Yamaska Literacy Council Activities: 2007-2008**

The core mission of the Yamaska Literacy Council (YLC) is to deliver individualized one-on-one tutoring for adults and older youth in reading, writing, and math through trained volunteer tutors. Prevention, publicity/public awareness and training are critical activities, designed to further the council's core mission.

### **Governance**

#### **Directors Meetings**

YLC's Board of Directors met six (6) times throughout the year:

- September 6, 2007
- October 25, 2007
- December 6, 2007
- February 7, 2008
- April 10, 2008
- June 12, 2008

The YLC Board and staff met in January to develop a new three year (2008-11) strategic plan. The session was facilitated by the Centre for Community Organizations (COCO). A background document was prepared in advance of the session to provide information on statistics, trends and demographics facing YLC. Based on research of demographics in our region, older youth were identified as a target market for potential clientele, and the plan addresses this need.

Based on the strategic plan, a permanent Recruitment committee has been identified to address the need for targeted ongoing awareness of literacy and the YLC's services, with the goal of increasing recruitment of student and volunteers.

The plan was adopted and an annual work plan established.

### **Tutoring and Training**

#### **Student-Tutor Matches**

Eight new students joined the Council this year. A total of 22 students were matched and received tutoring during the year.

***949 tutoring hours***

**Tutor Training**

YLC trains volunteers to deliver one-on-one tutoring during a 12-hour training session that covers: literacy statistics and issues (global, national and regional), sensitivity to the adult non-reader, tutoring techniques, use of a variety of materials, goal setting and assessment, lesson planning, etc.

YLC revised and updated many of its workshop segments this year, including adding sections on using technology with students, and essential skills. Power Point presentations were developed. YLC's revised its Tutor Handbook to reflect the current training, and provide new tutors with additional background information and references to resources

**Eight (8) new tutors were trained.**

**8 participants x 12hr = 96 training hours**

**4 Trainers x 12 hours = 48 hours**

**Workshops and Professional Development**

This year, YLC staff, volunteers and students participated in the following workshops and training activities:

<b>Date:</b>	<b>Workshop or Activity:</b>	<b>Attended By:</b>
Oct 2007	QELA (Quebec English Literacy Alliance, Skype, Bridging the Gap, Google groups, Reception and Referral (2 days)	Coordinator
Nov 2007	LVQ Annual General Meeting and conference (6 hr), Brain Gym, Science for Students, Essential Skills, Tutor Chat	Coordinator, volunteer tutors, students (6)
Nov 2007	QELA Skills for Life (5hr)	Coordinator
Jan 2008	LVQ Alpharoute workshop (on-line classes for students)	Coordinator
Feb 2008	QELA AGM and e-portfolios, portfolios workshop	Coordinator
April 2008	QELA using technology in the classroom	Coordinator
June	LVQ workshop on Legal Issues	Coordinator

**94 hours of training and professional development for staff and volunteers.**

## **Volunteer Support and Recognition**

### **Tutor Chat**

A 2-hour Tutor Chat was held in April. Nine members participated. It was an opportunity for Tutors to exchange tutoring challenges and solutions with each other. It was held in conjunction with Volunteer Week. Volunteers were recognized. An overview of the new Tutor Handbook was presented and there was a demonstration of free software that can be used by tutors called Natural Reader.

### **Volunteer Week**

In recognition of Volunteer Week, YLC presented its volunteers with a thank you card and a volunteer pin.

## **Programs**

### **Each One Teach One**

Tutoring adults using the Each One Teach One (EOTO) method is the central mandate of YLC. Volunteers are trained and matched with students. Tutoring takes place one or two times per week, for approximately one to two hours. Tutoring is individualized and offered at no cost to the student.

8 tutors were trained  
22 students received tutoring

### **Prison Program**

Two new one-on-one matches were established this year in the Cowansville Institution (federal penitentiary).

## **Prevention**

### ***i) Family Literacy Day***

In recognition of Family Literacy Day on January 27<sup>th</sup>, YLC launched a new publication "Learning with your Child", which was co-produced with Literacy in Action, as a project funded by the Townshippers' Foundation.

### **New Scribe Service**

As a way of addressing the needs of adults struggling with low literacy, the Yamaska Literacy Council launched a new Scribe service. YLC performs activities such as reading official documents, filling out forms and writing or proof-reading documents. As a public scribe mandate the focus is on literacy and not professional expertise in the field of the document." The free service is open to the public by appointment only.

## **Fundraising**

As a fund raiser, YLC sold bracelets that promote literacy, and note cards produced as part of YLC's "LitPix" contest. Donations were received from church and service groups.

## **Publicity, Public Awareness, and Networking**

Public awareness continues to be a challenge.

More than 50 volunteers participated in many different capacities at the following events:

- four-day Brome Fair,
- one-day Mansonville Multicultural Festival
- Townshippers Open House and Cabaret evening
- Townshippers Picnic
- Knowlton Christmas parade

YLC made a presentation to a group of Anglican ministers serving a wide section of our territory (April 2008). Approximately 40 people attended.

YLC participated in networking activities organized by Townshippers' Association. Groups serving the English population met to exchange information about projects and activities in the area, and find common ground to combine services and resources. (April and May 2008) Approximately 15 organizations were represented.

YLC participated in a community table to address the high drop-out rate (Massey-Vanier Partners for Educational Success (*MVPes*)). The group includes representatives from the school board, the Chamber of Commerce, Townshippers' Association, Le Sac a Mots, Centre Jeunesse. The goal is to combine efforts to produce a plan of action to keep youth in school. Approximately 10 organizations were represented.

Networking and partnerships are critical to increasing awareness of literacy issues and the services offered by the council, and continue to be a priority.

### **Collaboration with Francophone Literacy Organization**

YLC continues to build its relationship with *Le Sac a Mots*, the French literacy organization in our region. We participated in a community project, along with representatives from other community groups and health and social services providers. The project is funded by Quebec Enfants and aims to reach vulnerable families and with young children to stimulate communications skills and prepare children for success at school

### **Promotional Activity**

An emphasis was placed on raising awareness and recruiting students and tutors in Waterloo. Two YLC Directors visited various industries, community organizations and the elementary school to promote our services. YLC had an information kiosk at the Waterloo Elementary School on parent's night, with the goal of reaching parents with low literacy skills.

### **Newsletter**

The Council produced four issues of *Roadways*, our newsletter that is distributed to our members and many community groups and partners, and is posted on our website [www.yamaskaliteracy.ca](http://www.yamaskaliteracy.ca)

## **Memberships**

YLC is a member of the following organizations:

**Literacy Volunteers of Quebec (LVQ)**  
**Quebec English Literacy Alliance (QELA)**  
**The Literacy Foundation/La Fondation Alpha**

## **General**

### ***Annual General Meeting, October 2007***

Seventeen members attended the Annual General Meeting. Light refreshments were served and it was an occasion for our members to socialize and share their experiences, both the challenges and success, of the past year.

### ***Christmas Parade and Party, December 2007***

In December 2007, more than 20 YLC volunteers marched in the Knowlton Christmas Parade, with a YLC banner, and distributed information to bystanders about our services. Following the parade, volunteers enjoyed a Christmas luncheon at a local restaurant.

### ***End of Year social, June 2008***

A year-end celebration was held at the home of YLC President. 25 members attended.

## **Special Projects**

\*Due to timing of funding, YLC had two IFPCA projects running in the 07-08 fiscal year

### ***Incorporating Technology Project (06-07)***

The Yamaska Literacy Council received IFPCA funding to incorporate aspects of technology into three key areas of YLC's operations: outreach/promotion, recruitment, tutor training.

Project objectives included:

- Transfer and adapt content and materials used in basic tutor training workshop to Power Point presentation
- Develop a Power Point presentation as a tool to promote literacy and the services offered by YLC
- Introduce/upgrade use of technology on YLC's website.

The new workshop and Tutor Training Handbook were launched at the April workshop. An accompanying Trainer's Outline has also been created.

The new website [www.yamaskaliteracy.ca](http://www.yamaskaliteracy.ca) is up and running and being routinely updated.

A contest was launched to encourage people to visit our site. On World Book Day, one contest entry was drawn and a gift certificate for a local bookstore was awarded as a prize.

A power point presentation of literacy and YLC services was piloted in April by the Coordinator at a community event.

**Promotion in Action (07-08)**

➤ **Objective 1**

**Develop, produce and distribute print materials to:**

- ✓ Recruit volunteers
- ✓ Recruit students
- ✓ Publicize and promote awareness of literacy issues and YLC

➤ **Objective 2**

**Explore, develop, produce and distribute non-print based publicity materials aimed at recruiting the young adult population as students.**

- ✓ Recruitment and promotional information on CD/DVD:
- ✓ Investigate use of MP3 technology, YouTube and text messaging

➤ **Objective 3**

**Develop a YLC traveling “spokesperson” team that will promote YLC’s services.**

Recruit, train, provide materials and support to a core group of “spokesperson”, who will, along with the Coordinator, make presentations about the YLC and its services to community groups, agencies and industry in the communities it serves. The team will include students, tutors, and public personalities.

**Successes and Challenges**

Some of the successes that YLC is proud of this year are:

- ✓ ongoing collaborative relationship with the French literacy program, Le Sac-a-Mots
- ✓ One of YLC’s students, Eric Savage, won the Adult Literacy Recognition Award in April 2008 for his efforts. He has spoken publicly about his experiences struggling with literacy, including talking to new tutors at the basic training workshop, and appearing in local papers.
- ✓ Participation in community tables and initiatives, most notably the Cowansville Local Action Committee, which developed a bilingual project to reach vulnerable families with young children, and empower them to stimulate communication skills in their children to prepare them for success in school, and the Massey-Vanier Partners for Educational Success (MVPes) which aims to reduce the

high school drop-out rate. YLC's strategic plan identified older youth who have dropped out of school as a target clientele.

Recruiting and retaining students remains a challenge. The Council continues to work on developing creative ways to reach and recruit students.

It remains difficult to maintain a visible presence in all of the areas of our 5000 sq mile territory, given our current financial resources. Our 2008-2011 strategic plan focuses on the development of an ongoing recruitment committee to develop and maintain regular contact with all of our target communities to increase recruitment of students and volunteers.